

# Open College Network West Midlands

## Centre Handbook

### 2019/2020

**“We recognise achievement and support learning transforming the lives of individuals and communities”.**

# Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Centre Recognition</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.1 Sanctions.....	7
2.2 Management of Partnership Working, Third Parties and Satellite Sites .....	7
<b>3. Course Approval and Registration</b> .....	<b>8</b>
3.1 Qualifications and Customised Provision.....	8
3.2 Approval to Deliver Qualifications.....	9
3.3 Centre Withdrawal from a Qualification .....	10
3.4 Annual Curriculum Review.....	10
<b>4. Assessment</b> .....	<b>10</b>
4.1 Assessment Guidance.....	10
4.2 Assessment Plan .....	12
4.3 External Assessment .....	12
4.4 Policies Related to Assessment .....	13
<b>5. Quality Assurance</b> .....	<b>14</b>
5.1 The Role of the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).....	15
5.2 Sampling Assessment for Quality Assurance.....	16
5.3 Standardisation Activity .....	17
5.4 External Quality Assurance.....	18
5.5 Direct Claims Status.....	20
5.6 Exemptions, Equivalences, Credit Transfer and RPL.....	20
<b>6. Registration and Awards</b> .....	<b>21</b>
6.1 Registering Learners.....	21
6.2 Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC).....	23
6.3 Issuing Certificates.....	24
<b>7. Learner Records</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>8. Fees and Charges</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>9. Complaints</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>10. Glossary of Acronyms and Terms</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>11. Appendices:</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Appendix 1: Designing a Course.....	28
Appendix 2: Principles of Assessment: Pre-Verification Checklist .....	29

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

Appendix 3: Standardisation Meeting Agenda exemplar.....	32
Appendix 4: Centre Recognition Process .....	33
Appendix 5: Qualification Approval Process .....	34

# Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

## 1. Introduction

This handbook has been developed in consultation with centre representatives to help staff in recognised centres to meet Awarding Organisation and regulatory requirements, in relation to the delivery of Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) qualifications and Customised Accreditation provision. It has been designed in line with our Vision and our Values:

**Vision:** “to be the best we can”

### Our Values:

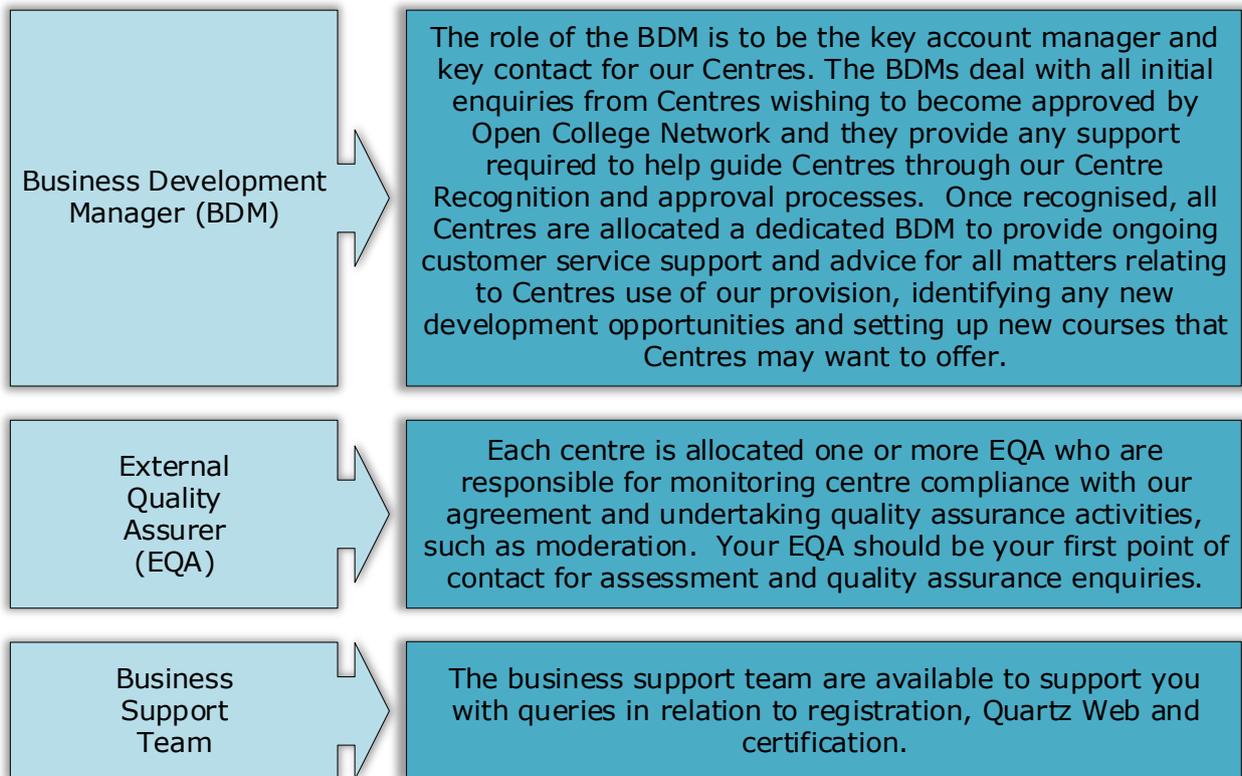
- ◆ **Integrity:** committed to ethical and sustainable business practices
- ◆ **Clarity:** a clear qualification offer supported by transparent processes
- ◆ **Collaboration:** working with customers and other stakeholders
- ◆ **Aspiration:** supporting individual to fulfil their potential requirements
- ◆ **Excellence:** committed to high quality
- ◆ **Innovation:** creating opportunities for learners, employers and communities
- ◆ **Inclusion:** celebrating diversity and respecting individuality

<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/about-us/mission-vision-and-values>

Throughout this handbook we will signpost centres to additional policies, procedures and documentation to further support centres in meeting their responsibilities as detailed in the *Centre Recognition Agreement*. Documentation is available to download from [www.opencollnet.org.uk](http://www.opencollnet.org.uk).

In addition, all recognised centres will receive additional guidance and support from their Business Development, Quality Assurance and Business Operations contacts. Our staff are committed to supporting centres to meet the needs of their learners in line with our [Customer Service Statement](#). Key contacts are listed [here](#).

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook



**If you have any additional enquiries, or comments please contact us:**

Tel no: 01902 624 230

E-mail: [wolverhampton@opencollnet.org.uk](mailto:wolverhampton@opencollnet.org.uk)

Website address: [www.opencollnet.org.uk](http://www.opencollnet.org.uk)

Aldersley House  
Overstrand  
Pendeford Business Park  
Wolverhampton  
WV9 5HA

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### 2. Centre Recognition

Centres are recognised in accordance with our Centre Recognition Policy. All centres must fully complete the application form and sign a **Centre Recognition Agreement** before they can be recognised. We reserve the right to amend this agreement in line with any regulatory and/or legal requirements. Centres will be notified of any changes and by continuing to use our products and services, you agree to abide by the latest version of the Centre Recognition Agreement. The flowchart in the appendix provides an overview of the Centre Recognition Process.

Our recognition process is based on risk, we consider the ability of the centre to:

- ◆ Provide the resources required to deliver approved qualifications (this includes physical resources, staffing and financial resources)
- ◆ Demonstrate the required expertise to manage the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications
- ◆ Demonstrate that they can meet our recognition and approval requirements on an ongoing basis.

The outcome of this risk rating will determine the type of quality intervention required before the centre is recognised.

This initial risk rating is reviewed as part of our ongoing quality assurance monitoring and in response to intelligence gathered in relation to our recognised centres. Ongoing risk analysis informs the scope and frequency of quality assurance interventions, centres are monitored on their ability to:

- ◆ Continue to meet our recognition and approval requirements
- ◆ Provide valid and reliable assessment, monitored by rigorous internal quality assurance systems.

Each centre will receive at least one quality assurance intervention each year. Additional visits or remote sampling activities may be requested by the centre or required by us. These are chargeable in accordance with our current fees and charges and can be arranged through our quality team or by contacting your EQA.

After each intervention the centre will receive a **Centre Monitoring Report**, which will include a risk assessment and identify any action points to be addressed. These will have been discussed with the centre during the visit and will be clearly identified in the report.

# Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

## 2.1 Sanctions

Where actions are identified or a centre fails to respond appropriately to actions within the agreed timescale the level of risk will increase, necessitating closer and more frequent support by the EQA. Depending on the severity, sanctions may be imposed in line with our documented sanctions policy.

### Related downloads from the Open College Network West Midlands website:

- ◆ [Centre Monitoring and Quality Assurance: a risk-based approach](#)
- ◆ [Centre Monitoring report](#)
- ◆ [Sanctions Policy](#)
- ◆ [Withdrawal of a Qualification from a Centre](#)
- ◆ [Qualification Approval Policy and Process](#)

Centres will continue to be recognised by us as long as:

- ◆ They continue to pay their recognition fee, and any other fees due.
- ◆ They continue to meet our requirements for ongoing recognition and qualification approval.
- ◆ No two-year period passes where learners are not registered.

Where centre recognition has lapsed, centres are required to follow our application process.

- ◆ [Centre Recognition Policy](#)
- ◆ [Centre Recognition Agreement](#)

## 2.2 Management of Partnership Working, Third Parties and Satellite Sites

In certain circumstances, we are willing to permit our recognised centres to work with other organisations to secure high-quality delivery, assessment and quality assurance. In order to ensure learners' interests are protected, and our requirements are met on an ongoing basis we will require centres to provide details in advance of the arrangements that are in place surrounding satellite sites and partnership working. Including:

- ◆ Signed agreements in place which detail the responsibilities of each partner for each element of the learner journey.
- ◆ The centre we recognise is responsible for the management of any organisations or self-employed individuals engaged on their behalf and must undertake suitable monitoring activities to ensure they remain

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

competent and have sufficient resources available to meet the needs of learners.

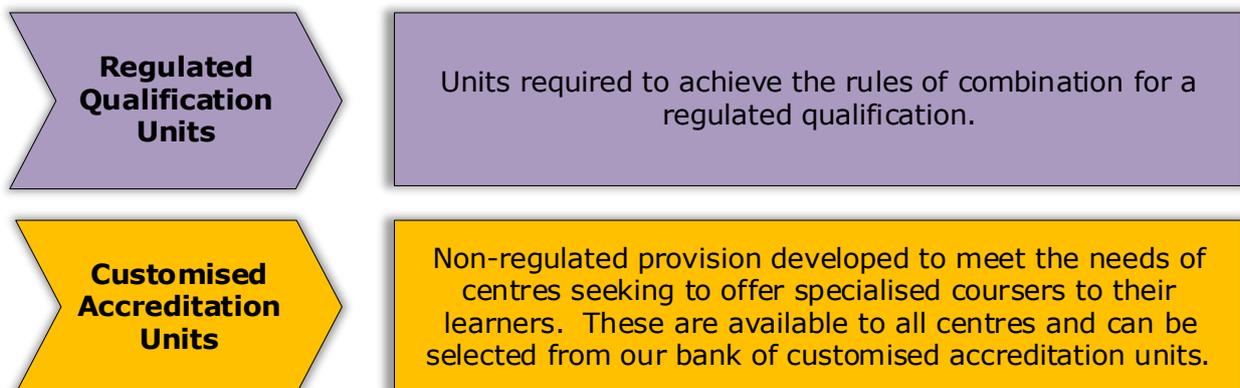
- ◆ Ensuring policies and procedures are implemented consistently and our requirements are met by each partner.
- ◆ Contingency planning, should one of the partners cease to trade or not fulfil their responsibilities.
- ◆ It is the responsibility of the centre we recognise to determine the suitability of any additional sites used. Additional sites must be communicated to us prior to the commencement of delivery.

Arrangements surrounding satellite sites and partnership working will be checked as part of our recognition procedure and monitored through ongoing quality assurance activity. Centres need to notify the Quality Team if there are any changes to site delivery.

### 3. Course Approval and Registration

#### 3.1 Qualifications and Customised Provision

**Courses may only be delivered by recognised centres and must be made up of either:**



**Regulated and customised units cannot be combined within the same course.**

Details of all the qualifications, courses and other products available to our centres can be found on our website. Your BDM will be able to provide advice to assist with selecting the right products to meet the needs of your centre and learners.

Many of our qualifications are eligible for funding. Please refer to our website and the Hub for further details.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### 3.2 Approval to Deliver Qualifications

**Centres must have both centre recognition and qualification approval before they advertise, recruit or register any learners onto a qualification or course. Please see the flow chart in the appendix for an overview of our qualification approval process.**

Centres need to demonstrate they can meet the requirements to deliver, assess and internally quality assure each qualification they wish to deliver. Details of requirements are specific to each qualification and are documented in the Qualification Guide. Risk analysis relating to the qualification and centre will be completed as part of the approval process and centres may be required to provide additional information, including qualification certificates or undergo an approval visit as part of the process.

As part of Centre Recognition each centre will be approved to deliver a range of qualifications, and/or customised units. Recognised centres may request approval to deliver additional qualifications at any time by submitting a Qualification Approval Form (QAF).

#### **Approval to deliver a course (ADC)**

The *Approval to Deliver a Course (ADC)* allows centres to select a smaller number of units from the regulated qualifications they are approved to deliver to create a course.

**When creating courses centres must ensure our requirements, detailed in the Qualification Guide and Centre Recognition Agreement are met. Consideration should be given to creating a coherent, progressive programme which meets the needs of learners, and the rules of combination for the qualification where required.**

Once courses have been set up, a **Course Confirmation Form** is then forwarded to the centre. Centres should check these forms for accuracy and retain them for future reference.

Units can be added to existing courses at any time through completion of the **Amendment to an Existing Course (AEC)** form.

#### **Choosing your course title**

Where a course is intended to lead to the award of a regulated qualification, the course name should reflect the qualification title. This ensures learners are able to choose the most appropriate qualification to meet their needs.

Where the course name reflects the qualification title, reference to both the level and size of the qualification must be avoided. For example, **'Induction**

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

*to College* is an acceptable course title; *'Level One Award in Induction to College'* is not. This is because the course title appears on the unit transcript detailing the specific units a learner has achieved on a course.

The full qualification title will appear on the qualification certificate, regardless of the name of the course leading to that qualification.

All titles used must accurately reflect the content of the course. **Any terms used in the title of courses consisting of customised units should avoid the use of terms which may imply the course leads to the award of a regulated qualification.**

### 3.3 Centre Withdrawal from a Qualification

At recognition, Centres must develop and maintain contingency planning which covers actions that will be taken to protect the interests of learners in the event that the centre no longer wishes or is able to deliver qualification/s or the centre has its approval to deliver qualification/s withdrawn by us. Centres wishing to withdraw from all or some of their provision must complete the **Qualification Withdrawal Form** available as a download from our website.

### 3.4 Annual Curriculum Review

Centres are encouraged to contact their BDM at any time for advice and support relating to their curriculum offer. BDMs also contact centres regularly with updates relating to new products and services, qualifications and curriculum matters.

As a minimum, every recognised centre is contacted on an annual basis by their BDM with a request to complete a formal Curriculum Review.

## 4. Assessment

**For further details relating to the principles of assessment, please see An Open College Network West Midlands Guide to Getting it Right.**

### 4.1 Assessment Guidance

As part of Qualification Approval, the expertise of the centre to deliver, assess and internally quality assure each qualification will be reviewed. Many of our qualifications are internally assessed and externally quality assured. Please check the arrangements for the qualifications you wish to deliver within each qualification guide (available from the ['Qualifications'](#) section of our website). Our expectations are documented in the **centre recognition agreement**.

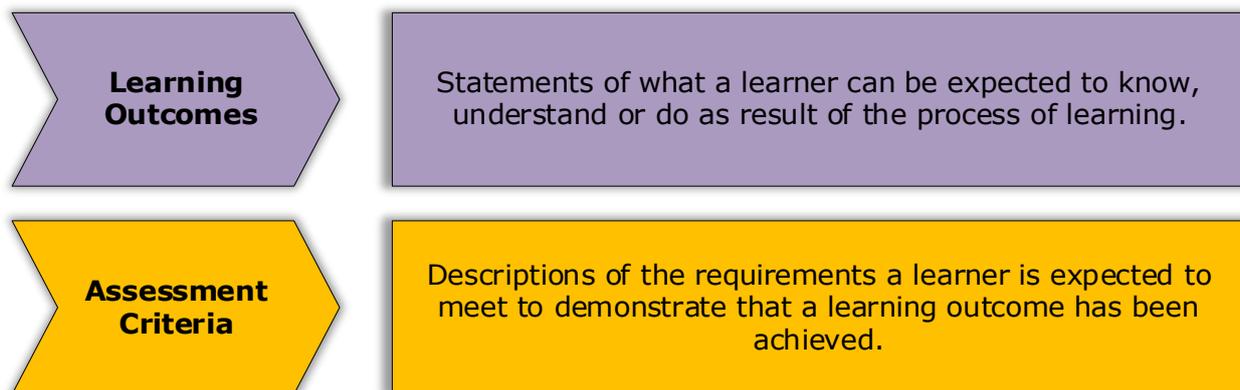
## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

Centres must consider the availability of resources for the number of learners the centre anticipates enrolling.

In order to be awarded a certificate each learner will need to have verifiable evidence of meeting the knowledge, skills and understanding requirements set out in the qualification guide.

The roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in the assessment and quality assurance processes must be clearly documented, understood and adhered to by all members of staff. It is essential that before planning assessment the relevant qualification guide is read by all those involved in the assessment process including: the tutors, assessors and internal quality assurers. If you require further information or clarification, please contact your EQA.

Each unit specification details:



For credit to be awarded for any unit, the learner must demonstrate that they have achieved **all** the required assessment criteria. The award of part of the credit value of a unit to reflect the achievement of a proportion of the learning outcomes is not permitted under the **RQF**. Partial credit cannot be awarded.

Centres must ensure that:

- ◆ Assessment tasks reflect the requirements set out within our qualification guides and documented assessment strategies (where applicable) taking into consideration any indicative content and assessment guidance contained within each unit specification.
- ◆ Meets the needs of learners, permitting reasonable adjustments to be applied where necessary to ensure assessment is fair.
- ◆ Allows for sufficient, authenticable evidence to be generated by the learner covering all assessment criteria.
- ◆ Assessment design minimises the likelihood of malpractice.
- ◆ Assessments are designed to be inclusive.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

- ◆ Assessment methods employed are safe, valid and fit for purpose.
- ◆ Assessments are designed to be at the right level.

### 4.2 Assessment Plan

**Before being registered for a qualification or course, initial assessment should take place to ensure that learners:**

- ◆ Meet any documented entry requirements (please see Qualification Guide).
- ◆ Are likely to be able to meet the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria following a course of study.
- ◆ Have the required support to enable them to achieve.

Evidence must be made available to your EQA of appropriate assessment and quality assurance planning which confirms assessment requirements. This can be recorded using a [unit tracking sheet](#). This should be submitted to the IQA for checking prior to use and retained for EQA monitoring.

Additional documentation:

- ◆ [Feedback to Learners – A Guide to Getting it Right](#)
- ◆ [Portfolio Construction – A Guide to Getting it Right](#)
- ◆ [Using E-portfolios – A Guide to Getting it Right](#)
- ◆ [Assessor Observation Record Sheet](#)
- ◆ [Open College Network West Midlands Witness Statement](#)

### 4.3 External Assessment

External assessment refers to assessments which are set and marked by the AO. Details of assessment windows for external assessments can be found on our website. Recognised centres wishing to deliver qualifications with external assessments must seek qualification approval prior to being able to register learners. Centres must ensure that relevant staff familiarise themselves and are provided with appropriate training in the requirements for administration and delivery of external assessment. Further details can be found in the External Assessment Policy.

Additional documentation:

- ◆ External Assessment Policy

### ***Continuing professional development (CPD)***

We require that all staff involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications and courses meet the requirements documented

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

in the qualification guide, where no requirements are detailed, it is the responsibility of the head of the centre to ensure staff appointed are suitable, competent, current and able to meet our requirements. All staff members should ensure that they maintain their competency through appropriate professional development opportunities related to the subject they are delivering alongside assessment and quality assurance. Recruitment and ongoing professional development will be monitored as part of our external quality assurance processes.

### 4.4 Policies Related to Assessment

A full list of policies and procedures required by recognised centres to support their learners is found on the centre recognition application form. Centres are expected to:

- ◆ Read and follow all of our policies and procedures.
- ◆ Refer to your EQA If you have concerns about assessment or the implementation of our policies within your centre.
- ◆ Have your own policies and procedures in place to meet our recognition requirements. These should align to our policies, signposting them to learners where appropriate.
- ◆ Provide evidence of centre policies and procedures and their implementation for quality assurance monitoring.
- ◆ Ensure their policies and procedures are current, reviewed in a timely manner and there is evidence of this process.
- ◆ Ensure staff and learners understand policies and procedures which are relevant to their role and there is evidence to support this.

### *Appeals*

Centres wishing to make an appeal should follow our **Appeals Policy**. Centres must also have documented procedures in place to assist learners wishing to make an appeal. Records of appeals and their outcomes must be retained for inspection by the EQA. Learners must have exhausted their Centre's appeals procedure before appealing directly to us.

### *Conflict of interest*

All centres must have a conflict of interest policy in place which provides details of the centre's approach to identifying, managing and monitoring conflicts of interest. Identified conflicts must be logged and evidence of appropriate management retained for review by the EQA.

**Centres must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment and/or quality assurance of a learner's work being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.**

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

**IQA must be independent of the assessment process and may not quality assure on any course on which they are also the assessor.**

### ***Malpractice and maladministration***

Centres must have in place policies and procedures to minimise the likelihood of malpractice and maladministration, and where instances do occur to notify us immediately and identify and investigate allegations thoroughly in accordance with our policy.

### ***Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy***

Centres must ensure that they have procedures in place for managing requests in line with our **Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy**. Where this is permitted, appropriate records must be kept of adjustments made at the centre, and requests submitted to us where required including evidence to support the adjustment.

Additional Documentation:

- ◆ [Enquiries and Appeals Policy](#)
- ◆ [Malpractice and Maladministration Policy](#)
- ◆ [Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy](#)

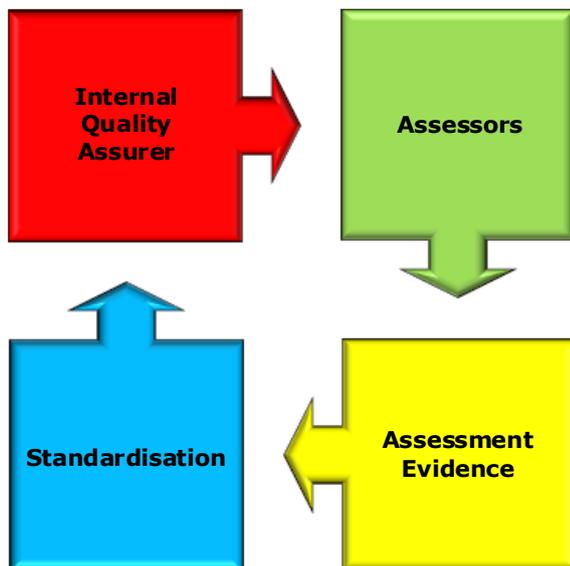
## **5. Quality Assurance**

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is a process by which a centre regularly samples and evaluates its assessment practices and decisions and acts on the findings, to ensure consistency and fairness. It involves:

- ◆ Moderation
- ◆ Verification
- ◆ Standardisation

which is carried out by one or more IQAs. There needs to be clear evidence of planning and completion of Internal Quality Assurance Processes available covering every site.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook



In order to meet Quality Assurance (QA) requirements recognised centres must have effective quality management systems in place to underpin the delivery of our qualifications. Our EQAs are on hand to support centres in applying quality assurance processes that are robust and fit for purpose.

Centres need to:

- ◆ Ensure they can meet the qualification guide requirements for each qualification and that staff are qualified and up to date with the required qualifications and experience.
- ◆ Implement effective, efficient and robust quality assurance activities and maintain documented evidence of these processes to ensure that assessment is fair for all learners, valid and can be relied upon.

Additional information on quality assurance activities, policies and procedures are available [here](#).

### 5.1 The Role of Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)

- ◆ Ensure that assessment methods are valid, reliable, safe and fair.
- ◆ Ensure that assessment decisions are made using the relevant criteria and guidance and in accordance with procedures and AO requirements.
- ◆ Ensure that assessments are carried out in line with AO and Centre procedures.
- ◆ Maintain and store appropriate quality assurance plans.
- ◆ Ensure standardisation of assessment decisions.
- ◆ Provide feedback to assessors to enhance the quality of assessment practice within the centre.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

- ◆ Ensure that assessors have relevant knowledge, skills, understanding and maintain professional development records.
- ◆ Work with the Centre's EQA to maintain and develop quality assurance systems.

The EQA will also be able to provide guidance and support to assist centres with development of assessment and assurance practices.

**Internal quality assurance must be carefully planned to ensure that it takes place following assessment and in advance of external quality assurance.**

To support IQAs we provide centres with exemplar IQA tracking and recording documents, which may be used within the quality assurance process.  
<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/centres/quality-assurance/internal-verification>.

We also offer introductory courses, refresher training and qualifications for IQAs  
<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/training>.

**Centres must inform our quality team of any changes to the IQA and provide evidence that this person has the appropriate qualification and experience to undertake the role of IQA.**

### 5.2 Sampling Assessment for Quality Assurance

The IQA must select the sample of assessed work for quality assurance. It is important that the sample is sufficient for the IQA to reliably judge the consistency and validity of the assessment. **The minimum sample size is 10% of portfolios or five portfolios, whichever is the greater.** An effective sample is also dependent on other factors such as assessor experience.

To ensure that a sample is representative of the cohort, the IQA must consider all variable factors that may impact on the quality of assessment. The experience of assessors and any identified actions from previous activities must be taken into consideration.

As a minimum, the IQA plan should ensure the monitoring of:

- ◆ All qualifications
- ◆ All units
- ◆ All assessors and assessment methods
- ◆ All sites

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

- ◆ Consideration of reasonable adjustments, referrals, complaints and appeals.

Additional Documentation:

- ◆ [Internal Quality Assurance – A Guide to Getting it Right](#)
- ◆ [Unit Tracking Sheet](#)
- ◆ [IQA1 – IQA for the Award of Credit](#)
- ◆ [IQA2 – IQA Sample Record](#)

### 5.3 Standardisation Activity

Recognised centres are required to contribute to our standardisation events (attendance and contributing materials) and to carry out appropriate internal standardisation.

#### ***Internal standardisation***

Internal standardisation involves ensuring that, where there is more than one assessor, IQA or assessment takes place at more than one site, the outcomes of assessment are consistent across the qualifications/courses and over time.

It is a requirement that internal standardisation meetings are planned and delivered routinely to include all assessors and IQAs and that following meetings action plans are produced, monitored and evaluated.

Evidence of internal standardisation activity and of how the centre identifies and disseminates good practice, including feedback from learners will be required by your EQA. This ensures:

- ◆ Consistency and a common understanding of credit value and level.
- ◆ Opportunities for staff to share good practice.
- ◆ Centres can monitor and improve their practice.

#### ***Managing an internal standardisation event***

The format and focus of standardisation events may vary, but the facilitator needs to draw out from participants the standards that they apply when monitoring assessed work. The samples provided at standardisation events are the means of exemplifying those standards for discussion.

Documents required for a standardisation event include:

- ◆ Agenda.
- ◆ Sample of work selected - photocopied to provide enough copies such that that all participants in the standardisation event can scrutinise all of the samples. These should be anonymous.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

- ◆ The appropriate qualification guide (RQF qualifications/units).
- ◆ Required forms for standardisation found on our website [here](#).

### **Samples for centre standardisation**

Samples must be taken from current learner evidence, and may include evidence from previous cohorts, ensuring standardisation over time. The sample should normally include evidence from each of the assessors for a course or curriculum area and cover all assessment methods.

The sample should include:

- ◆ Cover sheet.
- ◆ Unit title and code.
- ◆ Assessment tasks.
- ◆ Complete learner evidence including authentication statements.
- ◆ Assessment records, including feedback to the learner in relation to the achievement/non achievement of the assessment criteria.
- ◆ Internal quality assurance records, including feedback to the assessor.

The outcomes of the standardisation process should improve:

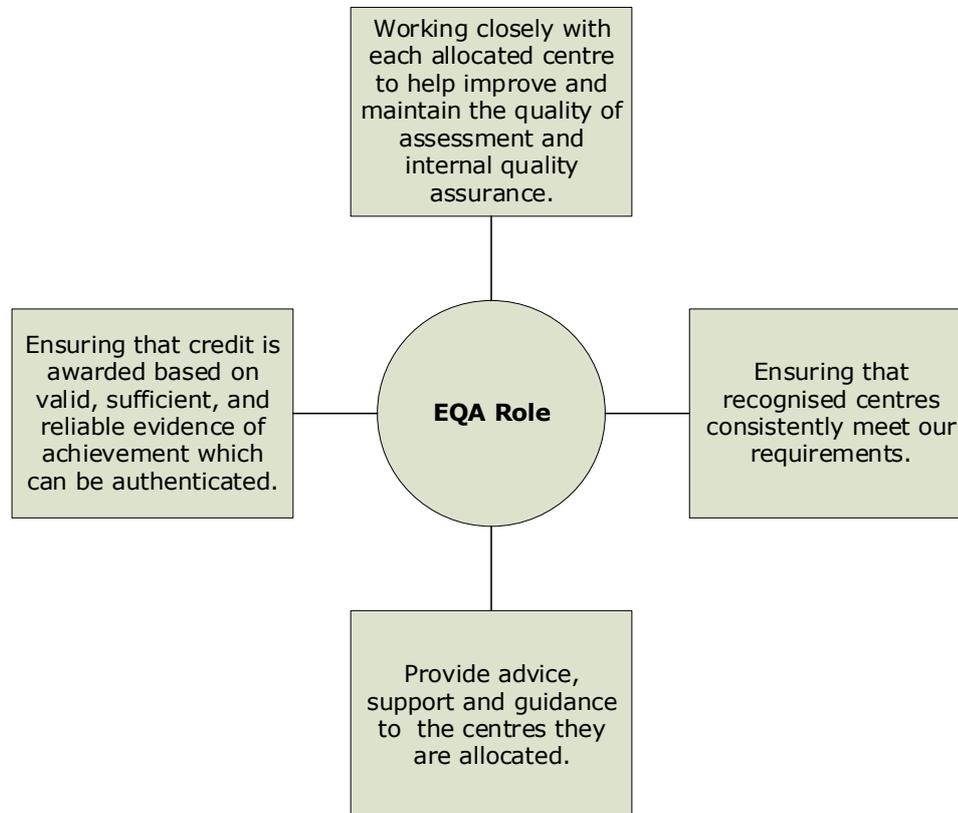
- ◆ Assessment practice within centres.
- ◆ Consistency in the judgements of assessors and quality assurers.
- ◆ The design of assessment tasks.
- ◆ Recognition and sharing of good practice.

### **5.4 External Quality Assurance**

Once assessment and internal quality assurance has taken place, unless the centre has direct claims (please see section 5.5) the centre should contact their EQA to arrange external quality assurance activity. This needs to take place once all internal quality assurance activity has taken place.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### The role of the EQA



Centres will be allocated one or more external quality assurers depending on the qualifications/courses that are approved at the centre. Contact details for quality assurers can be found on Quartz Web listed as **Specialist External Verifiers**.

Your EQA will also contact you to arrange monitoring activities, to follow up on actions which fall due between visits or to introduce themselves when they are first allocated to your centre.

The EQA will:

- ◆ Ensure that the centre is operating robust procedures which meet our requirements.
- ◆ Sample the assessment strategy and the assessment evidence provided by the learners.
- ◆ Confirm that all elements of the qualification assessment requirements have been met.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

- ◆ Check that robust internal quality assurance has taken place and ensure that any outcomes of this process are included in a quality improvement cycle.
- ◆ Support the development of the provision by making recommendations for improvement and highlighting good practice.
- ◆ Ensure that any recommendations for improvement are incorporated into the Action Plan that forms part of each Centre Monitoring Report.

The EQA is responsible for selecting an appropriate sample of learner work and will wherever possible notify the centre in advance of visit of the sample required. Please be aware that additional evidence may be required on the day of the activity.

### **Cancelled EQA visits**

EQA visits cancelled by the centre within less than 24 hours' notice may be charged. In addition, charges may be levied if the visit is unable to go ahead due to staff being absent or required evidence being unavailable. Visits repeatedly cancelled by the centre may also incur further sanctions, please see our sanctions policy for further information.

### **5.5 Direct Claims Status**

Recommendations for direct claims status will be made following an EQA visit in line with our direct claims policy. Centres are awarded direct claims for a period of up to one year to enable claims to be made between visits. This status is recommended based on the qualification and centre risk and will be reviewed by our quality team on an ongoing basis. Centres with direct claims will receive one or more monitoring activities from their EQA. Assessment evidence for claims must be retained between visits.

Additional Documentation:

<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/centres/quality-assurance/direct-claim-status>

### **5.6 Exemptions, Equivalences, Credit Transfer and RPL**

Centres should ensure, where appropriate and in line with AO and qualification requirements opportunities to claim exemptions, equivalencies, credit transfer and RPL are made available to learners. Evidence to support claims made must be retained for external quality assurance and made available to us upon request.

If a learner has achieved a unit that has been classed as an exemption or equivalent, or they have already achieved the unit through another Awarding Organisation (Credit Transfer) or will be achieving the unit through Recognition

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

of Prior Learning (RPL) you will need to complete the Claim Form for Prior Achievement. It is the responsibility of the centre to verify original certificates provided by the learner at this stage as evidence of achievement. Copies must be taken and signed as verified. The Claim Form for Prior Achievement, together with copies of the certificates, will need to be submitted to us via Quartz Web. A copy of the Claim Form must be passed to the IQA at the centre. The copies of the certificates need to be placed within the relevant learner's portfolio.

Additional Documentation:

- ◆ [Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement Policy](#)

## 6. Registration and Awards

### 6.1 Registering Learners

Learners can only be registered once the centre is recognised by us, approved to deliver the qualification and where appropriate has created courses.

It is the centre's responsibility to take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of each learner, ensuring that they can be clearly and uniquely identified. This is achieved through checking personal data, including date of birth, postcode, gender, unique learner number (ULN) and suitable photographic ID. Each centre must have a policy and procedure relating to the handling of personal data which meets current legislative requirements.

<mailto:wolverhampton@opencollnet.org.uk>

#### **UKPRN**

The UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) is a unique identifier used to share information with the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) and partner agencies such as the ESFA, HESA and UCAS. Providers have to register and apply for this number; further information can be found at <http://www.ukrlp.co.uk/ukrlp/ukrlp.first>.

#### **ULN**

The Unique Learner Number (ULN) is provided for every person in education and training aged 14 and over. The ULN is obtained through the Learner Register which is operated by the Learning Records Service (LRS), further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/learning-records-service>.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

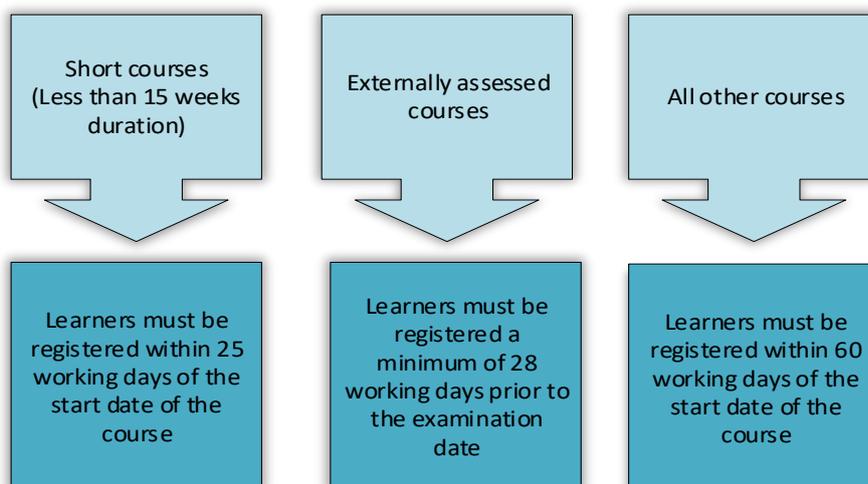
The ULN allows learners to build a lifelong record of their learning participation and achievement. It is the responsibility of each centre to obtain and validate a ULN for each learner.

### Privacy notice

Centres must inform learners that their achievement data will be uploaded to their Personal Learner Record. Centres may wish to refer to information from the Learning Records Service Privacy Notice. See [here](#) for further information.

### Learner registration

Learners must be registered with us in a timely manner to ensure that the necessary documentation is made available to you when required and that the award of credit for learners can be completed quickly and efficiently. Timescales for each type of assessment are detailed below.



Please be aware that:

**Learners cannot be assessed until they have been registered.**

A late registration fee may be charged for registrations received outside of these deadlines.

To register your learners please complete the **Learner Registration Form** with details of all the learners to be registered on each course and submit through Quartz Web using your unique username and password. If you do not yet have a log in or require further support, please download the **Quartz Web Access Request Form** and guidance from <https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/centres>, or alternatively, contact our business support team. Once correctly completed and submitted, your learner registrations will be uploaded to our database and processed within **1 working day**. The information from this form will be used to generate an

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

invoice in line with our current fees and charges. This will be sent to your finance contact.

Information requested relating to gender, ethnicity, employment status and learner support status is collected for monitoring purposes only. This information is treated as confidential and will not be available to anyone outside Open College Network West Midlands. Further information is available [here](#).

**When completing registrations please check that where RQF qualifications or units are included in the course that learners are registered prior to the qualification end date or unit expiry date and meet the minimum age requirements (see the relevant qualification guide for this information).**

**It is the centre's responsibility to make learners aware that their information will be passed to the Open College Network West Midlands for registration purposes.**

### **Amendments**

Please notify our business support team by email of any changes to learner details e.g. name change or units missing from a course. Please complete a new Registration to add any additional learners to a course.

### **6.2 Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC)**

Following satisfactory quality assurance (see section 5), you are able to submit a claim for certification. Claims should be submitted on a '**Recommendation for Award of Credit Form**', which contains details of the units and learners for each course run you have registered and will be provided by us. Further guidance surrounding the completion of this form can be found in the Registration and Awards [guidance document](#).

Before submitting the claim, centre personnel must:

- ◆ Download the RACs from Quartz Web.
- ◆ Ensure credit is being claimed against the correct unit(s) for each learner as per the centre's assessment and internal quality assurance records.
- ◆ Administrative checks have taken place to ensure accuracy of claims submitted.
- ◆ Ensure external quality assurance has been completed, and the EQA has agreed that certification can be claimed.
- ◆ Retain copies of the RACs for your records.

RACs should be uploaded as soon as possible following quality assurance and **must** be uploaded **within 12 weeks** of the end date of the Course.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### **Learner name**

Please check that all learners are listed on the RAC and names are spelt correctly. Any amendments to names should be emailed to the business support team immediately to ensure that the correctly spelt name appears on the certificate.

### **Recommending credit**

Credit must only be recommended when a learner has achieved all the learning outcomes for a unit. This is done by choosing 'Achieved' in the drop-down menu against each learner and the unit(s) they have achieved. If a learner has previously been awarded credit by Open College Network West Midlands for the unit(s) this will be shown as a date against the unit.

Where learners have achieved unit(s) with other Awarding Organisations which they wish to be included towards this achievement, the Claim Form for Prior Achievement needs to be completed and uploaded via Quartz Web. This should be done at the same time as the RAC is submitted.

### **6.3 Issuing Certificates**

In line with our certification policy, certificates for learners who have successfully completed unit(s) will normally be issued **within 3 working days of receipt of a verified RAC form**. The certificate will show the course title, the unit title, credit value and level of units achieved by the learner.

We endeavour to answer queries about results and/or certification accurately and promptly in accordance with our enquiries and appeals policy. All certificates will be securely dispatched to your centre for the attention of the specified contact who will be required to sign for them. Certificates should be checked before they are distributed to learners.



For any enquiries on re-issue or replacement certificates please download and complete the appropriate form from the Open College Network West Midlands website.

Certificates will be re-issued within **2 working days** of the receipt of an appropriately completed application forms, proof of identity, and the specified fee.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

Additional Documentation:

- ◆ [Quartz Web Access Request Form](#)
- ◆ [Policies and Procedures](#)
- ◆ [Centre Replacement Certificate Request Form](#)
- ◆ [Certification Policy](#)

### 7. Learner Records

Centres must securely retain the following documentation for inspection:

Documentation	Retention Period
<p><b>Registration and award records including:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name of learner, date of birth and contact address</li> <li>2. Title and accreditation number of each qualification and unit studied</li> <li>3. Qualification and/or units achieved</li> </ol>	<b>7 Years</b>
<p><b>Assessment and Internal quality assurance records including:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name(s) of assessor(s)</li> <li>2. Assessment records, including assessment decision and reason for decision</li> <li>3. Name(s) of IQA(s)</li> <li>4. Internal quality assurance reports</li> </ol>	<b>3 Years</b>

### 8. Fees and Charges

Open College Network West Midlands publishes its charges annually. A copy of the fees and charges leaflet is available from Open College Network West Midlands.

<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/centres/fees>

For further information on funding from a national perspective please refer to our funding page:

<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/qualifications/funding-2018-19>

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### 9. Complaints

If you have cause to complain about any aspect of the service we provide, which you are unable to resolve through discussion with our staff please refer to our Complaints Policy and process on the website.

- ◆ [Complaints Policy](#)

### 10. Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

#### Acronyms:

**AO:** Awarding Organisation

**BDM:** Business Development Manager

**BST:** Business Support Team

**EQA:** External Quality Assurer

**GLH:** Guided Learning Hours

**IQA:** Internal Quality Assurance

**RQF:** Regulated qualification framework.

**TQT:** Total Qualification Time

**QA:** Quality Assurance

#### Terms:

**Centre Recognition:** in order to deliver any of our qualifications a centre need to go through a centre recognition process and meet the terms of the centre agreement.

**Course:** This is not a regulated qualification but a curriculum framework for delivery of the content of a specific qualification. This will be made up of a unit/units from a qualification. There will be a planned scheme of work to ensure effective delivery and completion of a course.

**Credit:** every unit and qualification has a numerical credit value that must be achieved. The credit value indicated the amount of time an average learner will

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

need to achieve a unit or qualification. 1 credit represents 10 notional hours of learning. Credit is an indication of the size of the unit or qualification.

**Level:** this indicates the difficulty of a unit or qualification, the levels range from Entry 1 to Level 3 nationally. We offer qualifications up to Level 6 at present.

**Ofqual:** The Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation is a non ministerial government department that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. An awarding organisation has to meet the general conditions of recognition as set out by Ofqual.

**Qualification Approval:** to deliver any of our qualifications centres must complete the qualification approval process for every qualification they want to deliver.

**Unit:** every qualification has one or more units that needs to be achieved to complete a qualification. Each unit has set learning outcomes and assessment criteria that must be achieved.

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### 11. Appendices

#### Appendix 1: Designing a Course

Below is a list of the key factors you need to consider when designing a course:

Factor	Yes/No	Action if a no response	Action Achieved
Does the course title reflect the qualification? Remember the title will appear on the learners certificate.			
Have you accounted for the target group and their needs?			
How does the course design meet the learner needs now and for their progression?			
Have you set appropriate course entry requirements that meet the qualification guide requirements?			
Is the course set at the appropriate level for the learner group? An initial assessment will be needed?			
Does the course design meet the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Credit value</li> <li>◆ GLH</li> <li>◆ TQT</li> </ul> Ensure all delivery planning meets the specific requirements for each qualification.			

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

Does the course meet the Rules of Combination required for the qualification within the qualification guide.			
Are the learners clear about the likely progression routes?			
Have you accounted for subject specialist requirements in staffing and resources?			

This is an overview, other factors may need to be considered.

# Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

## Appendix 2: Principles of Assessment: Pre-Verification Checklist

<b>Centre</b>									
<b>IQA</b>				<b>Assessor</b>					
<b>Course/Qual/Unit</b>									
<b>Assessment ref/title</b>									
Assessment methods used (tick all that apply) [✓]									
Case Study		Essay or Written Statement		Report		Simulation		Project	
Artefact or Product		Presentation		Role Play		Written test/exam		Practical Demonstration	
Group Discussion		Performance or Exhibition		Reflective Log/Diary		Practice File		Other (please state)	
<b>Best practice</b>									Yes/No/Partial
Where <i>No</i> or <i>Partial</i> is indicated there must be a comment and remedial action.									
1	The unit details including assessment criteria are accurately transcribed from the original.								
2	There is a completed tracking sheet clearly showing the relationship between individual tasks and assessment criteria.								
3a	Where the assessment is for the whole of a unit, all criteria are sufficiently covered and weighted appropriately.								
3b	Where the assessment is for part of a unit, the other assessments are available.								
4	The tasks accurately address the criteria identified and are appropriate.								
5	It is clearly stated what the learner must produce (the evidence).								

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

6	The language used in the assessment is clear, unambiguous and appropriate for the content of the unit and the level.	
7	Tasks are varied, stimulating and likely to engage the learner.	
8	The assessment as a whole is presented in an appropriate format, conforming to agreed house style/branding and is visually stimulating.	
9	There is a clearly stated deadline for the assessment to be completed.	
10	The assessment conforms to equality and diversity requirements.	
11	As a whole the assessment is fit for purpose.	

Ref. No.	Action to be taken	By whom	By when	Date completed
<b>Examples of good practice</b>				

<b>Final sign off</b>		
<b>The assessment meets all the requirements and is ready for use.</b>	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Comments</b>		
<b>IQA Name:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>	

## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### Appendix 3: Standardisation Meeting Agenda exemplar

Centre name:

#### Internal Standardisation Meeting

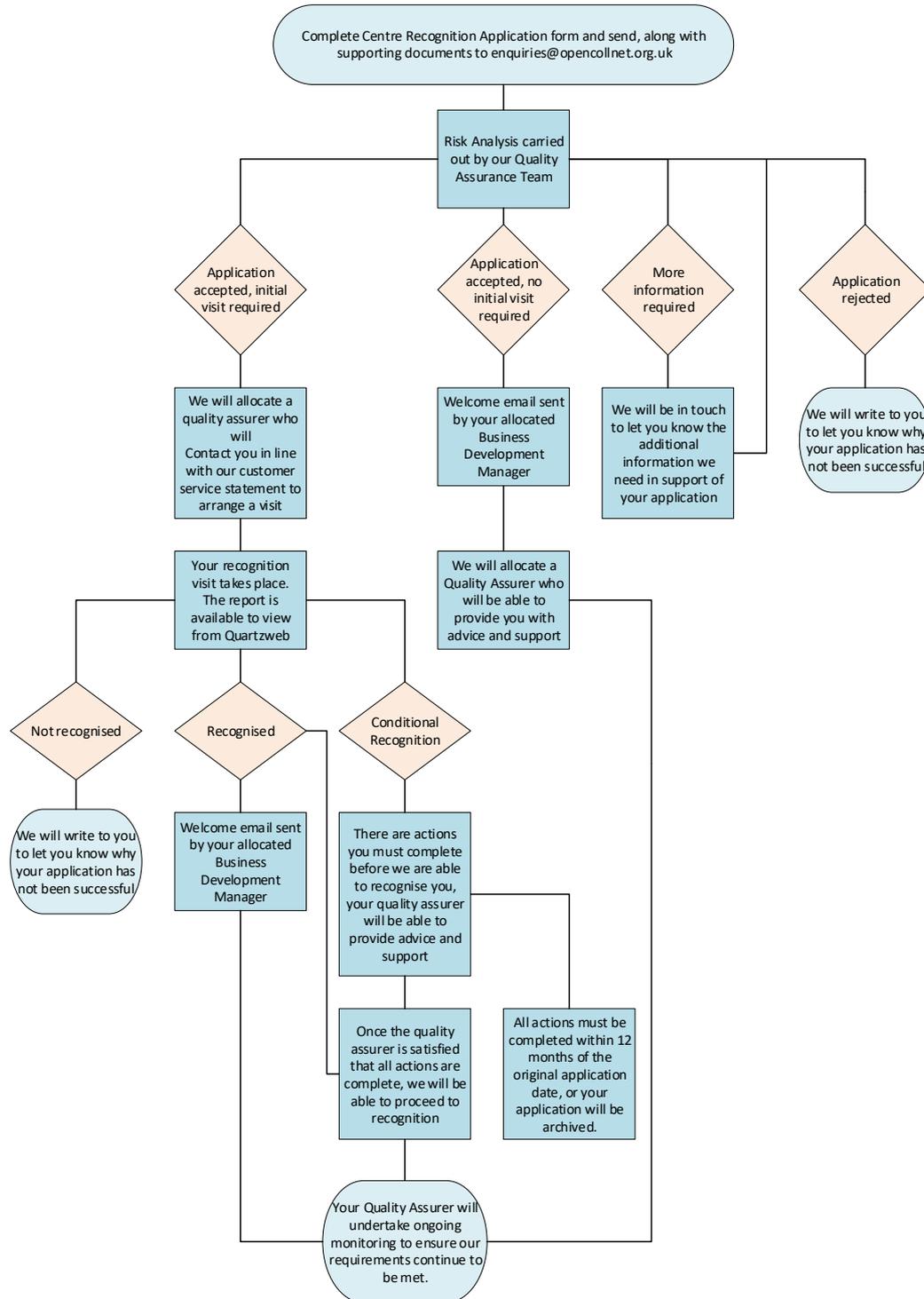
#### Date and Venue Agenda

- 1. Attendance and Apologies**
- 2. Chair: overview and expected outcomes/confidentiality statements**
- 3. Qualification/Units for standardisation confirmed via standardisation plan**
- 4. Standardisation Activity completed**
- 5. Standardisation documents completed and confirmed**
- 6. Verbal evaluation: key points of good practice and areas of improvement**
- 7. Summarise the main actions to be completed in the minutes so they are followed up. An action plan may be required.**
- 8. AOB**
- 9. Close**

**Documents needed: all Internal assessment and standardisation forms and learner evidence.**

# Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

## Appendix 4: Centre Recognition Process



## Open College Network West Midlands Centre Handbook

### Appendix 5: Qualification Approval Process

