



nife **NVQ**

NCFE NVQs
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

www.ncfe.org.uk

Issue 1

Where Service Matters

nife

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INTRODUCTION



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we are so pleased to be
able to offer you these
qualifications



INTRODUCTION

We want to make sure you have all the support and guidance you need to use our NVQs successfully. We're committed to providing exceptional customer service and value for money. We use the latest technology, with a personal service, to make your life easier.

This manual takes you through the key things that you need to know about administering, assessing and verifying our NVQs, from gaining centre approval to claiming certificates.





EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

NCFE is passionate about providing exceptional customer service. Every single NCFE employee is focused on not just meeting, but exceeding your expectations. We believe our approach to customer service makes us easy to do business with, flexible and responsive.

Once you become an NCFE-approved centre we'll send you the contact details of your dedicated Centre Support Assistant, who will deal with all your centre's queries. On approval, your Centre Support Assistant will contact your centre to discuss your needs and provide support. You'll also be allocated a Business Development Manager and a Business Development Officer, who can talk to you about your centre's curriculum needs.

NCFE offers a range of support materials, training and resources such as:

- our website (www.ncfe.org.uk), where you can download all our NVQ guidance and materials
- the NCFE Portal – our secure online candidate registration and entry system, which allows you to deal with candidate administration quickly and effectively
- free annual events for whoever deals with candidate administration within your centre
- a bespoke training service for centres: one of our standard training days delivered on site, or a qualification-specific training event put together to meet your precise needs.

For more information about our training events see our website (www.ncfe.org.uk/nvq)

OUR GUARANTEES

We'll guarantee to give you:

- a helpful, friendly and knowledgeable External Verifier
- a dedicated centre contact
- an informative website
- accessible materials in whatever format you need
- non-online systems if you cannot access our website
- fast turn-around times for certificates and letters of unit credit.

We'll:

- be easy to get in touch with during office hours
- get back to you within one working day of receiving any telephone message, email or letter
- keep you up to date with changes and developments, and with new products and services that might be of interest to you
- keep you informed about any delays or problems with processing your registrations, claims, queries or complaints.

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We rely on your feedback to let us know whether we're providing the right kind of products and service. We carry out a number of surveys and focus groups throughout the year, but you don't have to wait until then to tell us what you think. If you want to give us your thoughts, you can email feedback@ncfe.org.uk, or just pick up the phone and dial 0191 239 8035!



APPROVAL

Applying to be an approved centre is the first step in delivering NCFE NVQs. We've tried to keep the process as simple as possible, but we might need to take a look at your quality systems to make sure your candidates are being assessed and are well supported .

To gain approval you'll need:

- appropriately qualified and experienced staff to assess, internally verify and administer each NVQ you want to offer
- effective administrative systems and processes
- policies and procedures designed to ensure quality, and to allow fair and equal access to assessment and achievement for all your candidates
- access to the right equipment, facilities and resources.

If you're applying for the first time to offer NCFE NVQs:

Complete the *Application Form to Become an Approved Centre* and return it to us.

If you're already approved to offer NVQs by another awarding body we'll probably not carry out an approval visit; otherwise we'll need to spend (up to) a day with you to confirm that you've have everything in place that you need to successfully offer our NVQs.

If you're already an NCFE Approved Centre for NCFE NVQs and would like to offer additional NVQ products:

Simple! Just complete a *Notification by an NCFE Approved Centre to Offer Additional Product(s)* Form and send it to your Centre Support Assistant.

REGISTRATION

Gather your candidates' details and register them with NCFE. This can be done online via the Portal. Register your candidates as soon as possible after enrolment to make sure you receive up-to-date qualification information and plenty of support from NCFE.

The NCFE Portal:

Register and keep track of your candidates' progress using the NCFE Portal, our online candidate administration interface.

You can use the Portal to:

- register candidates
- download forms, invoices and reports
- view your candidates' status 24 hours a day.

You may also register candidates by email. However the preferred method is via the portal.

Email registration should only be used when the portal is not available.

For more information contact your Centre Support Assistant or see our website (www.ncfe.org.uk/nvq).





To begin using the Portal you'll need to complete the NCFE Portal Registration Form located on the Portal section of our website (www.ncfe.org.uk/portal), where you'll also find some tutorials designed to help you understand the system's operation and a comprehensive Portal User's Guide.

Once you register your candidates you'll need the following paperwork:

- Certificate Claim Form (see the Certification section below)
- candidate status report
- registration invoice (see the Fees and Invoices section).

If you use the Portal to register your candidates, you can download all the paperwork instantly once you complete the registration process. You should download and print it straight away as we won't send out hard copies, although you can go back into the Portal and print them off later if you forget.

If you use email registration we'll send the paperwork out by email or post.



ASSESSMENT

All NVQs are internally assessed. To complete their NVQ, each candidate must provide evidence that satisfies all the performance and knowledge competence requirements for each unit of their NVQ. The competence requirements define the standards that the candidate is expected to meet to achieve the NVQ.

Unless an individual qualification specification says otherwise, all evidence must be generated in the workplace.

The Assessor's role is to:

- manage the assessment process, from planning to the recording of assessment decisions
- confirm that all evidence meets the required standards
- only assess against the standards
- give candidates constructive feedback about their evidence and their performance
- record achievement using systems that have been agreed with Internal and External Verifiers.

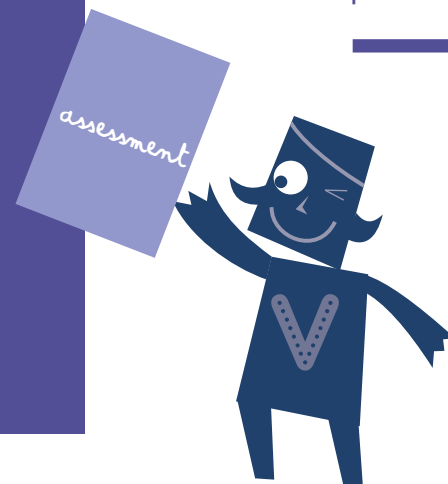
Assessors must:

- be appointed by the centre
- hold an Assessor's award (A1 or A2, or D32/D33) – or achieve A1/A2 within 18 months of commencing the role of NVQ Assessor
- be occupationally competent, and keep in touch with developments in their occupational area for the duration of their Assessor role.

It's normal for NVQs at Level 2 to be 'Assessor-led'. This means the Assessor may take a lead role in agreeing ways of obtaining evidence. Evidence-gathering strategies at Levels 3 and 4 should be increasingly 'candidate-led'.

Any assessment decisions made by a trainee Assessor must be countersigned by an appropriately qualified Assessor.

More information on Assessor occupational competence is available in each NVQ's Qualification Specification and from our website (www.ncfe.org.uk/nvq).





EXTERNAL VERIFICATION

Once you've registered your candidates for a particular qualification you'll be allocated an External Verifier. Your External Verifier will usually visit your centre twice a year for each qualification you offer. You can request more visits for a small fee (see our latest Fees and Pricing document for more details).

On the first verification visit your External Verifier will provide support and guidance to help you deliver the qualification effectively and will review your candidates' work to make sure you're on the right lines. On the second or final verification visit the External Verifier will actually sign off completed portfolios/candidates so you need to make sure you have all your candidates' work available. If you don't have completed portfolios available, your candidates' certificates could be delayed until the next visit, or you may have to request an additional visit.

After each visit you'll receive a report summarising the visit. The report will provide constructive feedback and details of any actions that you may need to complete.

Direct Claim Status ...

...allows you to claim certificates on demand, instead of requiring sign-off by your External Verifier. If you meet the following criteria for a particular qualification you'll be eligible for direct claim status for that qualification:

- your centre has been running the qualification for at least 12 months
- your centre has received 2 consecutive External Verifier visit reports, with all grades 1 or 2 and any action points completed.

Once we've told you that you've been awarded direct claim status you can claim certificates for your candidates as soon as they've successfully

completed the programme, without having to wait for your next verification visit. Once the internal verification has been carried out, your Internal Verifier can sign the Certificate Claim Form and you can return it to NCFE.

You'll still need at least one visit a year from your External Verifier, so you'll need to make sure a sample of candidate work is available. As long as you continue to meet the criteria, you'll continue to be awarded direct claim status.

Remember that direct claim status is awarded on an individual qualification basis so you might have Direct Claim Status for one qualification, but not another.

CERTIFICATION

Once the External Verifier has signed completed candidate portfolios you can claim their certificates.

To do this you'll need to complete the Certificate Claim Form. This needs to be signed by the Internal Verifier to confirm which candidates have achieved the full qualification. The Certificate Claim Form must also be signed by the External Verifier, unless you have direct claims status for that particular qualification.

You can claim a letter of unit credit for any candidates who have not completed the full NVQ but who would still like recognition for the parts they have successfully completed. You can indicate this on the Certificate Claim Form.

Once we receive your Certificate Claim Form we'll produce and send you the certificates and/or letters of unit credit within 10 working days. If we can't do this (for example, because the External Verifier signature is missing, or some of the information is incomplete) we'll let you know and tell you what needs to be done before the certificates can be produced.

Certificates and letters of unit credit will be accompanied by a unit summary in most cases. The unit summary will list the units achieved. With each batch of certificates you'll also receive:

- candidate status report on request (or packing list detailing candidate achievement)
- Certificate Claim Form for any remaining candidates in your batch who have not yet achieved the qualification
- invoice for the certification fee, if applicable (see our current Fees and Pricing document for details).



FEES

We aim to provide a transparent system of fees – there are no hidden charges and we keep administration costs as low as possible.

We publish our fees each February to help you plan and include accurate fees in your prospectus. You can download our latest Fees and Pricing document from www.ncfe.org.uk, or you can request it by emailing info@ncfe.org.uk or by calling our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000.

INVOICES

An invoice will be generated for any activity you undertake which has a fee attached to it (eg training events, candidate registration and certification, don't apply). The invoice will provide a description of what activity it relates to.

Invoices for candidate registration or for fast track entries for external assessment will be produced in one of 2 ways:

- automatically generated by the Portal if you register candidates in this way. You should download and print the invoice yourself when you register, as we won't send a printed copy out to you. If you forget, you can go back into the Portal and download historical invoices
- sent out as a hard copy by NCFE for activities not completed via the Portal, eg administrative fees. This will be sent to your exams office.

Invoices relating to candidate registration and certification activities will provide details of the NCFE batch number so that you can match the invoice to candidates.



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FEEES AND INVOICES

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ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION END DATES

Each NVQ has an accreditation date and a certification end date which are set by QCA to ensure that it remains current and valid. The accreditation date sets the last date we can register candidates on a qualification, and the certification end date is the last point at which we can issue certificates for candidates registered on a qualification.

We review qualifications that are near the end of their accreditation period. We work with sector representatives to make any changes necessary to meet sector needs. Then, in most cases, we apply to QCA for an extension to the accreditation period.

We'll post information relating to changes or extensions to qualifications on our website (www.ncfe.org.uk) and sent it to approved centres. Check that you are using the most up-to-date version of a Qualification Specification by comparing the date and version number with the publication information available on our website (www.ncfe.org.uk/nvq).

LEGISLATION

Owing to their nature, some NVQ Specifications may include references to particular legislation. This legislation is subject to change; however, the references in the *Qualification Specification* will be accurate at the time of printing. If there are any significant changes to the legislation or to working practices we'll update our *Qualification Specification* accordingly.

STATUS IN WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Currently, our NVQ Specifications and support materials are designed for centres in England. However, Specifications and materials can be made available to centres in Northern Ireland and Wales, and we can provide them in the Irish and/or Welsh language on request.

WHAT CAN I DO IF...?

... I've registered my candidates on the wrong qualification/session?

... I need a replacement certificate for my candidate?

... I need to change one of my candidate's names?

... I don't agree with my candidate's result?

... I've forgotten to print off my paperwork from the Portal?

The answer to these and other questions can be found on the NVQ FAQ section of our website (www.ncfe.org.uk/nvq).



ENQUIRIES

Any enquiries relating to this publication should be addressed to:

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St James' Boulevard

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 4JE

Tel: 0191 239 8000

Fax: 0191 239 8001

Email: info@ncfe.org.uk

Website: www.ncfe.org.uk

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

NCFE fully supports the principle of equal opportunities and opposes all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ability, age, colour, culture, disability, domestic circumstances, employment status, gender, marital status, nationality, political orientation, racial origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and social background.

NCFE aims to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated both in its own employment practices, and in access to its qualifications.

A copy of NCFE's Equal Opportunities Policy is available on request.

DATA PROTECTION

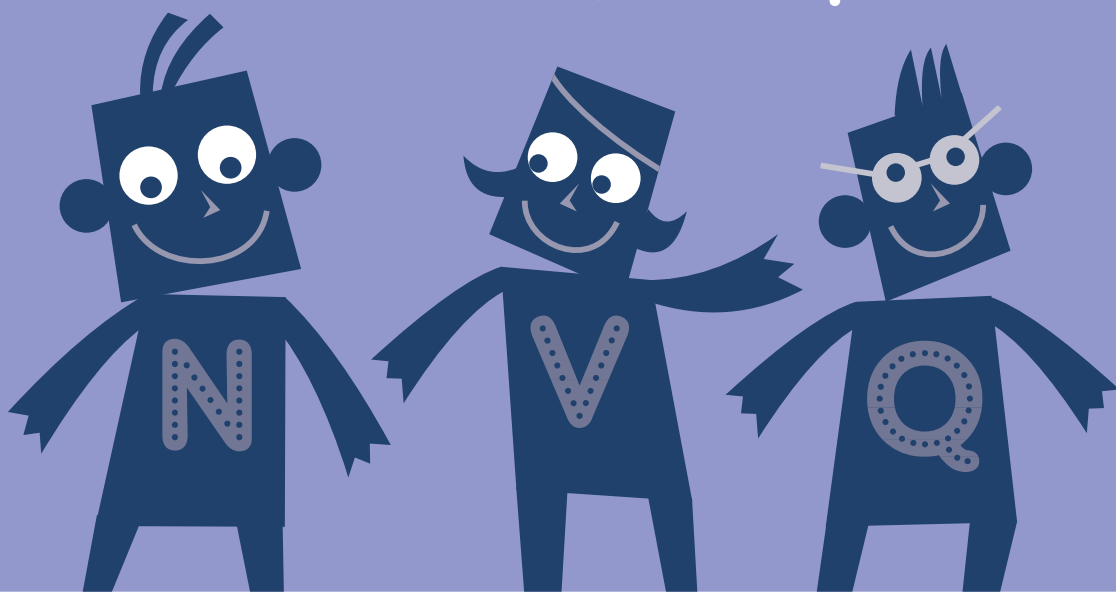
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if you have any
other questions,
please contact us





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