



Post-Recognition Monitoring Report: City & Guilds

March 2011

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Introduction

Regulating qualifications

The responsibility for regulating qualifications lies jointly with three regulators:

- Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), the regulator for qualifications awarded in England and vocational qualifications awarded in Northern Ireland
- Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), the regulator for Wales
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the regulator responsible for qualifications (other than vocational qualifications) awarded in Northern Ireland.

We systematically monitor awarding organisations and their regulated qualifications against the requirements set out in the statutory regulations. The aim of this activity is to promote continuing improvement and public confidence in the quality of regulated qualifications.

Where an awarding organisation is found not to comply with relevant criteria, the regulators will identify areas of non-compliance that must be rectified within a certain period. Even if an awarding organisation is compliant, the monitoring team may provide observations on ways in which the awarding organisation could change its systems and procedures to improve clarity or reduce bureaucracy.

Instances of non-compliances and observations arising from this monitoring activity are specified at the end of each section of this report. Awarding organisations are required to produce an action plan to show how they will deal with any non-compliance issues identified. We will generally agree the action plan and monitor its implementation.

We will use the outcomes of monitoring and any subsequent action taken by awarding organisations to inform decisions on future monitoring and/or the possible imposition of sanctions.

Banked documents

As part of the awarding organisation recognition process, the regulators require awarding organisations to submit certain documents to Ofqual, to be held centrally. Information from these 'banked' documents is used to inform monitoring activities and may also affect an awarding organisation's risk rating.

A suite of documents has been identified as suitable for banking, consisting of those items considered to be the most crucial in supporting an awarding organisation's ability to operate effectively. To maintain the currency of the banked documents, awarding organisations are responsible for updating them as and when changes occur. They are also reminded to review them at least annually as part of the self-assessment return.

About this report

This report is the outcome of a monitoring activity on City & Guilds awarding organisation that was carried out by Ofqual and DCELLS in March 2011. It draws together the regulators' findings on areas of:

- management and governance
- resources and expertise
- diversity and equality
- development of units and rules of combination (RoC) for qualifications
- design and development of assessment
- delivery of assessment
- centre recognition
- awarding and certification.

This is the first post-recognition monitoring activity on City & Guilds in respect of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) since the awarding organisation received supplementary recognition in March 2009.

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulators, examination of City & Guild's QCF recognition application and scrutiny of the awarding organisation's website. The regulators' monitoring team visited City & Guilds head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation. Visits were also made to two local offices and four centres. A member of the team also attended a QCF unit writers' training event.

This report draws together the regulators' findings from these monitoring activities.

About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is one of the oldest and largest awarding organisations, offering vocational qualifications across a wide range of sectors. For further information please see www.cityandguilds.com

Management and governance

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 2.1–2.3, 5.1 and 5.17

Findings

1. There have been significant changes to the City & Guilds governance arrangements, management structure and organisational development in the past two years. These changes were brought about following the appointment of a new Director General and Accountable Officer, in 2008, and through recognition of the wider implications of the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
2. The Director General provided us with an overview of the strategic direction to transform City & Guilds into a broader-based vocational education business. To ensure the success of this strategy it was necessary to modernise and simplify its governance arrangements, increase the capacity and capability of the management, and to be able to focus on critical areas of business.
3. Previously, City & Guilds was governed by a council, with its powers delegated to an executive committee, through which the work of the formal committees was channelled. The new arrangements have clarified the role of the Executive Committee and Trustee Board as being the decision-making body, with the Council taking a broader advisory role in supporting trustees and management. These changes were ratified by both the Council and the Executive Committee and revised charters and statutes have now been approved by Her Majesty the Queen in Privy Council.
4. It was also recognised that a review of composition and capability at management board level was needed. In reviewing the structure of the former management board, known as the Group Board, it was considered that some roles were too broad, for instance mixing functional and business responsibilities. It was also recognised that leadership in key areas such as product development and marketing needed to be strengthened. The changes aim to refocus City & Guilds' management into a functional leadership structure and ensure representation from all appropriate functions on the Management Board. This includes the representation of Group Policy, Research and Regulation, which has directorate responsibility for regulatory compliance and the Quality and Standards Committee, to a Board position.
5. The Management Board now consists of the Director General; the Director International; the Chief Executive Officer of Institute of Leadership and

Management; Chief Finance Officer; Human Resources Director; Marketing Director; Product Development Director; Strategy Director; UK Commercial Director; and Policy, Research and Regulation Director. Management Board members have key individual responsibilities, including functional leadership responsibilities, to provide a clear focus thereby ensuring accountability and management to their teams.

6. The Management Board have developed high level principles that underpin the strategy for the future direction of the organisation. It also identified the need for analysis of the organisational capability requirements necessary to implement the strategy. The capability requirements include delivering large scale but cost effective awards and testing activities, transitioning arrangements of the QCF, improving the customer experience through customer service support including providing sector-specific expertise and the developing of products and materials that are effective and meet demand.
7. To support the strategy, City & Guilds is making a substantial investment in the development of senior managers, function heads and future managers. It has established a three-year leadership development programme consisting of a series of training modules. The modules include personal leadership, managing change and commercial leadership. This also allows further development of internal staff through coaching, mentoring and assessment.
8. In addition to the leadership development programme, City & Guilds has a 'talent spotting' strategy. Initially focussing on the leadership programme the focus is now on identifying and developing emerging talent elsewhere in the organisation. We were told that the talent strategy was already proving beneficial with the secondment of individuals to key programmes and some internal promotions. The two strands of the staff development strategy will allow City & Guilds to deliver the organisational strategic plan.
9. The Programme Management Officer told us how City & Guilds planned the implementation of the QCF. Initial work was carried out in the summer of 2009 and was structured around five QCF work streams. These were strategy (proposition and funding); building the product (the move to QCF, sector skills council (SSC) engagement); operational (systems and requirements); stakeholder communications (internal and external); and programme management (project plan, deliverables, risks and issues).
10. QCF development work and migration activities were tracked and managed through these work streams, with monthly steering group meetings to translate ideas to practice.

Non-compliance

There are no instances of non-compliance in relation to this section.

Observations

1. City & Guilds is reminded to formally notify us of changes to its governance and management arrangements.

Resources and expertise

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 2.4–2.6, 3.1, 4.1, 5.2, 5.5 and 5.6e

Findings

1. City & Guilds employs approximately 1000 staff, including those working at 12 local offices. Resource needs are identified using a work planning tool. Each area of business is allocated to individual business partners from human resources and finance directorates who work with staff within the business areas to review current and future resource requirements on a quarterly basis. Information gathered is reported to senior management and aligned to the organisation's business planning process. Any new roles can be identified through a risk assessment and put forward in a business case with existing capability and costs also taken into account. Having proved an effective system City & Guilds is planning to introduce an IT business partner to review system resources in the same way.
2. The responsibility for business continuity lies with Group Facilities and there are business continuity and disaster recovery plans in place. A documented system is used to manage the process. The organisation has a number of fully equipped offices that it could use should its main office become inaccessible for any reason. There is one central system accessed by all of the local offices, but each has separate exchange servers that can work independently. City & Guilds is also rolling out more home access which will ensure that all 'business critical' staff members are able to operate from home. City & Guilds has a 'power down' test twice a year in order to put its plans into practice and identify any potential problems.
3. City & Guilds' performance management cycle runs in parallel to its financial year and is linked to the business planning strategy. The business planning cycle provides the opportunity for the directorates to set objectives for the year ahead. Each individual's objectives are set in a one-to-one meeting with their line manager and are linked directly to the business objectives of the organisation. Progress is assessed and discussed after six months, at which point staff members complete an 'on track form'. An online performance review system scores development progression and this information is captured and reported on to provide end-of-year outcomes. Employee opinion surveys are also circulated once a year and staff are given an opportunity to provide feedback about the performance management system.

4. As mentioned in the previous section, the implementation of the QCF led to specific short-term appointments being made and redeployment of existing staff to manage a programme of QCF workforce planning and implementation. Training has also been redesigned as a result. For example, the unit writing training has been revised to incorporate credit and levelling. Internal restructuring in 2010 resulted in a new development team being set up within the Product Development directorate, responsible for all of City & Guilds qualifications. Specific training on unit development has been provided to all members of the new team, and staff materials have been updated to reflect the requirements of the QCF.
5. All technical training is managed by a development training manager and delivered to relevant internal staff and to those on external contracts. City & Guilds has recognised the need to restrict the number of trainers in order to maintain consistency, with the majority of QCF training currently delivered by one consultant.
6. City & Guilds contracts with a range of consultants for work or projects where specific expertise is required. These include external verifiers, examiners and subject-specific experts for qualifications development. IT consultants and temporary staff that help to cover peak times are also contracted on demand. Annual contracting is managed by the transformation services team.
7. City & Guilds contracts with approximately 690 external verifiers. External verifiers are recruited using an application process when a need is identified, for example, quality managers in the local offices may request cover for gaps in provision. Potential external verifiers attend a selection and training day before being appointed and are subject to accompanied centre visits by the operational advisor until they are deemed competent.
8. External verifiers are managed jointly by operational advisors and quality managers. Quality managers oversee the allocation of external verifiers to centres and manage visit planning based on centre risk, while operational advisors are responsible for generic standardisation and centre visit reports. External verifiers receive sector-specific training once a year as well as generic training. Strategic advisors and qualifications advisors are available to deal with technical queries arising from sector-specific issues and may also attend external verifier meetings.
9. We reviewed the external verifier performance review process carried out by OAs, which includes looking at external verifier reports, CPD records and feedback from centres. The operational advisors' own review process includes a self-review of their performance for monitoring external verifiers. Strategic

Advisors are responsible for monitoring operational advisor performance through reports and personal contact.

Non-compliance

There are no instances of non-compliance in relation to this section.

Observations

There are no observations in relation to this section.

Diversity and equality

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 2.11–2.14

Findings

1. City & Guilds has a group policy for ensuring equal opportunities entitled '*Access to assessment – equal opportunities*'. This applies to all staff, including those who are externally contracted, as well as to learners. The document has recently been reviewed and amended to bring it in line with the Equalities Act 2010. The policy states that there is a working party that monitors and reviews the effectiveness of the policy. There was no evidence to show that this group had met or that the policy had been reviewed for effectiveness between August 2001 and February 2011.
2. Responsibility for keeping up to date with changes in legislation is shared. For internal staff the responsibility lies within the Human Resources Team. For qualification and unit-specific matters the responsibility lies with the Regulation and Audit Team. However, there does not appear to be any one person with overall responsibility for ensuring City & Guilds is responding to changes in legislation.
3. A Diversity and Equality Committee was established, but we saw no evidence to show that it has convened formally since March 2009. City & Guilds should assess its use of this committee and look at how it can be used more effectively.
4. As part of the qualifications development process City & Guilds carries out a skills need analysis. Such analysis includes consideration of the workforce within the particular sector that is being profiled. This takes into account characteristics such as age, gender, nationality and work patterns.
5. The *Product Management Qualification Development for the QCF Process Guide* (version 3, March 2010) states that diversity and equality issues are looked at as part of the business case for product development. This includes access and checking for potential regional issues. However, diversity and equality is not covered by the business case milestone checklist, or any other checking procedure, and therefore compliance cannot be tracked. As reported within the unit development section of this report, there is a lack of tracking of the development for individual units.

6. Specific training is given to staff that are involved in the design and development of qualifications and units. 'Access to qualifications and assessment' training is run three or four times a year and contributes to staff members' 'Skills Passport'. The technical training provided to external associates covers diversity and equality issues. This was confirmed at a unit writing training event, attended by a member of the monitoring team, where diversity and equality was included on the agenda for the day. Guidance on avoiding bias and discrimination is also provided in the *Designing City & Guilds Qualifications* document.
7. There is some evidence to show that learners' representatives (centres) are consulted in relation to diversity and equality during the process of developing units, qualifications and RoC. Some centres may be asked to contribute to the review of qualifications and units during development and may be specifically asked to consider inequalities and potential barriers.
8. City & Guilds acknowledges that data collection presents challenges. We saw reports that showed data on the numbers and types of requests made for access arrangements. The responsibility for collecting candidate data, other than name, gender and date of birth, lies with centres.

Non-compliance

There are no instances of non-compliance in relation to this section.

Observations

1. City & Guilds should review how it deals with equality and diversity issues across the organisation. It should consider whether there is a need for coordinated oversight of how staff are kept up to date, whether there is a need for specific training, and of how specific groups and committees are used to review and implement policy changes as a result of legislation.
2. City & Guilds should include formal records of diversity and equality activities, including consultation with learners or their representatives, to confirm such activities are embedded in unit and qualification design and development procedures.

Development of units and RoC for qualifications

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 3.2, 4.2, 4.3 a–f and 6.2a

Findings

1. City & Guilds has well defined processes in place for product development. All qualifications must be developed through a standard process. City & Guilds has added to this process to ensure the compliance of its QCF qualifications provision.
2. City & Guilds produced the document, *Product Management Qualification Development for the QCF Process Guide* (PMQDP), version 3, March 2010), specifically to control the management, design and development of its QCF products, including units and RoC. For the QCF, developments fall into two categories: City & Guilds-led initiatives and SSC-led cooperative initiatives.
3. The PMQDP outlines a generic process that applies to both categories. It is based on an eight-phase model. The model ranges from the initial assessment of a proposal to the evaluation and review of the developed product in the market. Each phase within the document contains an overview diagram of the process, a purpose, internal stakeholder liaison requirements across different teams and directorates, the steps of the process to be followed and the essential inputs and outputs. The inputs and outputs cover the resources and key information available and key documentation to be produced.
4. Finally, each phase has a milestone completion checklist which allows the steps to be noted as complete for each QCF qualification. We were informed that work is underway to develop these processes into a process map and working instruction format that will detail the procedures to be followed for unit writing and RoC development.
5. Following the initial review of a proposal a draft business case is developed (phase one). Phases two and three involve the development and sign off of the business case. This includes defining the work required and timescales involved to form a detailed project plan. Phase three also involves contracting external consultants to write units and develop RoC, and also includes considering any relevant training that may be required.
6. Phase four, production and operational review, includes the steps for producing the final version of units, assessment materials and RoC. These steps are supported by another detailed guide, *Designing City and Guilds Qualifications*

(version 2, October 2008). This document contains instructions on writing QCF units, assigning level and credit, developing RoC, and covers the responsibilities of consultants. The determining of RoC occurs once unit writing has taken place. The guide is to be used in conjunction with the PMQDP and has been designed to explain the processes, principles and terminology that inform the development, assessment and quality assurance of City & Guilds QCF qualifications.

7. The quality assurance activities of unit writing and developing RoC are explained within the PMQDP. There are review and sign-off throughout the process. A risk log is produced for each business case and this is updated as the phases are progressed. The process is recorded on a quality management database. There is an operational review step in phase four which includes confirmation of the units and sign-off of RoC.
8. A variety of staff from different directorates and teams across the organisation, as well as consultants, are involved in the development of QCF products. These include consultants used to write units and develop RoC and internal staff from Learning and Assessment Development and Portfolio Management and Development. These internal staff members are responsible for controlling the product development and project management functions respectively. The provision of training and development is seen as crucial by City & Guilds to enable staff and consultants to be competent in and have knowledge of QCF product development. Training in the principles and practice of writing units and assigning level and credit is mandatory for all staff and consultants involved in these processes; no one is allowed to carry out this work unless the training has been completed.
9. The processes, systems and documentation that govern product development, the writing of QCF units and the development of RoC, provide a standardised format. While this format confirms where some of the regulatory requirements can be met, it has not been fully reconciled with the requirements of the QCF regulatory arrangements that outline the development, sign-off and review of units in a particular systematic manner. City & Guilds is not able to confirm how each individual product meets all of the specific requirements of the QCF.

Non-compliance

1. City & Guilds must ensure that procedures for the development of QCF units and RoC are fully aligned to the regulatory requirements, are used systematically and can provide a complete audit trail for the development of individual products, along with the attendant review processes in line with those laid out in the QCF regulatory arrangements 2008.

(Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (August 2008) Paragraphs 3.2–3.4 and 4.2–4.4)

Observations

There are no observations in relation to this section.

Design and development of assessment

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 5.3 a–g, 5.4 and 5.16a

Findings

1. The design and development of assessment for QCF qualifications is a component of the PMQDP. Teams within the product development directorate have responsibility for influencing and inputting into the design and development of assessment for QCF qualifications.
2. The Assessment Development Team Has the main responsibility for developing products, including the design and development of assessment. It is supported by the Assessment Practice Team, which provides advice on assessment methods and is responsible for the production of guidance documentation, and the Assessment Research Team Which conducts research on assessment. The Portfolio Management Team Has responsibility to oversee the development of the product from project initiation to sign-off as part of the business case approach.
3. Integral to the writing of QCF units is the choice of appropriate assessment methods. This is controlled through the business case model, supported by the teams above and the consultants writing the QCF units, who initially select the most appropriate assessment methods.
4. Training is provided to staff and consultants on the principles of assessment and on each particular method that can be used for City & Guilds QCF qualifications. Detailed information and guidance on assessment issues is contained in *Principles and Policies of Assessment*. This document evaluates the various assessment methods that are available and provides guidance on how to select to the most appropriate method. Additionally, there are assessment handbooks that give advice and instruction on the content and use of specific assessment methods, including setting multiple-choice tests, and setting and editing short and structured response question papers
5. As part of the business case, milestone three of the PMQDP requires that assessment materials are developed alongside the writing of the units and provides mechanisms for quality checking and sign-off.
6. City & Guilds QCF qualifications are not graded.

Non-compliance

There are no instances of non-compliance in relation to this section.

Observations

There are no observations in relation to this section.

Delivery of assessment

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 5.5–5.6, 5.9–5.10, 5.16b and 5.20–5.23

Findings

1. The delivery of assessment for the range of City & Guilds QCF qualifications can be managed and conducted at both central office and assessment centre locations. As part of the design and development of the assessment process, the requirements for external and/or internal assessment are normally defined through the business case approach.
2. The roles and responsibilities of staff, consultants and assessment centre staff in the delivery of assessment are to be found in team and individual role profiles, consultant briefs and in centre handbooks. In respect of the introduction of the QCF, the delivery of assessment for City & Guilds has been essentially business as usual and has not required any significant changes to this process.
3. For the majority of QCF qualifications the assessment methods normally used are: Global Online Assessment Exams (GOLA); and assignments and portfolio assessment. There is generic documentation relating to assessments and centre handbooks and guides designed to instruct those managing the delivery of assessment. There are also suites of qualification-specific guides designed to provide specific assessment information and instruction for individual qualifications.
4. The range of external assessments includes multiple-choice examinations usually taken online (GOLA), short-answer written response, and long answer structured question papers. The processes for producing these assessments are defined in the dedicated guides and handbooks for all forms of external assessment. These ensure coverage of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. There is also guidance on the role of consultants, editing, proofing, and final sign-off of assessment products. Post-test validations take place to ensure products continue to be fit for purpose.
5. Spot checks are carried out on centres hosting examinations. These are managed by the centre performance team using local external auditors.
6. Internal assessment usually takes the form of the assessment of portfolio evidence and externally-set assignments that are internally marked. City & Guilds has produced extensive centre and internal assessment documentation

to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment conducted at centre level. This includes qualification-specific handbooks for portfolio assessment and marking schemes for assessments that are internally-marked. Processes for the moderation of externally set assignments that are internally marked are documented and include the quality assurance guidelines for marking by centre staff.

7. The conduct of internal assessment is controlled through an external moderation/verification process. External moderators/verifiers are allocated to operational advisors who are responsible for monitoring, supporting and training them, as well as reviewing their performance.
8. City & Guilds has also produced policies on the new requirements particular to the QCF, the recognition of prior learning and the use of exemptions.
9. Visits to centres delivering QCF qualifications confirmed the systems described above for internal verification were being used. The majority of centres also demonstrated an awareness of recognition of prior learning. For the QCF, centre staff confirmed that City & Guilds had provided sufficient information as well as a variety of training events, some of which were hosted at individual centres.
10. As per its previous National Qualifications Framework (NQF) provision, City & Guilds continues to have in place processes for the quality assurance of assessment decisions, arrangements for the standardisation and quality assurance of assessment outcomes across centres and awards, and review processes to support these.
11. City & Guilds' existing policies on the uses of the home nations' languages and the allowance of assessment in other languages have not changed as a result of the introduction of the QCF. This was confirmed at a visit to the local office in Wales. The strategic plan for Welsh language translation is reviewed annually. Any requests for Welsh language translations are logged so that they can be reviewed as part of the strategic plan review.
12. Where required Welsh speaking external verifiers are allocated, but if they are not available the Welsh speaking quality coordinator from the local office may attend the visit with an English speaking external verifier to translate. This ensures that comparability of standards is maintained.

Non-compliance

There are no instances of non-compliance in relation to this section.

Observations

There are no observations in relation to this section.

Centre recognition

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 5.11, 5.16b and 5.18

Findings

1. Centres are managed through 12 local offices across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The local offices are managed by a team of four territory managers within the Customer Support Team and are further supported by a central events manager. The events manager arranges events and workshops for centres in the local areas, while still recognising that these may need to be adapted in light of specific local issues such as funding.
2. There are 25 business managers within City & Guilds. They are responsible for key accounts, are aligned to local offices and are managed by the territory managers. The functions of sales and customer support have been separated to prevent any potential for conflict of interest between sales and quality issues, which is good practice.
3. Each local office has a quality team. The team is managed by a quality manager who manages a team of quality coordinators. The role of the quality teams is to provide consistent support to centres through the approval process, including qualifications approval, and to manage on-going external verifier centre monitoring reports. We visited two local offices to clarify how they were organised and to confirm the centre approval and monitoring processes that were being applied.
4. City & Guilds has a set of documents for approving centres. These include: *New centre's statement of intent*; application for centre approval; and quality systems consultant's report. City & Guilds staff described the centre approval process to us. Prospective centres are encouraged to visit the City & Guilds website in order to submit an online enquiry form. The business manager, based in the appropriate local office, picks up the enquiry and carries out some initial checks such as on the size of the centre, redirecting it to the appropriate documentation.
5. If a centre wants to proceed with an application, it completes a statement of intent form and sends it to its City & Guilds local office along with the required fee. Further checks are made to ascertain the viability of the centre. The statement of intent signed by the centre representative, states that the centre agrees to comply with the any relevant regulatory requirements.

7. The quality team assigns a quality systems consultant to the centre. The quality systems consultant carries out a pre-approval visit to the centre in order to assist it with the application process.
8. The centre has to complete a generic systems approval form and separate scheme approval forms for each qualification it intends to deliver. These may be completed at the same time or at a later date, but the centre must be approved before it can deliver any qualifications. The completed centre approval form includes the roles and responsibilities of centre staff and a statement confirming the person responsible for quality assurance.
9. Once the application has been submitted to the local office, a sector-specific external verifier is allocated and an approval visit takes place. The external verifier checks the resources, expertise and quality assurance arrangements to ensure they are compliant with both the sector-specific assessment strategy and the regulatory requirements. The external verifier may be the same person as the quality systems consultant.
10. The EV then completes a centre approval report to confirm that the centre meets the requirements as set out in *Providing City and Guilds qualifications: A guide to centre and qualifications approval* and *External verifier's reports – centre approval and scheme approval*. The quality manager reviews both the QSC and external verifier reports and when satisfied authorises approval. Once approved centres can register candidates and claim certificates using the secure IT system or the electronic data interchange (EDI) system.
11. City & Guilds staff confirmed that all centres are able to obtain unique learner numbers and where obtained these are stored in the learner record on the central IT system. Information on unique learner numbers and recognition of prior learning and exemptions is available in the individual qualification handbooks. All the centres visited had a good understanding of unique learner numbers.
12. Centre information including details of external verifier visits and qualifications offered is entered onto the bespoke external verifier tracking system at the local offices. External verifier monitoring visits are based on individual centre performance using a risk system that looks at the size of the centre as well as its performance. The system has built in criteria and a risk calculator.
13. There is no minimum level of visits per year, but all new centres receive at least one external verifier sampling visit before they can have direct claim status. Low risk centres may be externally verified remotely.
14. City & Guilds is making a significant investment in a new Supporting Customer Excellence system. Following successful piloting it is being implemented from

April 2011. The system is designed to keep the elements of good practice formerly in the NVQ code of practice and to enhance the centre experience by offering individually tailored quality assurance activity. It will consist of one central system of centre information and will also act as a risk management tool. Risk indicators are based on the risk rating of the product or qualification, the external verifier risk rating and the number of candidates, as well as overall centre performance.

15. The role of the quality teams will be to work with individual centres to devise annual programmes of activity that would best suit them. For example, an external verifier visit, or a workshop etc. This will make the most of the local knowledge of staff working with centres to develop them.

Non-compliance

There are no instances of non-compliance in relation to this section.

Observations

There are no observations in relation to this section.

Awarding and certification

Subject to the *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (August 2008), paragraphs 5.12–5.16 c–d and 5.19

Findings

1. City & Guilds has secure and complex operational systems to support the awarding of units and qualifications. The transformation services team works with development teams to build and test the system required for each qualification being developed. The product build includes inbuilt triggers that identify when specific criteria have been met. For example, it automatically identifies when a learner has successfully completed a RoC and the correct number of credits for a qualification to be awarded.
2. Centres have secure access to the City & Guilds system. They can register learners and upload results, as well as tracking learners' progress using enrolment numbers and unique learner numbers.
3. Each night the system identifies all the units and qualifications that have been completed. This information is sent via a secure link to an external printing company, which has been used since June 2010. The majority of City & Guilds certificates are now printed by this company.
4. Each certificate to be printed has a secure file which contains all the design information for that particular certificate. The printing company uses this file to print the correct certificate and uses a barcode system to ensure that each certificate is sent to the correct place.
5. When a new certificate is being printed for the first time a PDF copy is sent by the printing company to the transformation services team to be checked prior to being sent to the centre or learner.
6. City & Guilds carries out regular audits on the printing company to ensure all certificates are printed accurately and delivered to set timescales.
7. When a replacement certificate is requested a number of identity checks take place. A replacement certificate form is filled in online and sent to the Archive Services Team where the information provided is checked with the learner record on file. The archive services team checks that the name, date of birth, enrolment number, qualification and centre all match those on the system before issuing a replacement certificate. A replacement certificate was seen during the monitoring visit.

8. City & Guilds does not currently ask for the original certificate to be returned when a replacement is requested. Instead it relies on the centre to destroy it on its behalf. City & Guilds should consider requesting the return of original certificates, where they exist, to ensure they are destroyed appropriately.
9. We were shown examples of credit and qualification certificates. It was noted that the regulatory logos were missing from the credit certificate presented. City & Guilds accepted that this was an error in the original product build for QCF credit certificates, and took immediate action to make arrangements for this to be rectified.
10. City & Guilds has an internal audit team that carries out twice-yearly checks to ensure all procedures are up to date and fit for purpose.
11. City & Guilds produces numerous reports on the determination of results, including item analysis to ensure its standards are comparable across centres, qualifications and time.

Non-compliance

2. City & Guilds must ensure that its certificates meet the design specifications as set out in Appendix C and D of the regulatory arrangements for the QCF.

(Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (August 2008) Paragraph 5.13a)

Observations

4. It is strongly recommended that, when replacement certificates are requested, City & Guilds considers requesting the return of originals where possible. This will minimise the risk of fraudulent claims and ensure that all originals are destroyed appropriately.

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