



**Barbados Accreditation Council**



**GUIDELINES  
FOR THE  
RECOGNITION  
OF  
AWARDING BODIES**

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# **Preface**

This document has been prepared by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) to assist awarding bodies that are seeking to offer qualifications/awards in Barbados. It provides awarding bodies with information governing the BAC's recognition process, principles, procedures and criteria.

Policy related questions should be directed to the office of the BAC.

# **The Barbados Accreditation Council**

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) was established by an Act of Parliament, the Barbados Accreditation Council Act, 2004. It is a statutory body under the portfolio of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

## **Vision Statement**

A coherent system of post-secondary or tertiary education and training which assures excellence and integrity to all its stakeholders.

## **Mission Statement**

To be a high quality provider of registration, accreditation and related services in post-secondary or tertiary education and training in Barbados and beyond.

# **CORE VALUES**

## ***Quality***

The Barbados Accreditation Council will have a positive impact on the quality of post-secondary or tertiary education and training by its commitment to high standards that will sustain and advance excellence, efficiency, reliability and competence in higher learning. It will be forward thinking and proactive, responding to trends and changes in the national, regional and international environment.

## ***Integrity***

The Barbados Accreditation Council will place fairness, honesty, objectivity, accountability and transparency at the forefront both with regard to its own policies and practices, as well as in the implementation of registration, accreditation and related processes in order to establish integrity as central to educational quality.

## ***Inclusiveness***

The Barbados Accreditation Council will be an autonomous regulatory advisory body that will commit to inclusiveness by developing structures and processes that enable participation by a wide range of stakeholders. It will recognise and be responsive to the needs of its clients.

## ***Customer Service***

The Barbados Accreditation Council will be a customer friendly service-oriented organisation. Its staff will be dynamic, flexible, team-oriented, technology-oriented, communicative and people-centred.

## ***Learning***

The Barbados Accreditation Council will seek continuous feedback and insight from its stakeholders and use the collected information to improve its operations and support teamwork, and to provide learning opportunities for its staff and other stakeholders. At the same time, the Council will work with its stakeholders to foster an environment that promotes shared learning.

# QUALITY STATEMENTS

Quality for the BAC is the provision of effective and efficient services that are:

- ❖ geared towards the enhancement of post-secondary/tertiary education and training;
- ❖ fit for purpose, add value and exceed stakeholders' expectations;
- ❖ benchmarked against regional and international standards.

Quality for the BAC is guided by:

- ❖ a developmental approach;
- ❖ accountability to stakeholders;
- ❖ integrity of practise;
- ❖ excellence in service; and
- ❖ a commitment to national and regional development.

Quality for the BAC is demonstrated by:

- ❖ demand for non-mandatory services by its clients;
- ❖ respect of peers through mutual recognition;
- ❖ positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders;
- ❖ efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

The BAC perceives quality in institutions as:

- ❖ effective governance
- ❖ clearly stated and appropriate mission
- ❖ efficient and effective administration
- ❖ qualified, competent and engaged faculty and staff
- ❖ timely and customer-friendly services
- ❖ relevant, current, well-documented and appropriately assessed programmes
- ❖ established, documented, functional and well-managed quality assurance system
- ❖ responsiveness to change
- ❖ system for formative and summative evaluation and reform
- ❖ a culture which embraces integrity and ethical conduct
- ❖ prudent financial management
- ❖ effective and diversified learning and teaching experiences
- ❖ adequate and appropriate student services and support
- ❖ committed and motivated students

# Functions and Powers of the Council

The main *functions* of the Council include, inter alia to:

- a. register local, regional and foreign based institutions that offer educational courses in Barbados;
- b. maintain a record of all institutions that are registered and accredited by the Council pursuant to paragraph (a) and to;
- c. accredit and re-accrediting programmes of study and institutions operating in Barbados;
- d. provide for the validation of new educational courses and programmes of study being offered by institutions operating in Barbados;
- e. promote a programme of accreditation and registration;
- f. advise on the recognition of foreign based institutions and their awards;
- g. enhance the quality of post-secondary and tertiary education and training in Barbados;
- h. provide to the public, information on the quality and recognition of programmes of study and institutions, including the annual publication of a list of accredited programmes and institutions in order to protect the interests of the public;

To exercise its functions, the Council's *powers* include, inter alia to:

- a. undertake assessments and evaluations of programmes of study and educational institutions on their own initiative or in co-operation with other bodies as may from time to time be considered necessary for the discharge of its functions;
- b. establish the requirements that institutions must satisfy in order to be registered with the Council, or have their programmes accredited, re-accredited by the Council.

# GUIDELINES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES<sup>1</sup>

## Terms Defined

- A. **Awarding body** – an organisation that grants qualifications to learners and has responsibility for developing qualifications; assessing and quality assuring qualifications; managing the assessment process for each qualification; awarding qualifications; providing certificates; and providing customer service to approved centres and candidates.
- B. **Awarding institution** - a post-secondary or tertiary institution that awards post-secondary and/or tertiary qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, and degrees in its own name.
- C. **Collaborative provision** - all arrangements in which the awarding institution makes an award (solely or jointly) or gives credit towards an award on the basis of education provided by another institution or organisation in the home country or overseas.
- D. **Course** – a defined body of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired over a specified period of time. A course may be awarded one or more credits and can generally be completed in one term or one semester.
- E. **(Educational) Provider** – any individual, institution or organisation offering education and/or training programmes of study/courses at the post-secondary/tertiary level in Barbados.
- F. **Overseas institution** - an institution that is operating outside of its home country.
- G. **Partner** - an institution/organisation/individual that collaborates with an awarding institution offering post-secondary and tertiary programmes that lead to either an award in the name of the awarding institution or joint awards in the names of both the awarding institution and the partner.
- H. **Programme (of study)** – an approved curriculum composed of a series of courses, in an academic or vocational speciality, leading to a recognised qualification.
- I. **Provider country** - the source country of the educational programme or qualification that is delivered in another country.
- J. **Providing institution** – an institution or organisation which is delivering all or part of a study programme.
- K. **Receiver country** - the host country to which the educational programme or qualification sourced overseas is delivered.
- L. **Transnational/foreign institution** - an institution that has its origin and main campus or establishment in an overseas country or territory and is operating in another country.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines apply to local, regional and foreign/overseas/transnational awarding bodies.

## **Recognition Process**

Before submitting qualifications for accreditation, an awarding organisation must first apply for recognition as an awarding body with the Barbados Accreditation Council. The recognition process involves a review of the systems and procedures of the awarding organisation. The review is designed to ensure that the awarding organisations have the ability to offer its qualifications to the required quality standards established by the Council.

## **Principles**

The recognition process will be guided by the following five (5) principles:

- a. The awarding body has effective governance, leadership and management, which support the delivery of recognised qualifications. The awarding body's strategic aims, objectives and policies are appropriate and are understood by all who refer to them.
- b. The awarding body has developed and implemented a robust quality framework that ensures a quality product is delivered to the candidate. The awarding body and its staff are committed to a quality culture of continuous improvement through review and evaluation.
- c. The awarding body's administrative and support arrangements have been designed to reduce bureaucracy, are responsive to stakeholders needs, and are cost effective. The awarding body continually reviews its qualification provision to ensure it has, and deploys, sufficient resources to administer and support its qualification provision.
- d. The awarding body has demonstrated that it has the appropriate experience and ability to design, develop and deliver qualifications. The awarding body assessment methods are rigorous but have sufficient flexibility to ensure that their requirements can be met cost-effectively and in a variety of different circumstances. Copies of the awarding body's assessment methodology and guidance are made available to all those who may wish to use them.
- e. The awarding body's methodology for verification is rigorous and has been designed to ensure that only those candidates who have shown competence are awarded a certificate. The awarding body only deploys personnel who are qualified and competent.

# **Procedures**

## **Initial Application**

When a newly established awarding body is applying for recognition, it must submit a plan of proposed provision defining the level, types and subject/sector of qualifications.

The awarding body must demonstrate that its qualifications are fully quality assured and must include evidence that:

- a. the awarding body has dedicated staff to assure the delivery of the programme across national borders;
- b. the local provider has been reviewed and approved to offer qualifications by the awarding body;
- c. the local provider is in compliance with the relevant requirements and standards established by the awarding body;
- d. practices have been implemented to reduce the potential for fraud in the assessment of candidates;
- e. the awarding body is financially viable and unlikely to exit the country with student fees, etc.; and
- f. local candidates are treated the same as students from the country of origin.

## **Post Recognition**

Once recognised, awarding bodies must submit to the Council under confidential cover an updated plan of its provisions that include its intentions to:

- a. Develop new qualifications, with the appropriate sector/subject framework; and
- b. Amend existing qualifications.

To support amendments, the awarding body must submit supporting documentation including:

- a. Broad justification for each new qualification, amendment or withdrawal of qualification;
- b. Likely timescales for submissions of full proposals to the BAC; and
- c. Desired dates for the implementation of new or amended qualifications, or the withdrawal of existing qualifications;

Should an awarding body intend to extend the range of the provision(s) defined in its original plan, it must give notice in writing to the BAC and submit the relevant documentation to support its application.

After recognition, the awarding body will be able to offer qualifications with any educational provider that is registered with the BAC. Local providers will therefore not have to submit individual applications for recognition of qualifications offered in partnership with the particular awarding body.

It is anticipated that the process may take approximately 16-20 weeks based on the following projections:

- a. Provided a completed application is submitted, the gap analysis of the application is expected to be completed within 6 weeks.
- b. The provider responds to the gap analysis – the timeframe depends on the expediency of the awarding body.
- c. Once a response is received, the BAC will schedule a site visit.

### **Failure to Disclose Information**

Should an awarding body fail to disclose changes, amendments or withdrawals it will be subject to the sanction of the BAC which may include publication in the printed press and other forms of media.

### **Loss of Recognition**

If an awarding body loses its recognition status, for lack of compliance with the BAC's regulations, it will be required to undergo a full evaluation and pay the relevant fees.

## **Recognition Criteria**

The Criteria for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies are outlined at Appendix I.

Once recognised, awarding bodies will be issued with a '**Certificate of Recognition for Awarding Bodies**' by the Council. Furthermore, the recognition will be published in at least two (2) daily newspapers.

The cost of the certification and publication will be covered by the awarding body.

## **Responsibilities**

The awarding body will be responsible for:

- a. Establishing Centre Approval Criteria;
- b. Assuring that appropriate quality systems are implemented and utilised by Approved Centres;
- c. Monitoring the quality assurance mechanisms being practised by Approved Centres;
- d. Establishing qualifications that conform to the Programme Approval specifications of the BAC;
- e. Assuring the integrity of the assessment policies and practises used by Approved Centres;
- f. Establishing internal and external verification policies and requirements for all qualifications;
- g. Developing policies and procedures to ensure that all new qualifications are approved by the BAC;
- h. Assisting the BAC to formulate evaluation teams for accreditation of programmes and institutions;
- i. Assisting the BAC to establish subject specific accreditation standards; and
- j. Any other functions that would ensure the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

The BAC will be responsible for:

- a. The programme approval of all new qualifications or programmes of study designed and developed by the awarding body;
- b. The programme review of all unaccredited qualifications or programmes of study designed, developed and offered by the awarding body;
- c. The accreditation and re-accreditation of all qualifications designed by the awarding body;
- d. The monitoring of the internal quality assurance mechanisms used by the awarding body;
- e. The monitoring of the quality assurance mechanisms used by the awarding body to monitor Centres;
- f. Liaising with the awarding body when formulating evaluation teams and evaluation procedures for its qualifications; and
- g. All other functions which will ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities.

## **Costs**

The awarding body will be responsible for all direct costs associated with the evaluation, including:

- a. payment of professional fees for external evaluators;
- b. where applicable, the payment of airfares and accommodations for external evaluators and observers from the BAC; and
- c. fees for administrative and technical support provided by the BAC.

The fees covering the administrative and technical support that will be provided by the BAC, include:

- a. Review of the application and supporting documentation;
- b. Provision of a Gap Analysis to the awarding body;
- c. Review of additional submissions;
- d. Preparation of the Certificate of Recognition;
- e. Costs for publication of the recognition in the daily newspaper; and
- f. Provision of any other support that the awarding body may require.

## **Recognition Period**

Awarding bodies may receive recognition for periods ranging from five (5) to seven (7) years. Individual (single) international programmes offered by local institutions in collaboration with a foreign institution or awarding body which is evaluated locally, may receive recognition for up to three (3) years.

# CONDUCTING SELF-ASSESSMENTS

The self-assessment is essential in enabling awarding bodies to evaluate their own quality development and for the continuous improvement of their operations. Self-assessment should be a normal part of the operational review, evaluation and monitoring processes performed by awarding bodies.

In conducting the self-assessment, awarding bodies will need to:

- a) carefully consider all the standards which will guide the self-assessment process, paying special attention to the criterion statements and indicators;
- b) gather the necessary evidence, which should include:
  - management tools such as risk registers, internal and external audits;
  - reports such as annual reports to a governing body or the public;
  - performance against targets;
  - performance trends and benchmarking information;
  - feedback from the approved centres and/or candidates;
  - the most recent monitoring or self-assessment report; and
  - outcomes from quality assurance monitoring.
- c) Once the evidence in relation to the standards has been assembled, the awarding body can determine:
  - the strengths and weaknesses of its arrangements;
  - actions to be taken to address any weaknesses, including target dates and the person(s) responsible.

Some questions to ask include:

- How does the organisation evaluate whether our governance arrangements are fit for the purpose of maintaining and ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of all the qualifications offered?
- How do we evaluate whether the examiners, moderators, independent assessors, internal or external verifiers have the skills and knowledge needed to meet their responsibilities in relation to the delivery of the qualifications and the maintenance of the assessment standards?
- How do we evaluate whether the qualifications offered meet the needs of the users and industry without leading to excessive provision in the relevant sector/subject?
- How do we ensure the clarity of the content of the qualifications and the associated guidance/learner materials?

- How do we determine whether the assessment methodology/ies for each qualification is fit for purpose and not burdensome or too costly for the centres and/or candidates?
- How do we evaluate the reliability and validity of the assessment methods and approaches?
- How do we ensure consistency of the assessments within and across the approved centres, as well as between assessors, moderators and verifiers?
- How do we ensure that assessment standards are maintained year to year?
- How do we evaluate whether candidates assessments are appropriate, timely and valid?
- How do we evaluate whether candidate receive valid results and correct qualifications?
- How do we determine the effectiveness of our systems to detect and deal with malpractice?
- How do we measure our performance against our customer service targets?
- How do we evaluate the adequacy of our procedures for enquiries, appeals, or complaints against assessment decisions?

The self-assessment is designed to ensure a thorough evaluation and determination of the effectiveness of the organisation's systems, processes and procedures in maintaining the quality of its qualifications and ensuring that its qualifications are fit for purpose.



## Appendix I

### CRITERIA FOR THE RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES

#### Standard 1: Governance

**Criterion Statement:** The awarding body's corporate governance, strategic aims, objectives and policies are appropriate and are understood by all who refer to them.

<b>Standard 1.1</b>	<b>The awarding body has been established in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the country of origin</b>
<b>Indicator</b>	Awarding body followed the appropriate legislation in its establishment.
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Necessary documentation establishing the awarding body</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 1.2</b>	<b>The awarding body has robust and transparent governance arrangements</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>Governance arrangements must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A clear distinction between the organisation's role as an awarding body and any other functions ensuring that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple roles do not constitute a barrier to access or restrictive practice.</li> <li>• Effective measures have been taken to manage the potential for conflicts of interest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. A mechanism to notify the BAC, in writing, of any change to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governance arrangements.</li> <li>• Any partnership arrangements and associated partnerships agreement.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organisational chart(s) illustrating independence and separation between awarding body and other functions.</li> <li>○ Terms of reference for Committees and Board showing independent element on the Board and/or the most senior Committee.</li> <li>○ Job descriptions illustrating reporting lines, roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>○ Written agreements, memoranda of understanding, franchise arrangements etc to illustrate areas of responsibility and indicate review of, and changes to, responsibilities.</li> <li>○ Documentation that demonstrates that adequate measures have been put in place to ensure that any conflicts of interest are suitably managed.</li> </ul>

<b>Standard 1.3</b>	<b>The awarding body's leadership is effective</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body's leadership must ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The management of the organisation is defined by evidence-based decision making.</li> <li>2. The organisation has a clear strategic vision for the future that is based upon the needs of its stakeholders.</li> <li>3. Employees and customers are aware of the strategic vision for the organisation's future.</li> <li>4. The organisation's leadership encourages continuous improvement to meet customer needs.</li> <li>5. Staff, at all levels, are encouraged to maintain and enhance levels of professional competence.</li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documentation that illustrates that the organisation actively seeks feedback from others, for example, staff opinion surveys, customer surveys, complaints procedures etc</li> <li>○ The organisation's published strategic or mission statement.</li> <li>○ Notes of meetings with customers and staff where the strategic vision has been discussed.</li> <li>○ Policy for continual professional development of staff.</li> <li>○ Performance management and training records.</li> <li>○ Action resulting from internal reviews of key performance indicators.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 1.4</b>	<b>The awarding body has an effective business planning process</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body records and documents the outcome of its business planning process. The business plan should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provision for all its accredited qualifications.</li> <li>2. Is communicated to all internal and external stakeholders that have a legitimate interest in it.</li> <li>3. Contains aims (goals) and objectives, which relate to the current and future needs of the awarding body, its stakeholders and BAC accredited qualifications.</li> <li>4. Is formally evaluated, at least, on an annual basis with a view to improvement.</li> <li>5. Includes a policy for marketing its BAC accredited qualifications that is effective and takes into account the present and future needs of the awarding body and its stakeholders.</li> <li>6. The awarding body has the financial capacity to sustain its operations.</li> <li>7. The awarding body is supported by adequate physical and information technology infrastructure.</li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Procedure for business planning.</li> <li>○ Copies of agendas and minutes from planning meetings.</li> <li>○ Policies register showing the marketing policy.</li> <li>○ Market research materials.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Income and expenditure statements</li> <li>○ Budget demonstrating commitment to developing capacity within and across the organisation</li> <li>○ Financial statements that demonstrate financial solvency</li> <li>○ Website containing marketing information and business plan that is regularly updated.</li> <li>○ Business plan document.</li> <li>○ Copies of reviews of the effectiveness of the organisation's policy, standards and quality.</li> <li>○ Action plan linked to the evaluation of the business plan.</li> <li>○ Analysis of centre approval rates, qualifications uptake etc.</li> <li>○ Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis.</li> <li>○ A customer profile.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the business plan has been agreed to and signed off by the main board or Chief Executive.</li> <li>○ Documented processes for acquisition, maintenance and replacement of physical resources.</li> <li>○ Dedicated and secure information technology to support administration, client databases and monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 1.5</b>	<b>The awarding body assigns a single, named point of accountability for maintaining the quality of all qualifications</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body has assigned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual with specific responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards</li> <li>2. A department or team who reports to the designated person on the quality and standards of all qualifications</li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organisational chart showing the structure of the section with responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards</li> <li>○ Job descriptions</li> <li>○ Copies of reviews of qualifications</li> <li>○ Copies of reviews of policies and procedures for the quality maintenance of qualifications</li> <li>○ Documented processes for the preparation and delivery of programmes</li> <li>○ Documented processes for administration of examinations</li> <li>○ Documented processes for the assessment of examinations</li> <li>○ Documented processes for the verification of awards</li> </ul>

**Standard 2:****Quality Enhancement****Criterion Statement:**

The awarding body has developed and implemented a robust quality framework that ensures a quality product is delivered to the candidates. The awarding body and its staff are committed to a quality culture of continuous improvement through review and evaluation.

<b>Standard 2.1</b>	<b>The awarding body has a culture of continuous quality improvement</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have procedures for acquiring and analysing feedback on the effectiveness of the awarding body's service from key stakeholders and customers against the awarding body's key performance indicators.</li> <li>2. Documented internal quality assurance system to monitor compliance with BAC's criteria.</li> <li>3. Conduct a review at least once per year, which covers the following as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Administrative arrangements.</li> <li>○ Registration and certification.</li> <li>○ Appeals, complaints and equal opportunities policies.</li> <li>○ Quality assurance of BAC accredited qualifications.</li> <li>○ Provision of data required by BAC.</li> <li>○ Customer service statement against its key performance indicators.</li> <li>○ Staffing levels.</li> <li>○ Competence and deployment of external verifiers.</li> <li>○ Risk assessment process.</li> <li>○ Monitoring system for approved centres.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Implement improvements as a result of the review which ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bureaucracy is kept to a minimum.</li> <li>○ The allocation of resources is sufficient to meet the needs of the organisation and its customers.</li> <li>○ The service for the design and delivery of accredited qualifications is responsive to the needs of customers.</li> <li>○ Costs associated with the delivery of accredited qualifications are minimised.</li> <li>○ The systems and procedures in place meet the criteria of BAC</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Customer feedback forms, surveys etc that seek the views of customers and other stakeholders.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the organisation, on a regular basis, evaluates its performance against the customer service statement and where necessary, takes improvement action.</li> <li>○ SWOT and/or Political, Economic, Social and Technological</li> </ul>

	<p>(PEST) analyses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Evaluation of the awarding body's key performance indicators.</li><li>○ Self-assessment reports.</li><li>○ Report detailing the outcomes of the review of systems and procedures and identifying key target areas for improvement and development.</li><li>○ Analysis of resource levels against current and projected workload.</li><li>○ Pricing policy and structures and a rationale for any changes made to the pricing structure.</li><li>○ Analysis of the costs associated with the delivery of the qualifications.</li><li>○ Analysis of external verifier reports, identifying issues across centres and action taken due to the analysis</li></ul>
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**Standard 3:****Administration and Support****Criterion Statement:**

The awarding body's administrative and support arrangements have been designed to reduce bureaucracy, are responsive to stakeholders needs, and are cost effective. The awarding body continually reviews its qualification provision to ensure it has, and deploys, sufficient resources to administer and support its qualification provision.

<b>Standard 3.1</b>	<b>The awarding body has robust systems in place for the management of the services it offers</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body must have systems in place to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the design and delivery of qualifications.</li> <li>2. Ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to support the awarding body's activities in the design and delivery of qualifications.</li> <li>3. Ensure that staff are trained to support the organisation's activities in the design and delivery of qualifications.</li> <li>4. Deploy sufficient resources to administer and support the design and delivery of qualifications.</li> </ol> <p>The awarding body's management information system(s) must have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Security measures in place to prevent unauthorised use.</li> <li>6. Controls in place to ensure that unauthorised certificate printing cannot take place.</li> <li>7. Been designed to meet the requirements of all relevant legislation.</li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reports and/or evidence of review of management on the effectiveness of resources such as Information Technology (IT), staffing levels etc.</li> <li>○ Action plan detailing improvements to systems.</li> <li>○ Analysis of resource levels against current and projected workload.</li> <li>○ Training needs analysis.</li> <li>○ Job specifications and recruitment policy and procedures.</li> <li>○ Organisational chart.</li> <li>○ Evidence of compliance with the Health and Fire regulations.</li> <li>○ Evidence of compliance with the Data Protection Act.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3.2</b>	<b>The awarding body has effective communications strategy that supports its awarding body activities.</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work to ensure ongoing development, currency and credibility of the qualifications.</li> <li>2. Communicate to its approved centres, external verifiers and other key stakeholders, any pertinent information in connection with BAC accredited qualifications and the awarding body activities.</li> <li>3. Ensure that internal communication systems allow for the dissemination of information relating to the awarding body's activities</li> </ol>

	<p>or the accreditation of qualification.</p> <p>4. Ensure that BAC is granted access to the following from awarding body and approved centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessment locations,</li> <li>• candidates,</li> <li>• premises,</li> <li>• meetings,</li> <li>• documents,</li> <li>• data,</li> <li>• analysis, and</li> <li>• evaluation activities.</li> </ul> <p>5. Have processes in place to ensure BAC is sent data in the agreed format and by agreed timescales.</p>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minutes of awarding body forum.</li> <li>○ Communications between centres and the awarding body</li> <li>○ Communications between BAC and the awarding body.</li> <li>○ Evidence of attendance at relevant BAC meetings and events.</li> <li>○ Internal newsletters, flyers, etc</li> <li>○ Notes/agenda for internal and/or external training events.</li> <li>○ Quarterly registration and certification returns are sent to BAC by agreed timescales.</li> <li>○ Data requested for audit and centre monitoring purposes is sent to BAC by the agreed time.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3.3</b>	<b>Where applicable, the awarding body has systems and procedures for approval of centres</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that all centres within which assessment will take place are capable of meeting the full requirements of the centre approval criteria prior to any candidate being assessed or certificated for an accredited qualification.</li> <li>2. Seek BAC’s written approval for any amendments to the centre approval criteria prior to their implementation.</li> <li>3. Ensure that each centre identifies a single named point of accountability.</li> <li>4. Require all potential centres to make a formal approval application that demonstrates the centres’ compliance.</li> <li>5. Ensure that where a partnership or consortium is seeking centre approval that the roles and responsibilities in relation to the linked centres are clearly set out in a written agreement.</li> <li>6. Require a centre to declare, in its centre approval application, if it has had approval refused, suspended or withdrawn.</li> <li>7. Inform a centre that applies for centre or qualification approval of its approval decision in writing.</li> <li>8. Inform a centre of its right to appeal an approval decision made by the awarding body.</li> </ol>

	<p>9. Ensure that an external verifier visits approved centres before the first candidate is certificated.</p> <p>10. Ensure that centres not previously approved to offer BAC accredited qualifications receive an external verification visit prior to approval.</p> <p>11. Provide potential centres with appropriate guidance and support on the awarding body's approval process.</p> <p>12. Ensure that a centre provides evidence of approval of assessment/satellite sites and demonstrates that the quality assurance arrangements are consistent with those of the main centre.</p> <p>13. Require approved centres to inform the awarding body of any key changes.</p> <p>14. Retain and make available to the BAC on request:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Approval applications.</li> <li>b. Approvals visit reports.</li> <li>c. Details of the outcome of such visits.</li> </ol> <p>15. Have and maintain an accurate register of its approved centres and the qualifications each centre has been approved to offer.</p> <p>16. The awarding body must inform its approved centres that they must provide BAC with timely access to locations and records for monitoring purposes.</p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Published centre approval criteria.</li> <li>○ Centre approval applications.</li> <li>○ Approved centre files.</li> <li>○ Reports that illustrate how new centres are being visited prior to approval by an external verifier.</li> <li>○ Awarding body feedback to centres on the outcome of the centre and qualification approval process.</li> <li>○ Evidence that any action plan agreed at the time of centre approval has been achieved in full prior to first candidate certification.</li> <li>○ Copies of written agreements between linked centres.</li> <li>○ Copies of checklists against which assessment locations have been approved.</li> <li>○ Evidence of the centre informing the awarding body of changes to its assessors, verifiers and ownership.</li> <li>○ Approval guidance documents.</li> <li>○ Where appropriate, the awarding body allows credit transfer.</li> <li>○ Verifier report illustrating that the awarding body has reviewed the potential centre's assessor and verifiers to ensure occupational competence, experience and that they hold or are registered for the relevant assessor and verifier qualifications.</li> </ul>

<b>Standard 3.4</b>	<b>The awarding body has a customer service statement and identified service levels</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The customer service statement must be freely available to all who may wish to make use of it. The customer service statement must specify: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The quality of service a customer can reasonably expect.</li> <li>b. Relevant point(s) of contact and communication mechanisms.</li> <li>c. Measurable outcomes, such as timescales and associated performance measures.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. The customer service statement must specify, or indicate, where information may be found on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The fees and charges.</li> <li>b. Summary details of the awarding body's complaints and appeal procedures.</li> <li>d. Summary details of the awarding body's quality assurance mechanisms for centre approval and external verification.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where the awarding body is part of a partnership or consortium, the customer service statement specifies the main point of contact.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the customer service statement is made available freely to customers and prospective customers.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the customer service statement is updated as a result of review and customer feedback.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the published customer service statement meet policies, timelines and procedures used internationally by awarding bodies.</li> <li>○ Details of how the customer may communicate with the provider out of office hours.</li> <li>○ Details of e-mail, fax, telephone and communications facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3.5</b>	<b>The awarding body has open and transparent procedures for complaints and appeals</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The awarding body must publish and implement an appeals and a complaints procedure which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The system for making a complaint or an appeal.</li> <li>b. A specified point of contact.</li> <li>c. The circumstances under which a centre or candidate is entitled to make an appeal or complaint to the awarding body.</li> <li>d. The circumstances under which a centre or candidate is entitled to make an appeal or complaint to the BAC.</li> <li>e. Response times and anticipated timescales for dealing with complaints or appeals.</li> <li>f. Any charge for making a complaint or an appeal.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. The appeals procedure must be designed to resolve any disputes arising from assessment or verification decisions, centre approval decisions, and certification claims.</li> </ol>

<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A published appeals procedure.</li> <li>○ A published complaints procedure.</li> <li>○ Evaluation reports.</li> <li>○ Appeals register.</li> <li>○ Complaints register.</li> <li>○ A fees policy and list of fees charged for making an appeal or a complaint.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the awarding body has kept the complainant or appellant informed of the progress of the appeal or complaint.</li> <li>○ Evidence that appeals and or complaints are being resolved within specified timescales</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3.6</b>	<b>The awarding body has an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make every reasonable effort to collect each candidate's national registration number at the point of registration.</li> <li>2. Ensure that candidates who complete the requirements for a qualification or unit receive a certificate in the format agreed at the time of recognition by the Council.</li> <li>3. Ensure that certificates can only be issued when all the requirements for the qualification have been met and the claim authenticated.</li> <li>4. Recognise the previous achievement of any units that may be common to other qualifications and to uphold the principle of credit transfer.</li> <li>5. Ensure safeguards are in place to protect against fraudulent, invalid or mistaken claims for certification.</li> <li>6. Have a system in place for the issuing of replacement certificates.</li> <li>7. Ensure that replacement certificates are clearly marked as such.</li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each qualification must include the agreed title, the level, the date of the issue of the certificate, and the logos and credit points (where applicable).</li> <li>○ Each qualification must include the awarding body's designation</li> <li>○ Evidence that the awarding body offers certificates at unit and whole qualification level.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the awarding body recognises previous achievement.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3.7</b>	<b>The awarding body has implemented a diversity and equality strategy</b>
<b>Indicators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The awarding body's diversity and equality strategy, related policies and procedures must comply with all current legislation.</li> <li>2. The awarding body must have an equal opportunities policy that is freely available to all who may wish to make use of it.</li> <li>3. The awarding body must ensure that all relevant awarding body</li> </ol>

	<p>members of staff receive training on the organisations equal opportunities strategy, relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>4. The awarding body must have a policy and procedure for special assessment arrangements, which are freely available to all who may wish to make use of them. The awarding body’s policy and procedures for special assessment arrangements must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. State the procedure that centres must follow to apply for special assessment arrangements.</li> <li>b. Ensure that candidates who have taken ill at short notice are given fair access to assessment and verification.</li> <li>c. Ensure that the qualifications assessment specifications are not invalidated.</li> </ol> <p>5. The awarding body must have a policy and procedure for reasonable adjustments, which are freely available to all who may wish to make use of them. The awarding body’s policy and procedure for reasonable adjustments must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. State the procedure that centres must follow to apply for reasonable adjustments on behalf of candidates.</li> <li>b. Ensure that the qualification’s assessment specifications are not invalidated.</li> <li>c. Ensure that the adjustments take into consideration the current needs of the candidate and do not give the candidate an unfair advantage.</li> </ol>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A published diversity and equality policy and procedures.</li> <li>○ A published equal opportunity policy and procedures.</li> <li>○ A published assessment policy and procedures.</li> <li>○ Evidence of access to policies and procedures by staff.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the awarding body provides training to staff in relation to its policies and procedures.</li> <li>○ Evidence that the proper implementation of its policies and procedures are done.</li> </ul>

## ***Acknowledgements***

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- Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, United Kingdom
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