Agored Cymru

Approval Process for Agored Cymru units

1 Preparation and submission of a new unit by a providing organisation

1.1 Submitting centres are required to:

- **Establish that there is a need for a new unit to be written**. This will entail a detailed search of the Agored Cymru unit database to confirm that a suitable unit does not already exist, as well as discussion within the curriculum team of the submitting organisation. Early liaison with an Agored Cymru Curriculum Development Officer will allow identification of any QCF units that are available. A new unit will not be accepted by Agored Cymru if it is similar or has a large overlap with an existing unit. A detailed rationale of the need for a new unit is part of the submission documentation to Agored Cymru.

- **Check whether the centre has approval for the subject area and level of unit to be developed**.

- **Identify whether the unit is required in Welsh, English or Welsh and English**.

- **Write new units using the correct format and language, following the guidelines for writing credit-based units issued in documentation published by Quality, Standards and Regulation Committee, WAG and CEA**. *(hyperlink to be inserted)*

- **Map units to relevant standards e.g. National Occupational Standards, Language standards etc.**

- **Internally verify proposed new units prior to submission to Agored Cymru.** This will ensure that units are well constructed and correctly written and confirm that it fulfils a specific need within the centre.

- **Submit new units using the correct and current submission form available on the Agored Cymru website.** *(hyperlink to be inserted)*

2 Receipt of a new unit by Agored Cymru

2.1 Centres may submit units to either office of Agored Cymru. On receipt of the units and accompanying submission documents an initial scrutiny, focussing on format/construction will be carried out by quality team personal to ensure that they meet the requirements detailed the Regulation Authority guidance. If the requirements are met the submission date is logged and the unit(s) are sent for consideration by specialist readers. If the requirements, particularly those related to compliance with unit writing guidelines are not met, the unit is returned to the providing organisation for correction and re-submission.

3 Approval of new units

3.1 Once assured the initial submission has been checked, it is forwarded to two specialist readers, who will have expertise in a specific subject / sector, or where applicable in a certain type of provision e.g. Basic Skills or Independent Living Skills. Specialist readers are primarily drawn from experienced external verifiers or quality reviewers, however it is occasionally necessary to find subject specialist from outside this group. A database of suitably qualified and experienced readers is kept by Agored Cymru.

3.2 Specialist readers are required to make comments and recommendations regarding the unit content, level, credit value and title as well as the prescribed or optional assessment methods. Guidance on unit construction is given to specialist readers.

3.3 Where unit content relates to specific vocational sectors guidance will be sort from the relevant SSC. In some cases there are 'approval/governance' panels run by the SSC to confirm the vocational content of the unit e.g. NLIAH governance panel. Mapping to relevant standards such as National Occupational Standards will be checked for accuracy and relevance.

3.4 On receipt by Agored Cymru, comments made by specialist readers, which may either be in the form of recommendations or conditions, are reviewed by quality team personnel.

4 Notification to provider of specialist reader comments

4.1 If all comments regarding the new unit are positive and both specialist readers recommend that the unit is approved 'as is', it is subject to final scrutiny and allocated a code prior to the provider being notified of its approval.

4.2 If recommendations and / or conditions are made by one or both of the readers these are forwarded to the providing organisation for their consideration. Usually recommendations or conditions made by readers are accepted, but this is an iterative process where centres can explain why comments may be inappropriate. The final decision on any 'negotiation' is made by Agored Cymru. Similarly, the unit is subject to final scrutiny by the Quality Team before it is allocated a code and the provider is notified of its approval. New units are usually approved for a period of 5 years, or the life of the relevant National Occupational Standards after which their content will be reviewed.

4.3 If readers have identified serious failures with the specialist content of the unit it is referred back to the providing organisation, along with the guidance from the specialist readers, for further work.

4.4 A log is kept with details of all units submitted. This includes the date of the initial receipt of a unit, when it was sent to each reader, the date on which comments were received, when readers' comments were sent to the provider and their response, together with the date of unit approval and unit code when allocated, and final letter of notification to the provider.

4.5 Approved units are then published on the Agored Cymru Unit Library and if appropriate submitted for inclusion on CQFW.

5 Review of units

5.1 Units are approved for a set period of time, usually 5 years or for the life of the National Occupational Standards, though for areas where technical skills change rapidly such as IT the approval period may be reduced.

5.2 All units are reviewed by subject specialists, whose remit is to review units to identify:

- Any duplication of content with other units either in the QCF or on the local Unit Library
- Update mapping to National Occupational Standards
- Units not meeting current quality format
- Units where the credit level or value is inappropriate
- Subject areas that are out of date or no longer appropriate (particularly applies to IT provision)

5.3 Where amendments or deletions are proposed the information is circulated to all centres via bulletins, the website and/or meetings with Curriculum Development Officers. Timescales for last registration of learners allows adequate time for centres to adopt alternative units, wherever possible this will be not less than one academic year.

6 Use of units in the development of qualifications

6.1 Agored Cymru reserves the right to use 'locally' approved units in the development of QCF Qualifications where appropriate.

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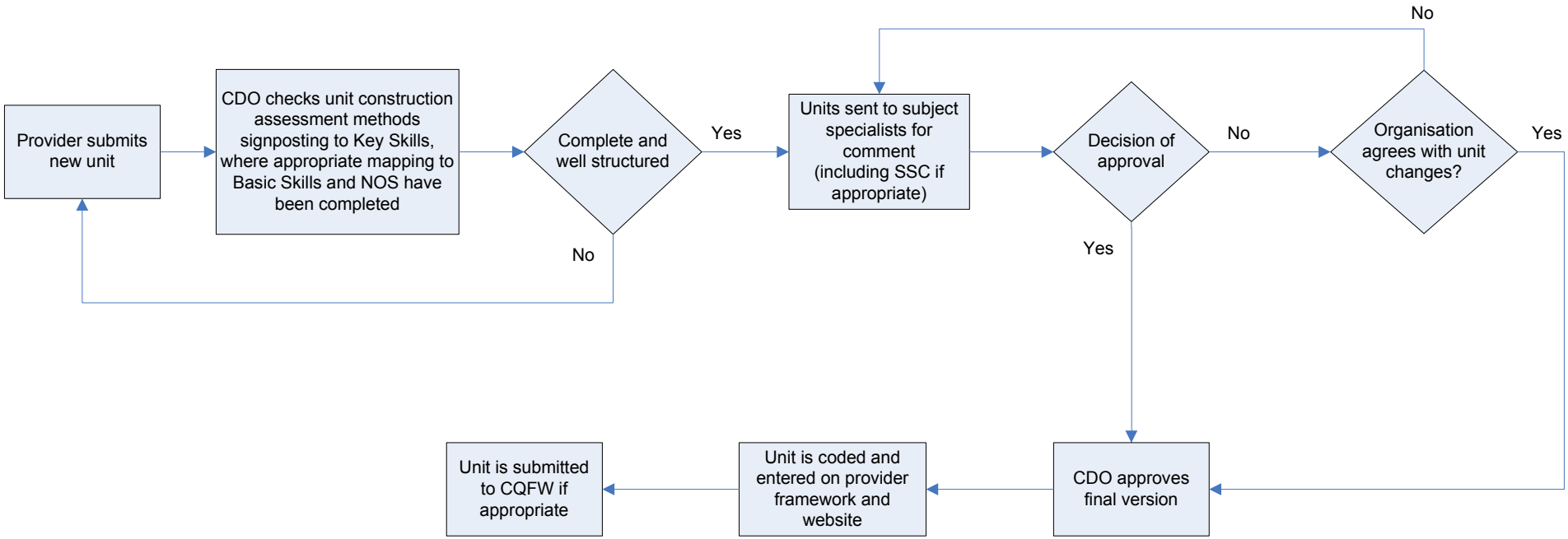
Process for New Unit Submission