

Centre Recognition and Review Policy and Procedure

1 Definition

'Centre recognition is a process through which a centre wishing to offer an award or awards is confirmed as being able to maintain the required quality and consistency of assessment, and comply with other requirements of the awarding organisation.'¹

2 Introduction

2.1 Centre recognition is an agreement made between a centre and Agored Cymru, specifying the minimum requirements an organisation must meet in relation to curriculum, quality and administration. It provides Agored Cymru with information about the centre, its structure and contacts. It also sets out the terms and conditions for recognition and the obligations on the centre when using Agored Cymru provision.

3 Audience

3.1 The intended audience for this document is:

- Staff responsible for developing and submitting centre recognition applications
- Quality, Standards and Regulatory Managers in recognised centres
- Curriculum Development Managers in recognised centres
- Agored Cymru staff
- Agored Cymru appointed External Verifiers
- Qualifications Regulators.

3.2 The policy and procedure will apply to centres offering or applying to offer:

- Access to Higher Education qualifications
- QCF Qualifications
- CQFW units
- Agored Cymru 'locally approved' units.

¹ Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework August 2008

4 Policy

4.1 Centres applying for recognition as an Agored Cymru Centre must ensure the following policies and procedures are in place as part of their quality systems:

- Access to Fair Assessment
- Appeals Procedures for Candidates
- Complaints Procedure
- Disability Discrimination Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Internal Verification Policy
- Malpractice Procedure
- Plagiarism Policy
- Policy on Checking for Criminal Records (if working with young people or vulnerable adults)
- Welsh Language Policy
- Child Protection Policy (where appropriate)
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy (where appropriate)
- Recognition of Prior Learning procedure
- E assessment Policy (if appropriate)
- Administrative procedures for registering learners, notifying achievement, holding learner information
- Staff induction and training procedures.

4.2 In addition each centre will be required to provide information regarding:

- a single named person accountable for quality assurance and management of the assessment of units and qualifications
- contact details for staff responsible for key areas such as curriculum development, administration and finance
- resources, systems and staffing appropriate to support the sector and level of provision to be accredited
- partnership arrangements.

4.3 Centres will be required to agree to terms and conditions that include:

- conducting and recording valid and reliable assessment of learner achievement
- ensuring learners are made aware of the appeals and complaints procedures

- implementing a quality management system that is regularly evaluated and improved if necessary
- contributing to Agored Cymru standardisation activity
- ensuring administrative systems are secure, accurate and timely
- documenting partnership arrangements
- informing Agored Cymru promptly of any reasonable adjustments or special considerations to be applied
- informing Agored Cymru promptly of any suspected malpractice
- keeping complete records for at least three years
- allowing access to premises, people and records as required by Agored Cymru.

5 Guidance for implementation

5.1 Initial application – Stage 1

5.1.1 Organisations applying for centre recognition are required to complete an initial enquiry form.

5.1.2 This identifies key information such as:

- centre type e.g. local government, private training centre, school etc
- target groups of learners
- subject/sectors/levels delivered
- relationship with other Awarding Organisations
- type of funding
- participation in regional partnerships.

5.1.3 All centres proposing to work with Agored Cymru must demonstrate financial viability and sustainability in order to proceed with the recognition application, in addition to demonstrating a commitment to the mission and values of the OCN.

6 Identification of appropriate route to centre recognition – Stage 2

6.1 Completed initial applications are considered jointly by the Business Development and Quality Assurance teams to identify whether or not the application should proceed and if so the recognition route that is most appropriate for the organisation. The recognition routes reflect the level of support that the centre is likely to need prior to submission of an application. If an application is rejected the submitting organisation will be provided with guidance as to possible alternative arrangements available.

6.2 Four alternative routes to centre recognition are available to organisations, taking into account the experience of offering learning/training, resources and size of the organisation:

- accelerated recognition route
- standard recognition route
- partnership recognition route
- postponed recognition route.

7 Accelerated recognition route

7.1 Available to organisations that have existing policies and procedures in place and who have at least one of the following:

- experience of working successfully with another Awarding Organisation for at least two years
- have a UKLRP registration
- a successful partnership arrangements with another approved Agored Cymru centre for a minimum of 2 years.

8 Standard recognition route

8.1 Available to organisations that can demonstrate a good understanding of quality assurance requirements and who have the capacity to develop and implement a robust internal quality assurance system. In addition, the organisation will be required to have key policies and procedures in place that support the learning process. (see section 4.1)

9 Partnership recognition route

9.1 If an organisation does not currently fulfil the criteria for undertaking the standard recognition route, consideration will be given to suggesting appropriate partnership arrangements that could be considered working with and being supported by another suitable centre.

10 Postponed recognition route

10.1 If an organisation does not currently fulfil the criteria for undertaking the standard recognition route and no appropriate partnership arrangements are possible, it may be proposed that the organisation needs to undertake further development activity before the application can be considered.

10.2 Once the decision to proceed and the appropriate route to be offered is agreed a Lead Officer from the Business Development team will be appointed to work with the centre in completing the recognition process and paperwork.

11 Confirmation of Centre Recognition – Stage 3

11.1 On submission of a completed Centre Recognition Application the responsibility passes from the Business Development team to the Quality Assurance team, who will allocate a Quality Reviewer (QR) to the centre. The Quality Reviewer will arrange to visit the centre to examine policies and procedures and to undertake an initial risk assessment of the centre. Following the visit to the centre, it is his/her responsibility to either recommend centre recognition or to refer the application for further development activity. This recommendation will be accompanied by a report detailing the initial annual monitoring plan and identifying any training requirements that staff must complete in the first year of activity e.g. undertaking administrative training.

11.2 The centre recognition report and annual quality monitoring plan will be checked and confirmed by the Director responsible for Quality Assurance. A copy of the report will be sent to the centre within 15 working days of the visit taking place.

12 On-going review of centre recognition

12.1 Each year a quality review of the centre will take place to establish that appropriate policies and procedures are being used to confirm the secure award of credit. This provides an opportunity to gather data such as the application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

12.2 Risk assessment will form the basis of the key quality judgements and each quality process will be assessed and a risk score allocated. This will provide a risk profile for each organisation, which will be the basis of judgements and of the rationale for any action / changes required. The scope and depth of the quality review for each centre will be determined by the risk profile for that centre and have the capacity to respond to any issues raised by the other quality assessment processes and their risk ratings. This approach gives Agored Cymru the opportunity to conduct cross centre or sector reviews of particular aspects of quality to inform quality improvement. The risk profiles will also identify good and best practice and let Agored Cymru disseminate that to improve overall quality.

12.3 The quality review will be discussed and confirmed with the Quality Assurance Manager and used to develop a Quality Plan (QP) for the centre. The Quality Plan will identify priorities for the coming year and will then be regularly reviewed and amended in subsequent years providing a clear audit trail and centre history/quality profile.

13 Useful links

Insert link to Initial Business Enquiry
Insert link to Centre Recognition application
Insert link to IV procedure
Insert link to Centre Handbook

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Agreed by:	QSRC	06/03/09
Approved by:	Board	21/04/2009
Review date:		March 2010
Reviewed by:		

Centre Recognition Process

