



A guide to centre approval

Guidance on completing the centre approval process for ASDAN qualifications

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Contents

Introduction	3
• The approval visit	3
Overview of centre approval documents	4
Key points for centre approval documents	5
• Access to fair assessment	5
• Internal moderation policy and procedure	5
• Equal opportunities policy	6
• Appeals policy	6
• Malpractice policy	6
• Health and safety policy	7
Evidence of quality systems	8
• Organisation chart	8
• Staff recruitment, induction and development policy or statement	8
• Procedure for internal moderation	8
• Access to fair assessment	8
• Procedure for dealing with complaints	8
• Candidate enquiries and appeals	9
• Malpractice and maladministration	9
• Health and safety	9
• Equality and diversity	9
• Conflicts of interest	10
• Withdrawal policy	10
• Qualification review	10
• Data protection and privacy (fair processing) notice	10
• Satellites, partnerships and third parties	11
• Procedures for managing internal assessment and assessment plans	11
Checklist: before your approval visit	12
Checklist: after your approval visit	13
Space for notes	14

Useful links

The following links to the ASDAN website contain essential information for centres delivering ASDAN qualifications.

- ASDAN policies and regulations: www.asdan.org.uk/courses/policies-and-regulations
- Generic centre guidance: members.asdan.org.uk/generic-centre-guidance
- Centre contact information: members.asdan.org.uk/my-centre/contacts/centre-contacts
- Centre approval status and information: members.asdan.org.uk/my-centre/centre-approval



Introduction

Approved centres are responsible for delivering ASDAN's regulated qualifications to the standards specified.

The General Conditions of Recognition require an awarding organisation to ensure centres:

- have adequate systems and physical and human resources in place to support the delivery and assessment of its qualifications
- fully understand the requirements of its qualification specifications, and the processes and procedures which support its quality assurance activities
- ensure that the interests of candidates are protected at all times

ASDAN's centre approval process sets out to confirm a centre's ability to comply with these responsibilities.

When applying to offer qualifications for the first time, centres **must** complete the centre approval process in order to offer their chosen qualification(s). All centres will be required to have an approval visit. ASDAN will carry out an approval visit to ensure the centre has sufficient resources to deliver ASDAN qualifications. A charge will be made for the centre approval visit, see the ASDAN website for full details of pricing and fees.

Requirements

To be fully approved, qualifications centres must:

- provide centre and staff information and sign the centre agreement on the ASDAN website annually
- submit satellite and partnership information on the ASDAN website annually
- have their policies, procedures and documents approved during a centre approval visit
- attend training for their chosen ASDAN qualification(s)

The centre approval visit

An ASDAN representative will contact the centre to arrange a suitable date for the centre approval visit. The visit will be conducted by an external quality assurer (EQA) who is a suitably experienced and trained member of ASDAN's quality team.

During the visit, the EQA will check that the following are in place:

- centre approval documents (p.4), including the key points (p.5–7)
- evidence of quality systems (p.8–11)

Overview of centre approval documents

The list below outlines the documents that centres need to provide as part of the centre approval process, with a brief overview for each document.

Centre agreement

This forms a legally binding contract between ASDAN and the centre, and sets out the expectations and responsibilities of both parties. It confirms the centre's understanding and acceptance of ASDAN's terms and conditions, and must be reviewed, signed and dated annually. This document is completed online.

Satellite and partnership arrangements

Centres confirm details of any satellite, partnership, consortium, franchise or sub-contract arrangement linked to the qualifications approval being requested on an annual basis. This document is completed online.

Access to fair assessment

This must be a document that states how the centre ensures fair access to assessment for all candidates. Reference may need to be made to the appeals policy which candidates would need to refer to if they felt that fair access had not been available.

Internal moderation policy and procedure

This is a key document for ASDAN, as internal moderation is a core element of our moderation procedures. This document should detail the centre's approach to internal moderation, how often it is carried out and how it is documented.

Equal opportunities policy

This policy must be in keeping with the Equality Act 2010 and demonstrate how the centre ensures that it is meeting the requirements of that Act.

Appeals policy

This document should outline the centre's procedure for appeals for candidates who believe they have not been treated fairly in relation to assessment outcomes, or any other aspect of the centre's delivery of qualifications, including who to contact in this situation.

Malpractice policy

This policy must demonstrate that the centre takes any instance of malpractice very seriously, and that the centre has robust procedures for preventing it from happening – and for mitigating the effect if it does. It must show that the centre understands that both staff and candidate malpractice can occur.

Staffing information

The centre contacts listed in the members area of the website must be kept up-to-date; centre contact information must be renewed annually and each time there is a change. This document is completed online; there are tick boxes to confirm that the staffing information is up-to-date and that there are no conflicts of interest.

Health and safety policy

Any health and safety policy must show evidence of undertaking risk assessments of the learning environment and the resources to be used.

Data protection policy

This policy demonstrates how the centre is meeting its responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Key points for centre approval document

The following pages outline the key points that must be included in each policy document.

All policies submitted by centres **must** include:

- centre name in the title of the policy
- centre logo
- current policy date
- review arrangements

Access to fair assessment

This policy is about ensuring that all learners within a centre have the same opportunity to achieve a qualification, so that no learner is disadvantaged on the basis of any attribute or circumstance (eg language, disability).

The policy must include a statement of intent, detailing how the centre will:

- provide all learners with the opportunity to achieve their full potential by the most appropriate and direct route
- ensure the assessment policy is based on the concepts of equality, diversity, clarity, consistency and openness
- implement assessment processes in a way which is fair and non-discriminatory

The policy may also include:

- how the policy is made accessible to all staff, learners and relevant third parties
- what a learner can expect from the centre in terms of appropriate induction and information sharing, the fair assessment and marking of their work, and how to raise any issues related to assessment decisions
- links to related policies, such as access arrangements; reasonable adjustments and special consideration; and equality and diversity

Internal moderation policy and procedure

Internal moderation ensures that the decisions of all assessors are consistent and fair to all learners. This is particularly important for ASDAN qualifications, which are internally assessed and externally moderated. Internal moderation procedures include the sampling and checking of candidate work, the standardisation and recording of assessors' decisions, and the mechanism for the internal moderator to feed back to assessors in order to improve practice (this includes both internal and external moderation feedback).

The policy must include statements on:

- the purpose of the policy (eg to promote fairness and consistency and to meet awarding organisation requirements)
- the arrangements for planning and carrying out internal moderation
- keeping records of standardisation and internal moderation
- support and training of relevant staff

The policy may also include a description of the centre's internal moderation process and procedures.

Key points for centre approval document

Equal opportunities policy

This policy reflects the duty of all educational organisations to publish their equal opportunities and diversity policy, which adheres to the Equality Act 2010.

- The policy must show that a centre recognises that discrimination can occur, is opposed to it and has procedures in place to prevent both direct and indirect discrimination from occurring.
- The policy must describe the way in which the centre will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to learners, as well as all staff and any volunteers working in the centre.
- It should be clear how staff, learners and volunteers are made aware of the existence of this policy and where it can be accessed – and how complaints are dealt with.

Appeals policy

This policy is about candidates being able to complain or appeal against assessors' decisions .

The policy must include statements on:

- candidates being able to appeal about any of the outcomes received for the qualifications they are undertaking
- how candidates are made aware of the existence of the policy and how to make an appeal (eg at induction)

The policy may also include the procedure for making such an appeal.

Malpractice policy

This policy must demonstrate that the centre takes any instance of malpractice very seriously, has robust procedures for preventing it happening and for mitigating the effect if it does.

The policy must include:

- procedures for dealing with staff as well as student malpractice
- how staff and students are informed about the policy/procedures
- examples of what the centre views as malpractice, including specifically in non exam-based qualifications
- the centre's procedures for reporting and investigating instances of malpractice, including the immediate reporting of all suspected (alleged) and actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration to ASDAN
- the sanctions in place (eg disciplinary action/disqualification)

Key points for centre approval document

Health and safety policy

All organisations are required to have a health and safety policy which adheres to the 1974 Health and Safety Act. The Act places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer. Who this is varies with the type of organisation, but for schools this will be either the Local Authority or the Governing Body.

The policy must include:

- a general statement of policy (ie who the policy is intended for and what it covers)
- who is responsible for each aspect of the policy

Plus, as appropriate:

- how staff and students are made aware of safety rules and practices
- arrangements made to put in place, monitor and review measures necessary to reach satisfactory health and safety standards
- training of staff in health and safety, including competence in risk assessment
- off-site visits with students
- selecting and controlling contractors
- first aid and support of pupils' medical needs
- school security
- occupational health services and work-related stress
- consultation arrangements with employees
- workplace safety for teachers, pupils and visitors
- violence to staff
- manual handling
- slips and trips
- on-site vehicle movements
- management of asbestos
- control of hazardous substances
- maintenance and, when necessary, examination and testing of equipment such as electrical equipment, local exhaust ventilation, pressure systems, gas appliances, lifting equipment and glazing
- recording and reporting accidents to staff, pupils and visitors, including those reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)
- fire safety, including testing of alarms and evacuation procedures
- dealing with health and safety emergencies, procedures and contacts

Evidence of quality systems

It is expected that centres applying for centre approval will have evidence for the documents and procedures listed below.

Organisation chart

This should include a diagram showing management functions and duties, illustrating clear lines of accountability. The name of the person responsible for each function and the job title must be included.

Staff recruitment, induction and development policy or statement

Centres must confirm they will ensure that they have sufficient staff with the appropriate training, qualifications and experience to deliver ASDAN qualifications, and that staff will be supported to maintain their experience and skills.

Centres must show how they will ensure that staff keep up-to-date with ASDAN's centre requirements.

Procedure for internal moderation

Internal moderation is the quality assurance process whereby samples of candidate work are moderated to confirm the assessment decisions made are consistent across all assessors and meet the required standards. Completion of this process must ensure that the requirements of ASDAN's qualifications are followed.

All centres are required to have a procedure indicating how internal moderation is carried out. Centres must be aware of and have read ASDAN's guidance on making effective use of internal moderation in the generic centre guidance: members.asdan.org.uk/generic-centre-guidance

ASDAN does not allow internal moderators to internally moderate their own assessments. This process must be independent of any original assessment decisions made.

Small centres with limited human resources could share this role with another small organisation. If they do, they should try to arrange a timetable of when they will undertake this, what documents they will use and how big the sample should be. ASDAN recommends a minimum of 5 candidates or 10% of cohorts of 50+.

Internal moderators must be fully aware of ASDAN's external moderation procedures, mandatory documentation and the requirements to keep internal moderation records.

Access to fair assessment

Centres must have on record a statement to say that they will provide an initial assessment of their candidates to ensure that any disability or learning difficulty will not unfairly disadvantage them during the assessment process. Centres must be aware that it is their responsibility to provide certain adjustments for their candidates during the delivery and internal assessment of qualifications.

Centres should be aware of ASDAN's policy on access arrangements and special consideration, and will need to follow ASDAN's procedures for making any such requests.

Procedure for dealing with complaints

Centres must show how they would handle complaints from candidates and staff and include:

- how candidates and staff are made aware of the complaints procedure
- appropriate timescales for dealing with them
- method by which a complaint should be made
- to whom an initial complaint should be made
- next steps if the complaint is not resolved (ie to whom is the complaint then referred)
- if still unresolved name an independent party who could make an independent judgement about the complaint; in certain circumstances this may be ASDAN

Evidence of quality systems

Candidate enquiries and appeals

All centres must have an enquiries and appeals procedure available to candidates.

For internal assessment decisions the centre's procedure must:

- identify the person with whom the candidate should lodge an initial enquiry or appeal; this would usually be the candidate's tutor or assessor
- state the method by which an appeal should be made
- if unresolved, state what the next steps should be: this should include submission to the person responsible for internal quality assurance
- if still unresolved, state what the next steps should be. This may include submission to the Head of Department/Quality, or to other persons who are independent of the internal assessment decision making process
- if the candidate is still unhappy with the outcome, include procedures for referral to ASDAN; see ASDAN enquiries and appeals procedure
- stipulate clear timelines for dealing with each step and retention of evidence

For external moderation decisions the centre's procedure must:

- stipulate clear timelines to candidates for making an appeal which takes into account the timescales published by ASDAN
- state the method by which the appeal should be made

Centres must ensure that candidates are aware of when and how they can enquire or appeal against assessment decisions made by centre assessors or ASDAN's external moderators. Centres should refer to ASDAN's policy on enquiries and appeals before submitting to ASDAN.

Malpractice and maladministration

Any actions ASDAN defines under malpractice will be any acts of dishonesty or any practice which compromises or threatens to compromise the validity of the assessment process and which brings the reputation of ASDAN and the award of its qualifications into disrepute. See ASDAN's policy on malpractice and maladministration for some examples of malpractice: members.asdan.org.uk/generic-centre-guidance

Any actions ASDAN defines under maladministration will be any failure to adhere to ASDAN policies and procedures in relation to assessment or to comply with ASDAN's quality assurance requirements.

Centres are required to have robust procedures in place for preventing and investigating incidents of malpractice or maladministration. Centres must promptly notify ASDAN of any incidents in line with our policy and procedures for malpractice and maladministration.

Health and safety

Centre policies should cover both staff and candidates and state who in the organisation is responsible for health and safety.

Centres must indicate that they will ensure all premises (including hired sites) have appropriate health and safety provision for the delivery and assessment of qualifications.

Equality and diversity

Centres must show that they are clearly committed to supporting equality and diversity for candidates by ensuring open access to qualifications and assessments irrespective of age, gender, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, employment status, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

Centres must ensure that their policy meets the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

Evidence of quality systems

Conflicts of interest

It is recognised that there may be a risk that some centres with a business interest in the outcome of assessments may have a conflict of interest when determining the achievement of learners. To mitigate this risk ASDAN requires centres to have in place, and to apply, sufficient and robust quality assurance procedures to safeguard the integrity of ASDAN qualifications. This will include how a centre manages conflicts of interest and how the assessment process is protected from any potential adverse effect.

Definition

A conflict of interest in this context can be defined as a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a tutor, assessor, and internal moderator because of a person's self-interest, professional interest or public interest.

ASDAN is required under its Conditions of Recognition to be aware of any potential conflicts of interest that may impact on the outcomes of internal assessment and ultimately the award of a qualification.

A centre policy or staff contract should make it clear to staff what may constitute a conflict of interest, and when, to whom and where this should be declared and recorded.

The following are examples of potential conflicts of interest:

- A member of staff works for a centre and a family member takes a qualification at the same centre
- A member of staff at the centre is completing a qualification delivered and assessed by the centre
- Tutor, assessor or internal moderator working with more than one centre or private training provider
- Tutor, assessor or internal moderator partaking in the appointment, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom they have family connections with
- A member of centre staff involved in the delivery or outcome of an ASDAN qualification having a family connection with an ASDAN registered learner or learner's family

This list is by no means exhaustive and centres must develop their own policies and procedures.

Withdrawal policy

Centres must be able to describe the procedures in place to protect the interests of candidates following any withdrawal from delivering a qualification, either as planned by the centre or imposed as a sanction by ASDAN.

Qualification review

Centres must indicate that systems and processes are in place to review and evaluate qualifications and their effectiveness.

A review should include feedback from staff and candidates. This may be recorded in staff and student surveys or minutes of meetings. ASDAN's qualification review procedures also include the request for feedback from centre staff and candidates.

Data protection and privacy (fair processing) notice

Data protection is a legal requirement to handle personal data properly and securely.

Centres must show how they comply with the requirements of GDPR legislation and any other current and appropriate data protection laws in relation to all learner data and ensure all candidates are aware of ASDAN's privacy notice: www.asdan.org.uk/courses/policies-and-regulations

The data collected and personal candidate information will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person or body.

Evidence of quality systems

Privacy notice (fair processing notice)

These notices are the means by which candidates are informed about what will happen to the data collected about them, and furthermore, how that data will be processed and shared. Centres will need to inform candidates about what happens to the data they collect. If centres require further information about candidate data sent to ASDAN (eg how it is processed and to whom it may be passed on) should refer to ASDAN's privacy notice; all candidates must be made aware of ASDAN's privacy notice: www.asdan.org.uk/courses/policies-and-regulations

Satellites, partnerships and third parties

A satellite centre is a site associated with a registered ASDAN centre, and is required to meet the same centre approval criteria.

Satellites are normally approved to offer the qualifications agreed by the approved centre and are required to operate the same quality assurance processes and procedures.

A satellite centre is not always an assessment site, although it will have an office and staff.

Where delivery or assessment of qualifications is shared with a partner organisation via a third party agreement, centres must declare this and provide details of responsibilities and the quality assurance arrangements in place.

Procedures for managing internal assessment and assessment plans

Internal assessors must have the appropriate qualifications, training or expertise to assess competence-based qualifications.

Centres must be able to explain their procedures for managing the assessment process, including how assessment plans are written, evaluated and agreed.

Assessment plans

Where a centre plans to start delivering a qualification, sample assessment plans for the qualifications the centre is planning to deliver will need to be approved. Guidance on developing assessment plans, templates and examples are available via the members area of the ASDAN website: members.asdan.org.uk

Checklist: before your approval visit

Have the following policies available for approval:		✓
• access to fair assessment policy		
• internal moderation policy and procedure		
• equal opportunities policy		
• appeals policy		
• malpractice and maladministration policy		
• health and safety policy		
• GDPR policy		
Make sure every policy includes:		✓
• your centre name		
• your logo		
• the current policy date		
• when the policy is due for renewal		
Have the following documents available:		✓
• organisational chart		
• staff recruitment and induction policy		
• conflicts of interest process and procedure		
• candidate support information		
• withdrawal policy		
• qualification review process, including quality systems		
• satellite centres and partnership agreements		
• completed assessment plans (templates for each unit are available from the members area)		

Checklist: after your approval visit

What next:		✓
• attend ASDAN training for the qualifications you are delivering		
• attend termly support meetings with your ASDAN regional representative		
Annual requirements:		✓
• pay your annual centre registration fee		
• review and re-sign the centre agreement		
• confirm any satellite and partnership arrangements		
• check and confirm staff details are up-to-date and add any new staff – update job roles and the conflict of interest declaration		



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