

Centre Approval: Guidance for Centres

INTRODUCTION

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

The General Conditions of Recognition¹ 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;

To this end ASDAN's Centre Approval processes set out to confirm a centre's ability to comply with these responsibilities.

The on-line Centre Registration form is completed when centres apply to run ASDAN's qualifications for the first time.

On completion of the Centre Registration form, centres intending to run qualifications complete the Centre Approval process by reading, agreeing and signing the **Centre Agreement**, to ensure that they meet regulatory requirements. This is an on-line process.

As part of the Centre Approval process, all centres will be required to take part in an Approval visit. ASDAN will carry out an Approval visit to ensure the centre has sufficient resources to deliver ASDAN qualifications.

To be fully approved, new centres must have:

- Provided all centre and staff information requested
- Signed the Centre Agreement and had their policies, procedures and documents approved
- Met all the requirements provided in a Centre Approval Visit Report
- Attended training for the relevant qualification/s

CENTRE APPROVAL DOCUMENTS

The documents centres need to provide for the Centre Approval visit are:

1. The 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 process is completed on line.

2. 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.

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3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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. It must show that the centre understands that both staff and candidate malpractice can occur.

8. Staffing Information

The Centre Contacts listed on the members area of the website must be kept up to date. The Staffing Update must be renewed annually and each time there is a change. There are tick boxes that confirm that the information is up to date and that there are no conflicts of interest.

9. 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.

10. Data protection policy

This policy demonstrates how the centre is meeting its responsibilities under the GDPR.

THE APPROVAL VISIT

An ASDAN representative will contact the centre to arrange a suitable date for the 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.

The EQA will ask the centre to confirm that they have read this guidance and which units they are planning to deliver.

EVIDENCE OF QUALITY SYSTEMS / DOCUMENTS

It is expected that centres applying for qualification approval will have all the documents and procedures listed in 1-16 below.

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1 Organisation Chart

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

2 Staff Recruitment / Induction / Development Policy / Statement

- Centres must confirm they will ensure that they have sufficient staff with the appropriate teaching and qualifications / experience to deliver ASDAN qualifications, and that staff will be supported to maintain the currency of their experience and skills.
- Centres must show how they will ensure that staff keep up to date with ASDAN's centre requirements.

3 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.
- 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 over 50).
- Internal moderators must be fully aware of ASDAN's external moderation procedures, mandatory documentation and the requirements to keep internal moderation records.

4 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.

5 Procedure for dealing with Complaints

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

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- 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 i.e. 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.

6 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 and/or ASDAN's external moderators. Centres should refer to ASDAN's policy on Enquiries and Appeals before submitting to ASDAN.

7 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 and units into disrepute. (See ASDAN's Policy on Malpractice and Maladministration for some examples of malpractice.)
- 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.

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8 Health and Safety

- Centre policies should cover both staff and candidates and state who in the organisation is responsible for health and safety. ASDAN's **Guidance on writing a health and safety policy** indicates what a centre should have in place.
- 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.

9 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.

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

- *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/IM working with more than one centre or private training provider;*
- *Tutor/assessor/IM partaking in the appointment, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom they have family connections with;*

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- *A member of centre staff involved in the delivery/outcome of an ASDAN qualification having a family connection with an ASDAN registered learner or learner's family.*

11 Candidate Support

(including arrangements for initial Assessment, Induction, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Transfer and Exemption, Advice and Guidance Procedures).

- Centres must indicate what systems and processes are in place to support candidates, and must include information on the following:
 - Advice and guidance: how candidates are informed about the qualification, including progression and employment routes and opportunities;
 - Obtaining a ULN: where a candidate chooses to have a unique candidate number (ULN), the centre is able to obtain one on their behalf through the Learning Records Service;
 - Initial assessment: is this qualification the right one for this candidate and will s/he be able to contribute to and successfully complete it?
 - Credit transfer: this is the process of recognising credits already achieved which contribute to the rules of combination towards another credit-based qualification;
 - Exemption: where the candidate may have other certificated achievements which are deemed of equal value and can confirm assessment criteria have been met in full;
 - RPL: recognition of prior learning, where a candidate can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning;
 - Induction: how is the candidate inducted into the centre and onto the course?
 - Ongoing learning support: for all candidates including those with learning difficulties

12 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 planned by the centre or if withdrawn or imposed as a sanction by ASDAN.

13 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 and / or minutes of meetings. ASDAN's qualification review procedures also include the request for feedback from centre staff and candidates.

14 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. The data collected

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

- Privacy Notice (PN) (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. Centres requiring further information about candidate data sent to ASDAN, how it is processed and to whom it may be passed on, please refer to ASDAN's Privacy Notice. All candidates must be made aware of ASDAN's Privacy Notice.

15 Satellite / Partnerships / 3rd 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 and / or assessment of qualifications is shared with a Partner Organisation (3rd party agreements), centres must declare this and provide details of responsibilities and the quality assurance arrangements in place.

16 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 qualification/s the centre is planning to deliver will need to be approved. This activity is carried out by the centre's Regional Support Co-ordinator and will be set as an action at the Centre Approval visit. Guidance on developing assessment plans, templates and examples are available on the members website.