



Defence Awarding
Organisation



Centre Agreement and Handbook

“Recognising Quality and Competence”

Supporting Defence with accreditation and specialist bespoke qualification opportunities

PARTIES TO THIS AGREEMENT:

DEFENCE AWARDING ORGANISATION is the MOD Awarding Body based at Defence Academy Headquarters, Room TF08 Trenchard, Shrivenham, Swindon SN6 8LA

AND

[NAME OF INDIVIDUAL] of [NAME OF CENTRE], [ADDRESS OF CENTRE],

1. Background

1.1 We are the DEFENCE AWARDING ORGANISATION (DAO) which is part of the Defence Academy.

1.2 You are [_____] of
[_____] ("the Centre")

and you have requested to offer assessment services that will enable individuals to gain qualifications that are formally accredited by the DAO.

1.3 We will provide an accreditation service by which individuals can gain formal recognition of their achievements. By gaining a qualification through a rigorous quality assurance process, employers will be able to have confidence that their employees have reached an agreed level of skills and knowledge.

2. Agreement

The purpose of this letter is to set out the Agreement to be entered between us, the Awarding Organisation and you, the Assessment Centre. We would be grateful if you would please sign and return the enclosed copy of this letter, to confirm your agreement on these terms within 10 working days of the date of this letter.

This Agreement shall take effect when you have signed and returned to us the enclosed copy of this letter provided that we have received the signed copy within 10 working days.

Yours faithfully

Signed for and on behalf of DEFENCE AWARDING ORGANISATION by:

Signed for, and on behalf of Defence Awarding Organisation, by		Signed for, and on behalf of, the Centre by:	
Signature		Signature	
Full name		Full name	
Rank/grade		Rank/grade	
Position		Position	
Full Address		Full Address	
Date		Date	

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Supporting Defence with accreditation and specialist bespoke qualification opportunities

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1. Introduction

The Defence Awarding Organisation (DAO) is an awarding body approved and regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) with authority to accredit courses onto the Regulatory Qualification Framework (RQF). It provides the opportunity for Defence organisations to offer recognised qualifications either as single unit qualification or multiple units that build towards a higher level qualification.

The DAO was founded in support of the principles of Defence Direction and Guidance for Training & Education (JSP 822), to provide opportunities to gain nationally recognised qualifications through the accreditation of education, training and experience. The DAO enables Defence to continue to develop a strategic approach to accreditation by ensuring a close fit with external developments and coherence, both within and across the Services, whilst minimising cost.

The DAO Centre handbook, effective from the 1 Jan 18, outlines the minimum level of service that Centres can expect. The handbook will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to customer feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from Ofqual. This handbook provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of both DAO and Centres, and will assist Centres in delivering exceptional customer service to all learners being offered DAO qualifications. It also provides useful information to making working with DAO as streamlined as possible.

DAO recognises and values the hard work of centres, without this commitment, DAO would not have the capacity to deliver the qualifications that they do.

2. Vision

The DAO to be recognised by the Defence Community as the first point of contact for accreditation services.

3. Mission

To award work-based qualifications to Armed Forces Personnel (Regular and Reserve), Ministry of Defence (MOD) Civil Servants and promote the Defence Brand through the exploitation of accreditation opportunities across the Defence Industry.

4. Centre Support

The DAO will work with Centres to deliver a customer-focused and professional service to learners. Support is available to DAO approved Centres through the DAO website, <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-awarding-organisation>, by email, post and telephone.

Defence Awarding Organisation
Defence Academy Headquarters
Room TF08 Trenchard
Shrivenham
Swindon
SN6 8LA

Tel: **01793 314187** or email us at: **enquiries.dao@da.mod.uk**

DAO policies are reviewed annually. Policies for handling enquiries, appeals, managing malpractice and maladministration etc are available on the DAO website, <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-awarding-organisation>.

5. Centres

Once a military training facility is established as a DAO centre, there are certain criteria that have to be followed to remain compliant. After the Centre Approval Visit you will receive an initial compliance visit (after the first course is delivered) and then an annual visit is undertaken. These visits are conducted by external Standard Verifiers (SVs) and they conduct impartial external quality assurance (EQA).

Failure or delay of an annual SV visit will result in a Centre not being able to claim certificates for qualifications, or being in the position to advance to direct claim status (see para 20) in the future.

The criteria for Centre Approval is detailed within Annex B, C & D and covers the following areas:

- Management systems
- Resources
- Learner support
- Assessment and quality assurance
- Records

Each DAO centre is expected to support requests and work with an SV to undertake the following activities (this list is not exhaustive):

- Examining portfolios / assessments
- Talking to students, ie learners
- Observing lessons
- Talking to tutors
- Inspecting facilities
- Reviewing learner resources
- Viewing management information eg spreadsheets and minutes of meetings

The DAO is responsible for the following:

- Overseeing arrangements between the Centre and SV to set SV/EQA visit date
- Providing the SV with a list of registered students against an award from the Centre
- Providing Centres with support if required
- Providing Centres with a copy of the SV report
- Providing Centres with a copy of new report
- Provide support if sanctions applied

The DAO Centre is responsible for:

- Negotiating with the SV to identify a suitable date to conduct a SV visit
- Providing access to the centre premises for DAO staff, nominated representatives, or SVs
- Providing a secure area for the SV to work from during the visit
- Booking in the SV at the guard room
- Ensuring all relevant personnel (eg learners, assessors, IQA), identified by the SV, are available
- Escorting the SV if required
- Providing all requested information
- Arranging inspection of facilities
- Ensuring policies in place to address (see table below):

Policy	
1	Equality and Diversity
2	Conflicts of Interest
3	Recognition of Prior Learning
4	Internal Quality Assurance

5	Confidentiality
6	Safeguarding
7	Malpractice and Maladministration
8	Complaints
9	Appeals
10	Reasonable Adjustments

It is a condition of Centre Approval that the approved Centre will provide DAO and Ofqual with access to premises, people and records and to co-operate with DAO monitoring activities. If a DAO Centre has a satellite Centre, then a named person, responsible for quality assurance within each Centre, must be available to assist the SV, as necessary. The satellite Centre may not be an establishment with an office and staff; it may be a location where a learner is being assessed for example, in the workplace. Satellite Centres must operate the same quality assurance procedures as the main Centre. The satellite Centre is also responsible for ensuring that student assessment/portfolios are available.

6. Non-compliance

Where an Approved Centre fails to meet the ongoing Centre Approval Criteria (Annex D), DAO will discuss the most appropriate course of action with the Head of Centre. Dependent upon the level of transgression, sanctions may be applied – see the DAO Sanctions policy. For minor transgressions an action plan will be completed with timescales applied for actions to be completed. Where a Centre fails to meet the criteria and that the failure is likely to compromise the integrity of qualifications, qualification units or the RQF, DAO may withdraw Centre Approval until such time as the Centre does meet all the requirements for Centre Approval.

7. Changes within Centres

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to inform the DAO whenever the contact details change or when there has been a change that may affect the approval conditions, DAO should be notified, in writing, within 30 days. If it is a change of Head of Centre a new agreement will be issued.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

DAO Responsible Officer and Development Managers are responsible for ensuring the following:

- DAO Centres meet with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition
- DAO qualifications are mapped to the RQF and meet with the conditions
- DAO provides support to current and new Centres
- Quality
- External Quality Assurance

Centres are responsible for:

- Learner confidentiality - the DAO only holds the minimum amount of personal data of a learner in order to conduct business as an awarding body. This personal data refers to name, gender, date of birth and service number, required to register and certificate a learner for a RQF qualification issued by the DAO.
- Equality & Diversity - the Centre must comply with legislation relating to equality and diversity and/or the requirements of the RQF relating to equality and diversity. There should be no barriers to achieving a qualification based on:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

Centres should consider how qualifications are publicised and assessed to ensure that no barriers exist on any of the grounds listed above. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that Learners who are disabled are not disadvantaged in any way. Learners must declare their needs prior to the assessment period and all necessary reasonable adjustment arrangements must have been implemented before the time of their assessment. Special considerations are made to ensure that Learners are not disadvantaged by any exceptional circumstances that may arise during the assessment.

9. Assessment of Vocational Based Qualifications in the RQF

DAO supports the use of non-bureaucratic assessment methods, ie learners should not be expected to generate portfolios containing substantial amounts of paperwork but the assessor needs to view evidence in terms of:

- Validity
- Authenticity
- Currency
- Sufficiency

Wherever practicable, the emphasis should be on naturally occurring evidence and making reference to that evidence in support of their claim for competence. The assessor may wish to support this evidence by using techniques such as a professional discussion recorded electronically, witness testimony from line managers etc.

It is the Centre's responsibility to provide assessment services that are lean and cost effective, using Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) where this is appropriate.

All staff undertaking assessment and quality assurance activities must:

- Hold the appropriate qualifications, or
- Be working towards those qualifications, with work countersigned by a suitably qualified person
- Undertake CPD

10. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The regulatory arrangements for the RQF provide the following definitions:

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.

Exemption – The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a RQF qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-RQF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.

Credit Transfer – The process of using a credit or credits awarded in the context of one qualification towards the achievement requirements of another qualification.

DAO supports the use of RPL, exemption and credit transfer, and will make these available wherever possible.

There are 5 generally accepted principles that DAO and its Centres will follow:

Principle 1

RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units in the RQF, irrespective of how their learning took place. There is no difference between the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit through prior learning and through a formal programme of study.

Principle 2

RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders to ensure that users can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of RPL.

Principle 3

RPL is a learner-centred, voluntary process. The individual should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support a claim for credit through RPL, and be given guidance and support to make a claim.

Principle 4

The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of credit through RPL will not be distinguished from any other credits awarded in the RQF.

Principle 5

Assessment methods for RPL must be of equal rigour as other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit in the RQF through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the unit do not allow this, based on a rationale consistent with the aims and regulations of the framework.

DAO Centres must work to the guiding principles above. Centres carrying out RPL must:

- Use appropriate assessment methods to ensure the evidence being assessed is valid, authentic, current and sufficient
- Register Learners as soon as they formally start to gather evidence
- Maintain records of assessment and monitor Learner progress
- Process Learner registration and certification claims using the standard procedures
- Ensure that Centre staff have the appropriate expertise to support RPL
- Keep an auditable record of the evidence provided by an individual to support their claim against a given set of standards or learning outcomes (ie qualification specification)

11. Conflicts of Interest in Assessment

It is a condition of Centre Approval that an Approved Centre must have a process to identify, monitor and manage any conflicts of interest in assessment outcomes.

The Centre must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a Learner being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment. This includes quality assurance activities.

Depending upon the size of the Centre, some roles may be undertaken by the same person, for example Head of Centre and Centre Coordinator. However, the assessor role and the internal verifier role must be carried out separately. The assessor cannot quality assure their own assessments as this presents a conflict of interest.

Individuals should not be involved in the assessment or the quality assurance of assessment decisions at a Centre in which they have a personal interest or, where this happens, they must ensure that the assessment process is subject to scrutiny by those without personal interest.

12. Confidentiality

All staff within Centres must recognise that some assessment information may be sensitive and provided 'in confidence'. Assessors should conduct their assessments in such a way that any confidential information remains with the Learner. For example, evidence can be assessed by the assessor and referenced in the Learner's portfolio; however, the evidence can remain with the Learner or the Learners' employer.

Where confidentiality in:

- a) The contents of assessment materials, or
- b) Information about assessment,

is required in order to ensure that a qualification reflects an accurate measure of attainment, the Centre must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Where any breach of such confidentiality (including the loss or theft of assessment materials) is either suspected by the Centre or alleged by any other person, DAO must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

13. Internal Quality Assurance

A condition for Centre Approval is that the Centre operates a robust internal quality assurance (IQA) system to maintain the consistency and accuracy of assessments.

The key features of an effective IQA system are that it must:

- Be planned, to cover a representative sample of assessments
- Include the monitoring of assessments and a way of standardising assessment judgements
- Sample assessments on a 'formative' basis, therefore giving feedback to assessors on an ongoing basis (not at the end of the accreditation process)
- Support and develop the assessment team
- Be accurately recorded to provide a clear audit trail
- Be carried out by suitably qualified and occupationally competent staff

The quality assurance strategy must satisfy the requirements of the DAO.

To guide/support the assessment team in the Centre; it is essential that a sufficient number of assessments are sampled. To sample all assessments may not be practical in terms of resources and could undermine the trust and confidence of the assessors. Over a period of time (6 - 12 months) the IQA strategy must be based on sampling all:

- Assessors
- Learners
- Units
- Assessment methods
- Types of evidence
- Assessment records
- Assessment locations

The IQA must include observation of all stages of the assessment process:

- Action and assessment planning
- Observation of Learner performance
- Briefing a Learner
- Questioning and giving feedback
- Assessment of product evidence

Records of observations by Internal Quality Assurers must be maintained for sampling by the External Quality Assurer. If a Centre is in doubt about their sampling plan, they should contact their External Quality Assurer for guidance.

14. Roles

The key roles at a Centre are Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers, Internal Quality Assurer Co-ordinator and Centre Co-ordinator/Manager. Each role is explained in the following paragraphs.

15. Assessors

The role of an assessor is to:

- Ensure that each Learner is aware of his/her responsibility in the collection and presentation of evidence
- Agree and record assessment plans with each Learner
- Fully brief Learners on the assessment process
- Observe Learners' performance in the workplace and/or in simulated situations, and/or conduct other forms of assessment in accordance with the qualification requirements
- Ensure that assessment of performance by observation is unobtrusive
- Judge the evidence and record assessment decisions against the standards/syllabus
- Provide Learners with prompt, accurate and constructive feedback
- Manage the system of assessment from assessment planning through to making and recording assessment decisions
- Assess evidence of Learner competence against the national standards of occupational competence within the qualification
- Ensure validity, authenticity, currency and sufficiency of evidence
- Maintain accurate and verifiable Learner assessment and achievement records
- Confirm that Learners have demonstrated competence/knowledge and have completed the required documentation
- Agree new assessment plans with Learners where further evidence is required
- Make themselves available for discussion with the Internal Quality Assurer / Qualification Co-ordinator and/or External Quality Assurer
- Demonstrate commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities
- Ensure that any member of the public (clients/service users) involved in the assessment give informed consent, especially if there is any risk of intrusion into areas of privacy and/or confidentiality
- Ensure maintenance of confidentiality for sensitive information

In some situations where work-based assessment is required, Centres may wish to use peripatetic assessors, ie assessors who are not employed in the same workplace as the Learner. The need for a peripatetic assessor may arise when a Learner is working on their own or there are insufficient assessors in the workplace.

16. Internal Quality Assurers

Internal Quality Assurers (formerly known as internal verifiers) monitor the work of all assessors to ensure that assessment processes and practices have been adhered to and assessment decisions are consistent across assessors. Internal Quality Assurers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that assessors follow the assessment guidance provided
- Advising and supporting assessors to assist them in interpreting and applying the standards/syllabus correctly and consistently
- Regularly sampling assessment activities, methods and records to monitor consistency of assessment decisions as specified by qualification documentation
- Providing assessors with prompt, accurate and constructive feedback on their assessment decisions
- Undertaking an active role in raising issues of good practice in assessment
- Ensuring that equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices are upheld in the assessment process
- Liaising with other staff members and the External Quality Assurer to implement the requirements of the assessment system
- Ensuring that all Learners' achievement records and Centre documentation are completed in accordance with requirements
- Countersigning appropriate assessment documentation
- Ensuring assessors have opportunities for updating and developing their vocational and professional competence
- Supporting, countersigning, dating assessments and quality assuring judgements by assessors and Internal Quality Assurers not holding the appropriate assessor/Internal Quality Assurer qualifications as approved and specified by the Regulatory Authorities

17. Internal Quality Assurer Co-ordinator

An Internal Quality Assurer Co-ordinator (formerly known as Internal Verifier) is recommended where more than one Internal Quality Assurer is involved in the internal quality assurance process. The Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Centre contact
- Maintaining regular contact with the Internal Quality Assurers whose work they co-ordinate
- Ensuring that internal quality assurance is carried out efficiently and consistently across the range of qualification(s) with which they are involved

18. Centre Co-ordinator / Manager

The Centre Co-ordinator/Manager will:

- Have a working knowledge of assessment management, administration and quality assurance
- Hold the necessary authority and have sufficient time to ensure that management, administrative, assessment and internal quality assurance/qualification coordination procedures are implemented correctly and consistently across the Centre as a whole
- Have regular contact with the Internal Quality Assurers/Internal Quality Assurer Coordinators/Qualification Coordinators whose work they co-ordinate
- Liaise closely with other staff members to obtain, and provide External Quality Assurers with, detailed information on the overall operation of the Centre
- Co-ordinate visit arrangements for External Quality Assurers

The Centre Co-ordinator/Manager will ensure that:

- Registrations/entries are sent in accordance with specified procedures
- Registrations/entries have been received from DAO and Learner enrolment numbers are checked
- Only suitable staff are used in the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance processes, in accordance with specified vocational experience/qualification requirements
- Staff involved in training, assessment and internal quality assurance/qualification coordination have access, and regularly participate in, activities designed to promote continuous improvement
- Sufficient and effective support is available for confirming the decisions of assessors and Internal Quality Assurers not holding the appropriate assessor/Internal Quality Assurer qualifications as approved and specified by the Regulatory Authorities
- Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers/Qualification Coordinators are able to apply equal opportunity principles to assessment
- Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers/Qualification Coordinators are familiar with the qualifications they are assessing or quality assuring with a knowledge base sufficient to enable them to interpret the knowledge requirements, values and documentation
- Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers/Qualification Coordinators are familiar with the recording systems, documentation and procedures for assessment and internal quality assurance
- Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers/Qualification Coordinators are prepared for their role, supported and allowed sufficient time
- Any action plans agreed between the External Quality Assurer and the Centre are met within the appropriate timescale
- Proof of Learners' identities is obtained for those qualifications where this is required
- All those involved are notified of assessment dates well in advance
- Appropriate records, results or other evidence of achievement are released to other Approved Centres or Learners (as applicable) in cases where Learners transfer to other Approved Centres
- Certificates and certificates of unit credit received from DAO are securely stored prior to issue to Learners
- Certificates are properly issued, within a timely fashion, to Learners from the Centre
- All general correspondence between DAO and the Centre is disseminated promptly to all relevant people within the Centre

The DAO will:

- Will assign you with a DAO POC
- Will assist you with any queries that you have regarding quality
- DAO will assist you with organising SV/EQA visits
- DAO will assist you with any action plans

19. Records

Centres must keep Learner records up-to-date. Any portfolios produced by Learners are the property of the Learner. For quality assurance purposes the Centre must ensure that if portfolios are to be used as evidence, they are available for quality assurance purposes. Centres are required to keep the following records for a minimum of 3 years:

- Assessment plans, action plans and feedback reports
- Learner interview records
- Records of achievement/tracking documents
- IQA sampling plans, records and feedback reports

20. Direct Claims Status (DCS)

When a Centre has been fully operating a qualification for 2 years, they can apply for DCS status if:

- No sanctions and no unaddressed action plans exist
- Achieved 'low risk' status
- Had 2 successful, consecutive EQA visits

Every Centre awarded DCS will be asked to sign an agreement specifying the ongoing conditions they will meet. They will also provide specimen signatures for all Internal Quality Assurers who will sign DCS certification claims.

The following list of conditions attached to DCS must be agreed by a member of the senior management team at the Centre:

The Centre must keep records relating to Learners for whom direct certification has been claimed for at least 3 years from the date of the claim. The records will include:

- Learner names
- Registration numbers
- Full details of assessment and internal verification and claims for certification

Random checks will be carried out by DAO on any portfolios of evidence and assessment records of Learners for whom claims have been certificated. These may include assessment records and portfolios of Learners who have finished qualifications.

Where direct claims include requests for credit transfer or exemption, the assessor and IQA must confirm that original certificates have been verified as authentic and valid.

All Learners including any who leave the Centre following certification must be asked to retain their evidence, portfolios and assessment records in good condition for one year as they may be required for audit.

Approval is granted on the basis of information supplied by the Centre to DAO and its EQAs.

DCS may be withdrawn at any time if, in the opinion of DAO, any of the above information given is no longer current, the conditions of this approval are not met or the quality of assessment and verification at the Centre is compromised.

Only qualifications approved for DCS that have signed agreements will be eligible for direct certification claims. Attempts by the Centre to claim certificates for other qualifications will be regarded as grounds for the withdrawal of Direct Claims Status from all qualifications.

Any additional premises belonging to the Centre where qualifications will be delivered under the same Centre name, Centre number and Centre Coordinator, must be listed on the agreement.

Claims made under the DCS agreement will relate only to Learners assessed at the Centre.

Certification claims will be signed only by the Internal Quality Assurers whose name(s) have been registered with DAO.

The qualifications covered by DCS approval will require a minimum of one full-day EQA visit within each 12 month period.

21. Enquiries and Appeals

The enquiries and appeals procedure has 3 stages:

- 1 – Enquiry
- 2 – Appeal
- 3 – Independent Review

Centres or Learners can make enquiries about assessment results or decision made by DAO by following the enquiries procedure. The procedure does not include general enquiries about fees, products and services. Enquiries of this nature should be sent to enquiries.dao@da.mod.uk.

For more information on appeals against decisions, see the Enquiries and Appeals Policy on the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dao-policies>.

22. Complaints

The procedure for enquiries and appeals handles enquiries about assessment decisions and appeals against decisions made DAO. There may be exceptional circumstances where a complaint is raised. The complaint may be against an Approved Centre or DAO. All complaints must be dealt with promptly and professionally. For further information please see the DAO Complaints policy.

23. Complaints to Centres

It is a condition of approval that Centres have a complaints procedure that staff can follow, to ensure that complaints are as objective as possible and dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The Centre complaints policy and procedure should:

- Identify the person who received the complaint
- State how the complaint was made (telephone, e-mail etc.)
- Have clear timescales for investigation, response and resolution
- Incorporate an impartial panel to resolve issues

24. Complaints to DAO

DAO staff and its representatives are expected to work in a professional manner and all procedures are developed taking into account the needs of Centres, Learners and Ofqual. If circumstances arise where a formal complaint is made to DAO, it should be made in writing and sent to the DAO Responsible Officer (Awarding Organisation Manager) at DAO, stating the:

- Nature of the complaint
- Date(s) the reason for the complaint arose
- Desired outcome

If the complaint is from a Learner and regarding the Approved Centre, it is expected that the Learner will have exhausted the Centre's own complaints procedure.

25. Malpractice and Maladministration

Malpractice and/or maladministration compromise the integrity of qualification development, the assessment process and the validity of certificates. This includes; misconduct, failure to follow the regulations and procedures set out by Ofqual and/or DAO and incorrect recording of information.

DAO takes any issues relating to malpractice seriously and any suspected or actual malpractice must be reported immediately.

It is a condition of Centre Approval that Centres have a malpractice and maladministration policy. Centres must take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice or maladministration, eg identifying where potential malpractice/maladministration may take place and taking preventative action, building security measures and robust quality assurance into working practices. For more information on malpractice and maladministration, see the DAO Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures on: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-awarding-organisation>.

For further guidance on preventing, investigating or dealing with malpractice or maladministration, contact the Awarding Organisation Manager at DAO.

26. Withdrawal of Services

In the event that DAO or an Approved Centre wishes to withdraw its services, then they will take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners.

Should DAO decide to:

- Withdraw a qualification, or
- Cease to offer its services

DAO will inform the Centre of its intentions giving a minimum of 3 months' notice. At the end of this period DAO will stop taking registrations and allow sufficient time for Learners to complete the qualifications. The time allowed for Learners to complete the qualifications will be no longer than 3 years.

Should the Centre decide to:

- Withdraw a qualification, or
- Cease to offer its services

The Centre will inform DAO of its intentions giving a minimum of 3 months' notice. The Centre will stop taking registrations and allow sufficient time for Learners to complete the qualifications. The time allowed for Learners to complete the qualifications will be no longer than 3 years.

27. Advice

DAO works with its Centres to deliver a customer-focused and professional service. For help or advice to resolve any issues, please contact us by e-mail enquiries.dao@da.mod.uk or telephone (01793) 314187.

ANNEX A

DAO Contact Details

In the event that you need to contact DAO, please contact the Business Co-ordinator in the first instance.

DAO Address:

**Defence Awarding Organisation
Defence Academy Headquarters
Room TF08 Trenchard
Shrivenham
Swindon
SN6 8LA**

Email address:

enquiries.dao@da.mod.uk

Telephone numbers:

Position	Number
DAO Team Leader	01793 314612
Development Manager	01793 314177
Development Manager	01793 314186
Business Co-ordinator	01793 314187

ANNEX B

Centre Approval Report

Centre Approval Report

Centre Details

Centre Name	
Address	
Contact Name	
Email	
Position	
Telephone Number	
Date of Visit	

About the Centre

Standard Verifier (SV) / External Quality Assurer (EQA) to provide brief details about the type of centre, governance / partnership arrangements, proposed qualifications, current qualifications and any other relevant information

Centre Approval Criteria

Management Systems			
1	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
1.1	<p>Are the Centre's aims and policies in relation to qualifications supported by senior management/chain of command, and, understood by the assessment team, including policies for dealing with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> malpractice maladministration enquiries appeals/complaints 		
1.2	<p>Are the Centre's access and fair assessment policies and practices understood by Assessors?</p>		
1.3	<p>Are the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and quality assurance teams across all assessment sites clearly defined, allocated and understood?</p>		
1.4	<p>Is there effective communication within the assessment team and with the Defence Awarding Organisation (DAO)?</p>		

1.5	How will the DAO be notified of any changes which may affect the Centre's ability to meet the approved Centre criteria?		
1.6	Is learner and trainer feedback (InVal) process established to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of qualification provision?		

Comments

Resources

2	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
2.1	Will assessors and Internal Quality Assurers have sufficient time, resources and authority to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively?		
2.2	Are there sufficient competent and qualified Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers to meet the demand for assessment and Quality Assurance activity?		
2.3	Is a staff development programme established for the assessment and quality assurance team in line with identified needs?		
2.4	Are resource needs effectively identified in relation to the specific qualification, and resources are made available?		

2.5

Does equipment and accommodation used for the purposes of assessment comply with the requirements of relevant Health and Safety legislation?

Comments

Large empty rectangular area for providing comments.

Learner Support

3	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
3.1	Will information, advice and guidance about qualification procedures and practices be provided to Learners and potential Learners?		
3.2	Will learners' development needs be matched against the requirements of the qualification units and an agreed individual assessment plan established?		
3.3	Do learners have regular opportunities to review their progress and goals and to revise their assessment plan accordingly?		
3.4	Is there an established appeals procedure which is documented and made available to all Learners?		

Comments

Assessment and Quality Assurance

4	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
4.1	Are arrangements established to allow DAO, or qualifications regulators, to access to premises, records, information, Learners and staff for the purpose of external quality assurance or other monitoring activities?		
4.2	Are Internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures and activities clearly documented?		
4.3	Are occupationally qualified and competent staff in place to conduct assessment?		
4.4	Will Internal Quality Assurance be conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced staff?		
4.5	Is the effectiveness of the IQA strategy is reviewed against DAO policy and corrective measures are implemented?		
4.6	Unless a Learner chooses not to have a unique Learner number (ULN), are arrangements in place to obtain the ULN and a Learner record on behalf of the Learner?		

4.7	Where Learner consent is given, will the Centre use access to the record of the Learner's previous achievements in their Learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximized (RPL)?		
4.8	Does the Centre have a process to identify, monitor and manage any conflicts of interest in assessment outcomes?		
4.9	Is learner and trainer feedback (InVal) process established to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of qualification provision?		

Comments

Records

5	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
5.1	Will learner records and details of achievements accurate be kept up to date and securely stored in line with DAO requirements; and, will they be available for external quality assurance and auditing?		
5.2	Are records of IQA activity maintained in line with DAO requirements and made available for the purposes of auditing?		
5.3	Are the Centres achievements evaluated and reviewed and used to inform future Centre programme developmental activity?		
5.4	Does information and recording systems enable Learners' achievements to be monitored and reviewed in relation to the Centre's equal opportunities policy?		
5.5	Does the Centre have the staff, resources and system necessary to support the assessment of units and the qualification?		
5.6	Does the Centre have the staff, resources and systems necessary to support the accumulation and transfer of credits, the recording of exemptions and recognition of prior learning, if applicable?		

<p>5.7</p>	<p>Is learner personal data collected and held in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – are such records held with the explicit consent of the Learner?</p>		
<p>5.8</p>	<p>Does the Centre have in place a process to confirm the identity of Learners?</p>		

Comments

Basis of this Report

Standard Verifier (SV) / External Quality Assurer (EQA) to provide brief details about the type of centre, governance / partnership arrangements, proposed qualifications, current qualifications and any other relevant information

Staff Interviewed During Approval Visit

Name	Job title

Comments

Other comments relating to the Centre's ability to meet the Approval Criteria	
Strengths	
Areas for Future Development	
Timescales for implementing the actions above	

Risk Rating

Use the criteria on the following pages to determine a risk rating for the Centre and recommend the monitoring actions to be taken:

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Resources	<p>All Centre staff are appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>All IQAs are appropriately qualified and At least 75% of the assessment team are appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>All IQAs are not yet appropriately qualified</p> <p>or</p> <p>Less than 75% of the assessment team are not yet appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Overall Risk Rating of the Centre: (high/medium/low)	
Centre Monitoring: (please state your recommendation for future Centre monitoring including the timescales)	

Declaration

I confirm that I have carried out a robust, thorough and accurate audit of the Centre and my recommendation is that the Centre meets the Defence Awarding Organisation Centre Approval Criteria.	
Signed:	
EQA/SV Name:	
Date:	

ANNEX C

Centre Approval EQA Report for Initial Compliance with Approval Criteria

External Quality Assurance (EQA) Report

**For Initial Compliance with
Approval Criteria**

Centre Details

Centre Name	
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Centre Contacts			
Position	Name	Telephone	Email
Centre Head			
Centre VPN Holder(s)			
Centre POC			

Standard Verifer (SV) / EQA Name	
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Course/Unit/Qualifications Sampled		
Qualification Title	Underpinning MoD Course Title	Estimated uptake of learners per year (Jan-Dec)

Visit Date	
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Initial Compliance Approval Criteria

Management Systems			
1	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
1.1	<p>Are the Centre's aims and policies in relation to qualifications supported by senior management/chain of command; and, understood by the assessment team, including policies for dealing with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • malpractice • maladministration • enquiries • appeals/complaints 		
1.2	<p>Are the Centre's fair assessment policies and practices understood and complied with by Learners and Assessors?</p>		
1.3	<p>Are the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and quality assurance teams across all assessment sites clearly defined, allocated and understood?</p>		
1.4	<p>Is Learner, trainers feedback (INVAL) used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of qualification provision?</p>		

Comments

Resources

2	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
2.1	Do Assessors/Trainers and Internal Quality Assurers have sufficient time, resources and authority to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively?		
2.2	Are there sufficient competent and qualified Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers to meet the demand for assessment and Quality Assurance activity?		
2.3	Is there a staff development programme (i.e. CPD) established for the assessment and quality assurance team in line with identified needs?		
2.4	Are resources needs effectively identified in respect to the specific qualification and resources made available?		

Comments

Resources

3	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
3.1	Are information, advice and guidance about qualification procedures and practices provided to Learners and potential Learners?		
3.2	Do Learners have regular opportunities to review and receive feedback on their progress?		
3.3	Is unit certification made available to Learners who do not complete all aspects of the course?		
3.4	Are particular assessment requirements of Learners identified and met where possible?		

3.5	Is there an established appeals procedure which is documented and made available to all Learners?		
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Comments

Assessment and Quality Assurance

4	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
4.1	<p>Are requests from DAO, or the qualifications regulators, complied with for access to the following for the purpose of external quality assurance or other monitoring activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • premises • records • information • learners • staff 		
4.2	<p>Is access to assessment encouraged through the use of a range of valid assessment methods?</p>		
4.3	<p>Are Internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures and activities clearly documented?</p>		
4.4	<p>Are Assessment decisions and practices regularly sampled to ensure consistency and fairness?</p>		
4.5	<p>Is Assessment conducted by qualified and occupationally competent staff?</p>		
4.6	<p>Is Internal Quality Assurance conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced staff?</p>		

4.7	Is the effectiveness of the IQA strategy reviewed against DAO policy and corrective measures are implemented?		
4.8	Where Learner consent is given, does the Centre use access to the record of the Learner's previous achievements in their Learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximized? (RPL)		
4.9	Does the Centre have a process to identify, monitor and manage any conflicts of interest in assessment outcomes?		
4.10	Does the Centre have arrangements in place to ensure the confidentiality of assessment materials (exam papers)?		

Comments

Assessment and Quality Assurance

5	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
5.1	Is Learner personal data collected and held in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)? Are such records held with the explicit consent of the Learner?		
5.2	Does the Centre have a process in place to confirm the identity of Learners?		

Comments

Staff Interviewed During Initial Approval EQA Visit

Name	Job title

Comments

Other comments relating to the Centre's ability to meet the initial Centre Approval Criteria	
Strengths	
Areas for Future Development	
Timescales for implementing the actions above	

Risk Rating

Use the criteria on the following pages to determine a risk rating for the Centre and recommend the monitoring actions to be taken:

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Compliance with Centre Approval Criteria	All improvement actions have been completed within the agreed timescales and there are no outstanding actions <input type="checkbox"/>	There are some outstanding improvement actions and the Centre is adhering to the agreed timescales <input type="checkbox"/>	There are some improvement actions and the Centre is not meeting the agreed timescales <input type="checkbox"/>
Centre Performance	The Centre is delivering qualifications to their forecasted uptake <input type="checkbox"/>	The centre has registered Learners according to their forecasts but Learner certification is behind forecast <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre's Learner registrations are not meeting their forecasts <input type="checkbox"/>
Qualification Delivery	The Centre has delivered full qualifications* which have been accredited for at least 12 months. <i>(* same or similar qualifications in the sector to which Defence Awarding Organisation have approved the Centre to deliver)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has delivered full qualifications* which have been accredited for at least 6 months. <i>(* same or similar qualifications in the sector to which Defence Awarding Organisation have approved the Centre to deliver)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has not yet delivered any full qualifications* that have been accredited. <i>(* same or similar qualifications in the sector to which Defence Awarding Organisation have approved the Centre to deliver)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>

Resources	All Centre staff are appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering	<input type="checkbox"/>
	All IQAs are appropriately qualified and At least 75% of the assessment team are appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering	<input type="checkbox"/>
	All IQAs are not yet appropriately qualified or Less than 75% of the assessment team are not yet appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall Risk Rating of the Centre: (*high/medium/low*)

Centre Monitoring: (*please state your recommendation for future Centre monitoring including the timescales*)

Declaration

I confirm that I have carried out a robust, thorough and accurate audit of the Centre and my recommendation is that the Centre meets the Defence Awarding Organisation Centre Approval Criteria.	
Signed:	
EQA/SV Name:	
Date:	

ANNEX D

Centre Approval EQA Report for Annual Compliance with Approval Criteria

External Quality Assurance (EQA) Report

**For Annual Compliance with
Approval Criteria**

Centre Details

Centre Name	
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Centre Contacts			
Position	Name	Telephone	Email
Centre Head			
Centre VPN Holder(s)			
Centre POC			

Standard Verifer (SV) / EQA Name	
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Course/Unit/Qualifications Sampled		
Qualification Title	Underpinning MoD Course Title	Estimated uptake of learners per year (Jan-Dec)

Visit Date	
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Annual Compliance Approval Criteria

Management Systems			
1	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
1.1	<p>Are the Centre’s aims and policies in relation to qualifications supported by senior management/chain of command, and, understood by the assessment team, including policies for dealing with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policies for dealing with malpractice • maladministration • enquiries • appeals/complaints 		
1.2	<p>Are the Centre’s fair assessment policies and practices understood and complied with by Learners and Assessors?</p>		
1.3	<p>Are the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and quality assurance teams across all assessment sites clearly defined, allocated and understood?</p>		
1.4	<p>Is there effective communication within the assessment team and DAO?</p>		

<p>1.5</p>	<p>The DAO is notified of any changes which may affect the Centre's ability to meet the approved Centre criteria?</p>		
<p>1.6</p>	<p>Is Learner, trainers feedback (INVAL) used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of qualification provision?</p>		

Comments

Resources

2	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
2.1	Do Assessors/Trainers and Internal Quality Assurers have sufficient time, resources and authority to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively?		
2.2	Are there sufficient competent and qualified Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers to meet the demand for assessment and Quality Assurance activity?		
2.3	Is there a staff development programme (i.e. CPD) established for the assessment and quality assurance team in line with identified needs?		
2.4	Are resources needs effectively identified in respect to the specific qualification and resources made available?		

2.5

Do equipment and accommodation used for the purposes of assessment comply with the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety Legislation?

Comments

Learner Support

3	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
3.1	Is information, advice and guidance about qualification procedures and practices provided to Learners and potential Learners?		
3.2	Are learners' development needs matched against the requirements of the qualification units and an agreed individual assessment plan established?		
3.3	Do Learners have regular opportunities to review and receive feedback on their progress?		
3.4	Is unit certification made available to Learners who do not complete all aspects of the course?		

3.5	Are particular assessment requirements of Learners identified and met where possible?		
3.6	Is there an established appeals procedure which is documented and made available to all Learners?		

Comments

Assessment and Quality Assurance

4	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
4.1	Are queries about the Qualification or Award Specification, assessment guidance or related DAO materials, resolved and recorded?		
4.2	Are requests from DAO or the qualifications regulators complied with for access to the following for the purpose of external quality assurance or other monitoring activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • premises • records • information • learners • staff 		
4.3	Is access to assessment encouraged through the use of a range of valid assessment methods?		
4.4	Are Internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures and activities clearly documented?		
4.5	Are assessment decisions and practices regularly sampled to ensure consistency and fairness?		
4.6	Is assessment conducted by qualified and occupationally competent staff?		
4.7	Is IQA conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced staff?		

4.8	Is the effectiveness of the IQA strategy reviewed against DAO policy and corrective measures are implemented?		
4.9	Unless a Learner chooses not to have a Unique Learner Number (ULN), are arrangements in place to obtain the ULN and a Learner record on behalf of the Learner?		
4.10	Where Learner consent is given, does the Centre use access to the record of the Learner's previous achievements in their Learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximized? (RPL)		
4.11	Does the Centre have a process to identify, monitor and manage any conflicts of interest in assessment outcomes?		
4.12	Are actions identified by external quality assurance (EQA) visits disseminated to appropriate staff and corrective measures are implemented?		
4.13	Does the Centre have arrangements in place to ensure the confidentiality of assessment materials (exam papers)?		

Comments

Records

5	Criteria	Yes/No	Details of Evidence Seen
5.1	Is information supplied to the DAO for the purposes of registration and certification complete and accurate?		
5.2	Are Learners records and details of achievements accurate, kept up to date and securely stored in line with DAO requirements and available for EQA and auditing?		
5.3	Are records of IQA activity maintained in line with DAO requirements, and, made available for the purposes of auditing?		
5.4	Are the Centre's achievements evaluated and reviewed and used to inform future Centre programme developmental activity?		
5.5	Do information and recording systems enable Learners' achievements to be monitored and reviewed in relation to the Centre's equal opportunities policy?		
5.6	Does the Centre have the staff, resources and systems necessary to support the assessment of units and the award?		

5.7	Does the Centre have the staff, resources and systems necessary to support the accumulation and transfer of credits, the recording of exemptions, and recognition of prior learning (RPL), if applicable?		
5.8	Is Learner personal data collected and held in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)? Are such records held with the explicit consent of the Learner?		
5.9	Does the Centre have a process in place to confirm the identity of Learners?		

Comments

Staff Interviewed During Initial Approval EQA Visit

Name	Job title

Comments

Other comments relating to the Centre's ability to meet the ongoing compliance with the Centre Approval Criteria	
Strengths	
Areas for Future Development	

<p>Timescales for implementing the actions above</p>	
<p>Any sanctions to be applied: (please state the sanction level and your rationale for recommending the sanction)</p>	

Risk Rating

Use the criteria on the following pages to determine a risk rating for the Centre and recommend the monitoring actions to be taken:

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Experience	The Centre has been operating for a minimum of 12 months <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has been operating for a period of between 6 to 12 months <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has been operating for less than 6 months <input type="checkbox"/>
Compliance with Centre Approval Criteria	all improvement actions have been completed within the agreed timescales and there are no outstanding actions <input type="checkbox"/>	there are some outstanding improvement actions and the Centre is adhering to the agreed timescales <input type="checkbox"/>	there are some improvement actions and the Centre is not meeting the agreed timescales <input type="checkbox"/>
Centre Performance	The Centre is delivering qualifications to their forecasted uptake <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has registered Learners according to their forecasts but Learner certification is behind forecast <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre's Learner registrations are not meeting their forecasts <input type="checkbox"/>
Qualification Delivery <i>(*same or similar qualifications in the sector to which DAO have approved the Centre to deliver)</i>	The Centre has delivered *full qualifications which have been accredited for at least 12 months <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has delivered *full qualifications which have been accredited for at least 6 months <input type="checkbox"/>	The Centre has not yet delivered any *full qualifications that have been accredited <input type="checkbox"/>

Resources	All Centre staff are appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering	<input type="checkbox"/>	All IQAs are appropriately qualified and at least 75% of the assessment team are appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering	<input type="checkbox"/>	All IQAs are not yet appropriately qualified or Less than 75% of the assessment team are not yet appropriately qualified for the qualifications they are delivering	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Overall Risk Rating of the Centre: (high/medium/low)

Centre Monitoring: (please state your recommendation for future Centre monitoring including the timescales)

Declaration

I confirm that I have carried out a robust, thorough and accurate audit of the Centre and my recommendation is that the Centre meets the Defence Awarding Organisation Centre Approval Criteria.	
Signed:	
EQA/SV Name:	
Date:	

ANNEX E

External Quality Assurance Visit Agenda

Centre Name:	
Centre Number:	
Date of visit:	
Time:	
Venue:	
External Quality Assurer (EQA) Name:	
EQA email:	

Meeting with Centre Co ordinator and/or Head of Centre Review of the items indicated below:	Lead
Progress of actions from previous visit	
Assessor and IQA records, including original or authenticated certificates, CVs and CPD records <i>There may be occasions when your EQA asks to observe assessment meetings or visit other assessment locations. If any of your candidates are using e-portfolios please arrange for your External Quality Assurer (EQA)/ Standard Verifier (SV) to be provided with log-in details. With your consent, remote sampling of e-portfolios can take place prior to the visit.</i>	
Records of Health and Safety checks carried out at assessment location(s)	
Induction materials used with candidates	
Written Internal QA policies and procedures	
Other written policies and procedures used within the Centre	
Records of standardisation meetings	
Records of other IQA activities including portfolio sampling plans and activities, observation of assessment meetings and learner interviews	

Portfolio Sampling (as rows as necessary)

Please have available:

- all portfolios claimed by Centre since the last EQA visit
- all portfolios that you are submitting for certification
- all the work in progress portfolios indicated below (where numbers are high, sampling requests will be indicated on your candidate list).

Qualification Title	Candidates Name

Meetings with Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) (as rows as necessary)

Please arrange for the following IQAs to be available, at times to suit them for a maximum of 30 minutes.

IQA Name	IQA Name	IQA Name

Meetings with Internal Assessors (IAs) (as rows as necessary)

Please arrange for the following IAs to be available, at times to suit them for a maximum of 30 minutes.

IA Name	IA Name	IA Name

Meetings with Candidates (as rows as necessary)

Please arrange for the following candidates to be available either within the Centre or on the telephone, for a maximum of 10 minutes.

Candidate Name	Candidate Name	Candidate Name

Feedback and action planning

Meeting with the Centre Coordinator and/or Head of Centre plus other members of the team, as appropriate. Feedback will be provided on areas of best practice identified during the visit. Any action points and/or recommendations will be discussed. In the event that sanctions are to be applied these will be explained and it will be made clear what needs to be done to have these lifted.

