VQA Endorsed Learning



Endorsed Course Provision

Frequently Asked Questions
V25.1

What is an endorsed course and how is it different to a regulated qualification?

Regulated qualifications, such as those offered by VQA under Ofqual regulation, are designed and delivered to meet rigorous standards and provide nationally recognised outcomes. These qualifications undergo thorough scrutiny to ensure compliance with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition, focusing on quality, fairness, and validity.

Endorsed courses, by contrast, are reviewed by VQA to ensure they meet specific quality criteria, and upon approval, VQA may endorse them as a mark of that quality. These courses offer greater flexibility, allowing training providers to tailor content to meet specific learning and industry needs.

While endorsed courses are not subject to the same regulatory requirements as Ofqual-regulated qualifications, they are still assessed. However, completion of an endorsed course does not lead to a regulated qualification, nor does it carry credit value. Instead, it serves as evidence of the knowledge and skills gained.

How can an endorsed course benefit my centre and learners?

Endorsed courses are a great way of enhancing a centre's learning and development provision and gaining a stamp of approval from VQA, one of the UK's leading awarding organisations. It is a way of demonstrating that a course meets a recognised standard making it more attractive to your learners and reassuring them of its quality. With the ability to upscale and adapt your courses, you can explore new sectors or enhance your current regulated qualifications portfolio by identifying gaps in the market.

How do I know which type of endorsed course is best for my needs?

We have developed three types of endorsed courses tailored to a centre's specific needs.

Certified Learning Course (CLC):

- This course provides formal recognition of specialised training developed by a centre.
- It includes structured units with learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- A learner's knowledge and skills are formally measured through robust assessment activities.

Professional Development Learning Course (PDLC):

- This course is focused on continuous professional development and growth of employees.
- It supports the workforce to remain up to date with current knowledge and practices.
- It does not include unitised assessment.

Recreational Learning Course (RLC):

- This course has a focus on non-professional interests for personal enrichment.

- It is designed to support learners to explore a new pastime, hobby, or craft.
- A learner's knowledge and skills are formally measured through informal formative assessment.

I have not written a course before. Does VQA offer any support?

VQA has produced a comprehensive guide to support centres in developing an endorsed course. Centres can also use regulated qualifications for inspiration. Please use regulated courses for inspiration only; the content and title of an endorsed course cannot align with regulated qualifications.

Additionally, we offer regular webinars and Q&A sessions, plus our expert qualification developers are on hand to answer any questions you may have.

Are there any restrictions on the types of courses or subjects that can be submitted for endorsement?

You are not restricted by which course type you can submit; the only stipulation is that the course is developed and delivered by someone who is qualified and has relevant experience in the subject area.

All sectors are open for consideration, but we will not consider applications in subject areas where there is an associated risk or constraint, as outlined below. We are unable to consider an application where the course:

- involves a regulated profession (as defined in the Professional Qualifications Act and where a full list of regulated professions is referenced)
- purpose or content overlaps or competes with regulated qualifications
- involves teaching and developing techniques that result in semi-permanent or permanent changes to an individual's appearance. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - tattooing and microblading
    - cosmetic and aesthetic procedures
    - any form of body modification (such as piercing or implants).

What level of detail is required for learning outcomes and assessment criteria?

Learning outcomes should clearly state what learners are expected to know, understand, or do by the end of the course.

You may follow the structure outlined in our regulated qualification provision or use the information provided in the main guidance document.

Does an endorsed course have to be delivered face-to-face?

No. An endorsed course can be delivered online, face-to-face, or use a combination of methods.

Why do I need to adhere to the titling conventions?

As part of creating a strong and recognisable endorsed product with VQA's seal of approval, you must adhere to the titling conventions outlined in our guidance. This helps ensure that the course's title is clear and does not mislead learners or imply that the course is a regulated qualification.

If you're finding it difficult to write the title of your course, you can contact the Qualifications Team and we will be happy to offer suggestions.

Can I support an endorsed course at any level?

Courses at Level 6 and above are not considered for endorsement. Each endorsed course type follows a levelling structure as outlined below:

- Certified Learning Course: Levels 1 – 5 (these levels adhere to the Ofqual guidance for levelling regulated qualifications).
- Professional Development Learning Course: Foundation, Proficient, Advanced.
- Recreational Learning Course: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced.

Can my course be written and assessed in a language other than English?

Currently, we only accept endorsed course applications written and assessed in English.

What kind of support does VQA provide during the application process?

During the application process, we provide centres with the following:

- A guidance document.
- Information on how to write learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Example documents and templates.
- Access to external quality assurance support.

What specific documents are required for submission?

When you are ready to apply for approval, you must provide:

- Justification for the course to include how it addresses a need or skills gap.
- An overview of the course aims and objectives.
- Detailed learning outcomes and assessment criteria if submitting a CLC.
- A summary of the course structure.
- Information on how learners will evidence successful attainment.
- Details of teaching staff's qualifications.
- Details of how quality standards are maintained.
- Copies of relevant centre policies.

I am ready to submit my application. What do I do?

If you have recently become an approved centre and this is your first endorsed course application, please contact the Business Development Team and they will send you a link to the online form. You will need to ensure that you have:

- the course teaching content
- an equipment list you will use to support the delivery of this qualification (if you are applying for approval of a Recreational Learning Course).

In the form, you will need to enter:

- the details of any person delivering the course and their qualifications and experience
- a course rationale
- suggested progression routes for learners
- assessment strategy
- the course launch date.

I am ready to submit my application. What do I do?

If you have any questions about what course is best for your centre needs, our Business Development Team can provide you with support

When you are ready to submit your application and have any questions about the process, you can contact the Qualifications Team.

Who can I contact to support my application?

The length of the endorsement process will depend on the type of course you are proposing and the completeness of the submitted information.

We will respond to your endorsed course application within two working days and, provided you have supplied all the information required, we aim to provide you with an answer within 10 working days of the receipt of your submission.

How detailed is the feedback provided during the first review of the application?

Following an initial review, if we require further information, it may be because of issues such as:

- the titling convention
- the aims and objectives of the course and its target audience
- the learning outcomes and how they align with the content
- the delivery model
- missing details of how you will maintain the quality of the course and review its content
- missing details of how learners' achievements will be assessed and evidenced
- missing information on how the course will be advertised and marketed.

What happens if my course is not approved?

If we decide that we are unable to approve your endorsed course application, we will provide you with detailed feedback about the reasons why. Our feedback would

advise on whether we would reconsider the application if amendments were made to it or whether we were unable to approve it at all.

What happens when my course is approved?

When we approve your endorsed course, we will confirm this by email.

We will inform other departments about the approval so we can ensure a smooth process and support you with any questions about quality assurance and the practicalities of claiming certificates for your learners.

Are there any advertising restrictions?

Yes, there are rules about how you advertise your endorsed course.

All advertising must be clear and accurate, and state that the course is endorsed and not a regulated qualification.

Any marketing of the course must avoid making any misleading claims about outcomes, progression, or recognition, and any use of VQA's logo must follow our brand guidelines. This document will provide you with answers to our advertising FAQs.

What is the process for submitting learner certification claims once the course is approved?

You will be provided with a spreadsheet upon course approval. This spreadsheet should be completed in full and submitted to our Operations Team when your learners have completed the course.

What evidence is required for annual/biannual reviews?

An External Quality Assurer will conduct an annual or biannual review and will need to see evidence which demonstrates that the centre is continuing to comply with VQA's expectations in line with the centre agreement.

The EQA may request sight of:

- course materials including any changes to course structure or delivery
- copies of promotional materials and a review of online presence
- details of learner registrations
- details of learner feedback
- samples of learner work
- staff training records
- updates to centre policies
- details of any complaints and how they were resolved
- evidence of consistency.

If updates are needed for an approved course, what is the process for submitting revisions?

If we require updates to be made to an approved course, we will provide you with a list of actions you need to take. This may include:

- a request for a review of the aims and objectives
- suggested course content revisions
- updates to the assessment methods used
- amendments to promotional materials
- amendments to the centre's website.

This information should be sent to our Qualifications Team along with the course name and title and a Word or PDF document that outlines the changes you wish to make. You will not need to reapply via the application link given when first submitting the course.

What are the associated costs or fees?

We've designed our new endorsed provision to provide industry-leading value. The costs for endorsement are:

- an annual centre recognition fee of £1,500. This fee includes two endorsed course applications and will not be incurred by centres who are already recognised by us (and therefore have already paid their recognition fee).
- (for RLCs). The difference is due to the number of reviews required: CLCs and PDLCs need two, while RLCs need just one.

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Company number 07827508.
Registered address: Crossgate House, Cross Street, Sale, England, M33 7FT.