

Centre Approval Process

Quality Assurance Standards

Version 1.1

Last modified 31-October-2025

For external use

Version control

This is version 1.1 of the City & Guilds / ILM Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Approval Process. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all staff involved in the provision of City & Guilds / ILM qualifications and/or assessments familiarise themselves with this version of the document.

This document is subject to revision and maintained electronically. Electronic copies are version controlled. Printed copies are not subject to this control.

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Date
1.1	Updates to reflect changes to Expression of Interest form and Centre Approval (CAP) form Addition of steps one to five to clarify the process Amended references to City and Guilds	31.10.2025

Introduction

Organisations wishing to offer City & Guilds and ILM qualifications must first become an approved centre. The centre approval process requires you to meet our centre quality assurance criteria, to deliver our qualifications and assessments to the required standards. Approval is the first stage of our comprehensive quality assurance model. Following this, we continue to monitor approved centres' capacity to meet our quality assurance criteria.

We have designed our centre approval process to be clear and straightforward, whilst maintaining our rigorous quality assurance standards. Our dedicated Centre Quality team are on hand to facilitate and support centres through the approval process.

Centre approval includes an initial qualification approval. Approved centres wishing to offer additional qualifications must complete the qualification approval process.

This document outlines the key steps in the approval process for prospective centres, from the initial customer application form through to approval being granted. It is for use for use by any staff involved in the approval process.

Step one: Meeting the criteria

Firstly, please ensure you have read and understand the Centre quality assurance criteria section of this document and are confident that all requirements are in place.

Step two: The Customer Application Form

Please complete the Customer Application Form with as much information as possible to register your interest in becoming an approved Centre.

Step three: We'll be in touch

Our Sales team will respond to your Customer Application form within five working days to provide guidance on the process and evaluate the suitability of your organisation becoming a City & Guilds centre, subject to our terms and conditions.

The decision to progress your enquiry is at our sole discretion. Should we determine not to proceed, we will endeavour to suggest alternative options; however, please note that this decision is final and not subject to appeal.

If we confirm that your enquiry is suitable to progress, you'll be invited to complete an Application of Interest form.

Once submitted, we'll review your information and carry out a credit check. Depending on the outcome, you'll then move on to step four of the process.

Step four: The Centre Approval Application form (CAP)

The Centre Quality team will set you up with access to our secure online administration system, Walled Garden. This platform allows centres access to:

- view the City & Guilds and ILM catalogues
- submit approval applications
- track the progress of approvals
- view external quality assurance feedback reports

You will receive an email with the link and access details for Walled Garden. The email will also contain instructions on how to access the Centre Approval form (CAP), which is the next step of the approval process.

You can access the Centre Approval form (CAP) in the Quality Portal, a dedicated area within Walled Garden designed to support you in planning and managing your centre's quality assurance activities. This form captures a range of information detailed in the table below, including the qualifications you are seeking approval to deliver.

The CAP form **must** be completed and submitted within ten working days of access being granted to the Walled Garden. If the form is not submitted within the allocated timeframe, we will assume that you no longer wish to continue with your application at this time, and therefore the application will be withdrawn.

Once your CAP form has been submitted, our Centre Quality team will review it to ensure all required information is complete. We'll then allocate an external associate to your centre to conduct the Centre approval activity.

Please refer to our **Centre Charges List** for costs of approval (available on the website).

The Centre Approval Application (CAP)

The CAP is split into the following sections:

Contact Details	Centre address, quality contact (for all quality queries), head of centre
Current / Previous Approvals	Detail whether the organisation has or had any approval with City & Guilds/ILM previously.
Systems, Procedures and Resources	To confirm that qualification assessment and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) procedures are in place as well as required policies (as detailed in Centre quality assurance criteria) e.g. Conflict of Interest, subcontractor arrangements, alternative locations and secure storage facilities for exam papers and assessment materials.
Learner Support	Systems are in place to track learner progress and support them through their qualification.
Centre Quality Performance	Detail of how the organisation will monitor and evaluate the assessment and quality assurance of the qualification
Qualification Details	QAP detailing the qualification approvals being sought, including estimated number of candidates to be registered, staffing involved etc
Delivery and Resource	Confirmation that the organisation has the staff and physical resources required for the qualification assessment and IQA arrangements. This includes appropriate assessment sites.
Possible Sources of Evidence	Tick box section to confirm the sources of evidence the organisation will provide to support the application.

Declaration	Head of centre confirms acceptance of City & Guilds conditions
Payment Method	How the organisation will pay for centre approval

If you have any questions at all about completion of the CAP, please do get in touch with the Centre Quality team.

When completing the CAP, you can save and exit the CAP as often as you need. Upon completion, click 'Submit'. A large green ✓ will appear on the screen.

If there are errors or the system identifies that information is missing, the screen will remain the same and you will need to scroll through the application to identify the errors/missing information (highlighted in red).

We process all CAP forms within 30 working days of receipt.

Step five: Centre approval and qualification approval activity

The date for the approval activity will be agreed between the external associate and the centre.

The role of the external associate is to conduct the Centre approval activity ensuring that all necessary systems, resources and procedures are in place before approval can be granted.

A centre approval report will be completed by the external associate. This report is split into three sections and outlines whether the centre meets our approval requirements:

- **Supporting Evidence** – External associate comments on the physical resources, staff resources assessment and quality assurance requirements. This will include good practice identified as well as areas for improvement.
- **Action Plan** – Any actions the centre needs to meet are referenced to Centre and Qualification quality assurance criteria and are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound)
- **Additional Comments** – Any other relevant information that the external associates feel may affect the approval application.

Following the approval activity the report is submitted to our Centre Quality team for final review.

We will then confirm the decision in writing and the Centre Approval report will be made available to view in the Quality Portal, in the 'Online Forms' tab following the confirmation. This report is called a "CAPv and QAPv" in the dropdown options.

Where actions have been raised, the centre will have to forward evidence to the Centre Quality team to confirm the actions have been met. If required, a further approval activity may be arranged.

Centre approval and qualification approval granted (with or without action plan)

Where approval is granted, we will write to the organisation to confirm it is now an approved City & Guilds/ILM centre and provide them with a unique six-digit centre number. A certificate of centre approval will be issued. Future external quality assurance activities will also be arranged at this stage, depending on the types of qualifications being offered.

Centres can then register candidates for the qualifications they are approved for on Walled Garden and undertake delivery and assessments (in line with the guidance in the relevant qualification and/or assessment documentation). For qualifications where centres can claim

certificates themselves, they will require a first positive EQA sampling activity before claims can take place.

Once approved, centres can apply for further qualification approvals via the catalogue on Walled Garden and submitting a Qualification Approval form (QAP) for processing. Further information on applying for additional qualification approvals can be found in the Centre Handbook, section 2.12.

Centre quality assurance criteria

The centre quality assurance criteria are what initial centre approval is measured against and represent the minimum requirements that centres must adhere to, to retain this approval.

The table below lists the criteria, along with the sources of evidence that organisations will need to supply at approval, and upon subsequent ongoing external quality assurance monitoring.

Centre quality assurance criteria	Sources of evidence
The centre has a single named Centre Quality Contact	A documented named point of accountability for management of quality assurance, with secure contact details (specific to the centre).
The centre can hold and securely transmit details of assessment outcomes	Documented procedures to ensure security when sending and receiving details of learner information to us.
The centre has the staff, resources and systems needed to support: - the delivery of assessment - where necessary, the recording of any appropriate exemptions	- Documented quality assurance procedures - An organisational chart - Up-to-date CVs, original certificates, and/or assessor qualifications of the assessment/delivery team - Documented procedures for registering learners within 12 weeks (unless there is a specified exception to this rule e.g. a short course programme, SVQs) - Learner tracking documentation - Procedures for recording exemptions, internal appeals, complaints, malpractice, maladministration, reasonable adjustments, special considerations and plagiarism - Induction plans for centre staff involved with delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance - A documented Equal Opportunities policy and procedures, along with evidence of their implementation

	• A documented Health & Safety policy and procedures, along with evidence of their implementation.
The centre has administrative systems in place to track the learner's progress	• Records of learner tracking systems • Assessment records • Individual Learning Plans (ILP) – where appropriate.
The centre has arrangements in place that allow for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	• Records of initial assessment procedures • Learner induction plans • Individual Learning Plans (ILP).
The centre documents the respective roles and responsibilities of any partnership arrangements, including satellite centres, additional assessment sites and subcontracted providers. This includes their contractual relationship.	• Partner contracts and service agreements • Recorded agreements for roles and responsibilities.
The centre must give access to premises, people and records, and to cooperate with any of the allocated quality assurance activities.	Access to all documentation as requested by the EQA
The centre declares any withdrawn centre and/or qualification approval from us or other Awarding Organisations. The centre contact declares if they have been a director or centre contact for any centre that has had any approval removed.	• The CAP form at approval should be completed to include this information if applicable • Completion and sign-off of the Centre Update Form (CU form) for ongoing compliance.

Centre Document Library

The City & Guilds Centre document library can be found at www.cityandguilds.com/delivering-our-qualifications/centre-development/centre-document-library

This is a resource area designed for our centres and has practical guidance information to help you with every aspect of running our qualifications.

The guidance covers everything from initial approval and centre charges, malpractice, to learner exam administration, policies and procedures.

Contact us

T: 01924 930800

E: centresupport@cityandguilds.com

Lines open: Monday to Friday 08.00 to 18.00 GMT

About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is the global skills partner, empowering people, organisations and economies to develop the skills they need for growth. With almost 150 years of trusted expertise, we support people into work, help them develop on the job and move into the next job.

We work with Governments, employers, training providers, colleges and industry stakeholders to design and deliver high-quality training, qualifications, assessments and credentials that lead to meaningful career progression. We understand the life changing link between skills development, social mobility and success. Our solutions span critical sectors including construction, engineering, transport, energy and electrical, serving over 1 million learners annually.

Through our comprehensive portfolio of brands and trusted global network, we set industry-wide standards for technical, behavioural and commercial skills to improve

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is true and correct at time of going to press. However, City & Guilds' products and services are subject to continuous development and improvement and the right is reserved to change products and services from time to time. City & Guilds cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage arising from the use of information in this publication.