Being an AIM Awards Centre

Welcome

AIM Awards Aspire to Inspire providers to Motivate learners to achieve. We have a portfolio of qualifications ranging from Entry 1 to Level 5 that are used by over 300 colleges, schools and training providers. Last year over 34,000 learners registered with us through our Centres.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you work as a recognised centre by:

- Providing guidance on working with us, from becoming a centre through to certificating learners
- Making you aware of your responsibilities

At the end of each section of this handbook are references to the documents you will need, the documents we will use and our regulator Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition that apply. All related documents are available on our website.

Customer Service Statement

AIM Awards provides a high quality, effective and efficient service. Centres are supported in the strategic development of their AIM Awards provision, including on-going delivery, administration and quality assurance. Our staff is committed to providing these services in a responsive, accessible and prompt manner in accordance with our published Service Standard timescales outlined in this document.

We endeavour to provide you with the best possible service to enable you to cater for the needs of all your learners. We will do this by ensuring our service is:

Prompt	• We will work to our published timelines for registration and certification
Efficient	• We will ensure our published information is up to date, accurate and accessible • We will use plain English in all our correspondence and documentation • We will ensure all our systems and procedures meet or exceed external audit requirements
Responsive	• Our friendly, trained staff will provide a courteous, prompt response to any enquiry you make • We will maintain a flexible approach in working with you to meet your needs • We will work with you in responding to the needs of your learners
Supportive	• We will publish a programme of training and information sessions • We will publish up to date guidelines on all aspects of our service • We will provide online access to appropriate documentation, news and information • We will allocate a named Customer Support Officer, Curriculum Contact and Quality Reviewer to each provider to give on-going support • We will appoint an External Verifier to each provider on receipt of your learner registration documentation
Professional	• We will work to high professional standards and we are committed to continuous improvement • We will use our resources to best effect and conduct our work with integrity

We will regularly ask you about the types of services you require and your level of satisfaction with our existing services. The services we provide are only as good as your feedback, so please let us know how we can improve, so we can respond accordingly.

Contents

Getting centre approval

Approval

If you wish to offer AIM Awards qualifications and units, you need to become a recognised centre. To apply to become a recognised centre all you need to do is complete the **Centre Application Form** available on our website (http://www.aimawards.org.uk) and return it along with your **Centre Policies** as requested and a signed to enquiries@aimawards.org.uk. You may complete **Qualification Approval Forms** at this stage if you know which qualifications you wish to offer.

If you need help in deciding which of our qualifications are best suited to your learners or in completing your application then please get in touch and we will allocate a Curriculum Contact to you. They will work with you to ensure that you can make the most of our offer and help you prepare to submit your application for centre recognition.

Our simple centre recognition process involves a review of your completed form and centre policies along with a telephone meeting or visit from a Quality Reviewer, depending on the nature of your centre.

Once you have been approved and have paid the annual centre recognition fee we will send you a Certificate to show that you are an AIM Awards recognised centre.

All centres are allocated a team who will then support and guide you through the delivery of your chosen qualifications:

> **Customer Support Officer** – to help with all aspects of learner registration and certification

> **Curriculum Contact** – to work with you on your qualification offer

> **Quality Reviewer** – to work with you and approve your quality assurance arrangements

Our **New Centre Support Team** are here to help with any queries on 01332 861 986.

Centre decides to run AIM Awards qualifications. Centre ensures appropriate resources are in place
Centre staff

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AIM Awards Curriculum Development Contact discusses curriculum offer and preparation for application (If necessary)
Curriculum Contact / Centre staff

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Centre submits application, centre policies and signed centre agreement
Centre staff

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Application (including centre policies) reviewed, initial Quality Review call or visit carried out, any actions set for centre
Quality Reviewer (QR)/Officer

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Centre given approval, team at AIM Awards allocated to centre
Quality Officer

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Centre ensures AIM Awards notified of any changes in named contact
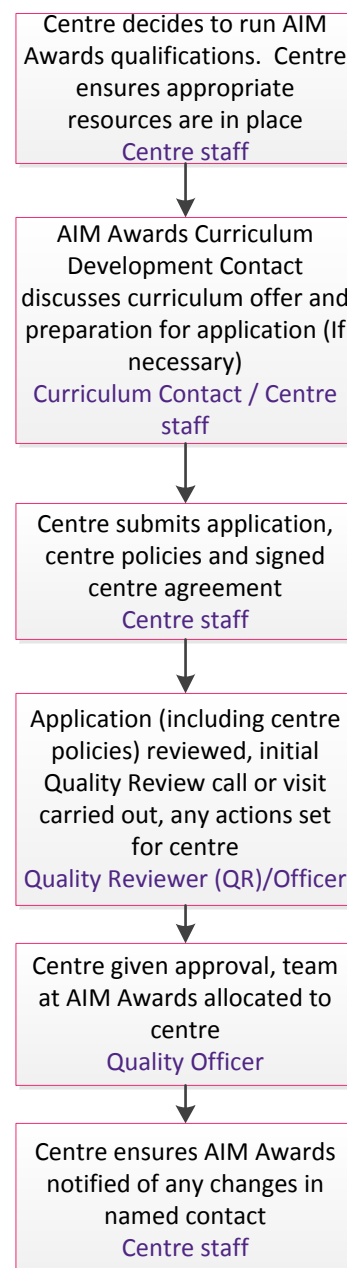Centre staff

Putting the correct resources in place

The centre agreement covers the requirements that centres must adhere to in order to be able to deliver AIM Awards qualifications and units. You must ensure that you have sufficient staff to be able to deliver the qualifications you are approved to run, including administration, teaching, assessing, quality assurance and management of the provision. You need to ensure that assessors and Internal Verifiers (IVs) are occupationally competent and knowledgeable to be able to assess and quality assure appropriately.

It is important to remember that the IV is responsible for the integrity of the qualification and that any potential conflicts of interest are avoided (for example assessing work completed by a family member).

You must also have appropriate facilities for teaching and assessing the qualifications, for example classrooms, access to IT, libraries etc. All resources will be considered as part of the Quality Review cycle.

We offer a wide range of training days that are listed and can be booked on our website. These include training on assessment, verification and about our qualifications and we offer bespoke training if required.

Working with us and changes at the centre

Please help us to help you:

- Provide us with as much information as you can when you make an enquiry
- Comply with any requests for information or documents in a timely manner
- Circulate our documentation and information to all appropriate staff and/or learners promptly
- Complete our documentation fully and accurately
- Inform your Customer Support Officer by email of changes to your named contacts, address or delivery sites

Documents you will need:	Centre Application Form Centre Agreement Qualification Approval Form
Documents we will use:	Centre Recognition Report
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	C1.1, C1.2, C2.1, C2.2, C2.3

Getting approval to run qualifications

Qualification specifications

Our **Qualification Specifications** contain full details about our qualifications, including the title, the rules of combination required to achieve each qualification, links to the units within the qualification, any specialist information and provide guidance on how to assess and deliver. They also include the end dates for the qualification and units.

Certain qualifications require that centres have specialist resources, or that staff assessing or internally verifying the qualification have certain qualifications or experience and this information is detailed in the qualification specifications. Proof of these resources may be required for certain qualifications.

Qualification approval

You need to get approval to run each qualification you'd like to deliver.

Please note we have separate processes for the approval and administration of Access to Higher Education qualifications.

Most centres have an internal process to approve each course or qualification that is delivered. Once this has been completed a **Qualification Approval Form** (QAF) for each qualification to be delivered must be completed and signed by someone with suitable authority at your centre (for example a Curriculum Manager).

Qualification Approval Forms are located on our website and within each Qualification Specification and are pre-filled with the qualification details.
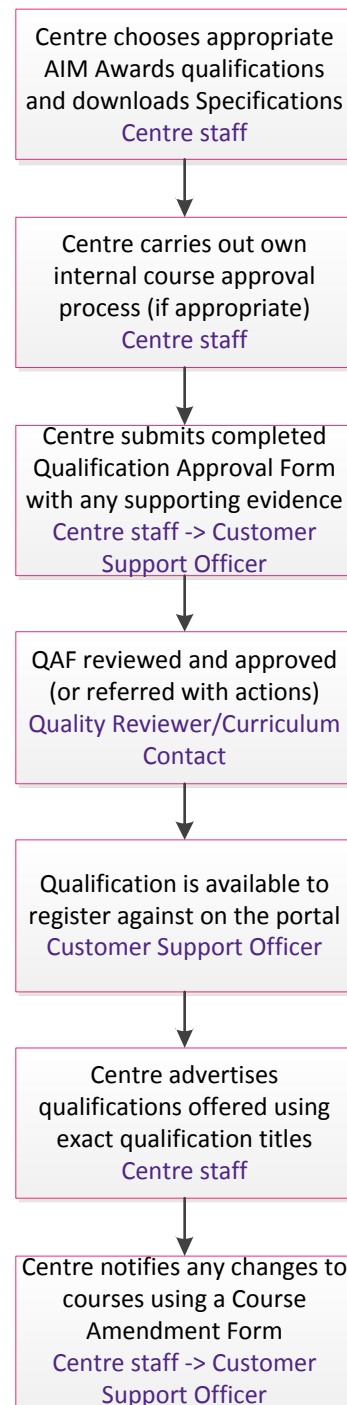
Completed Qualification Approval Forms must be submitted electronically to your allocated Customer Support Officer. Your allocated Quality Reviewer will review the application and any supporting evidence and when any queries have been answered, approval will be granted. Once the approval process is complete you will be able to register against this qualification on the portal.

Approval to deliver qualifications is valid until withdrawn either by the centre or by AIM Awards. Changes can be made over the academic year by submitting a **Course Amendment Form**. Centres will be notified annually of the courses that are currently approved via their nominated internal Administration and Centre contacts.

Qualification development

Centres that have specific curriculum requirements that are not currently met by the AIM Awards portfolio of qualifications can contact their allocated Curriculum Contact to discuss developing QCF qualifications where there is sufficient demand.

If you have training courses that do not lead to a QCF qualification we can offer you the AIM Awards Quality Mark for Approved Training Courses which provides your delegates with our seal of approval. Your delegates will be issued with certificates of attendance printed by us. For further information on the AIM Awards Quality Mark please visit our website or get in touch.

Centre chooses appropriate AIM Awards qualifications and downloads Specifications
Centre staff

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Centre carries out own internal course approval process (if appropriate)
Centre staff

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Centre submits completed Qualification Approval Form with any supporting evidence
Centre staff -> Customer Support Officer

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QAF reviewed and approved (or referred with actions)
Quality Reviewer/Curriculum Contact

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Qualification is available to register against on the portal
Customer Support Officer

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Centre advertises qualifications offered using exact qualification titles
Centre staff

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Centre notifies any changes to courses using a Course Amendment Form
Centre staff -> Customer Support Officer

Advertising qualifications/courses

You must ensure that the correct titles of all AIM Awards qualifications and units are used in your advertising (as per the Qualification Specifications/Units) and that qualifications/courses are not promoted in a manner that could be misleading to learners or potential learners.

You should not put copies of AIM Awards qualification specifications, units, handbooks, policies or assessment resources on your website as these may be changed and updated. Instead, you can put links to the relevant sections of the AIM Awards website.

Full details can be found in our **Public Information** policy**.**

Documents you will need:	Qualification Specifications Qualification Approval Form Course Amendment Form Public Information
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	B5.2, C2.3

Registering learners

Confirming identity

Once the curriculum offer has been decided and you are approved to deliver qualifications you can enrol learners to the course. It is essential that upon enrolling learners their identity is confirmed in order that we can be assured that qualifications are being awarded appropriately. In most cases learners have to complete an enrolment form and at enrolment the centre checks their identity via a passport, driving licence or other documentation.

Unique Learner Numbers and the privacy notice

At the enrolment stage a range of information about each learner must be obtained in order that they can be registered with us correctly, as a minimum: first name, surname, date of birth, postcode and ULN.

You are responsible for obtaining a Unique Learner Number (ULN) for each learner and ensuring learners are issued with a Privacy Notice explaining that their personal information will be shared with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and other education related organisations.

Standard text is available for this on the Learning Records Service website: http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/documents/privacy-notices-eng.htm

If a learner chooses not to have their public information shared they must inform the Learner Records Service. Further details about ULNs:

http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/comms/aquickguidetodataquality.htm

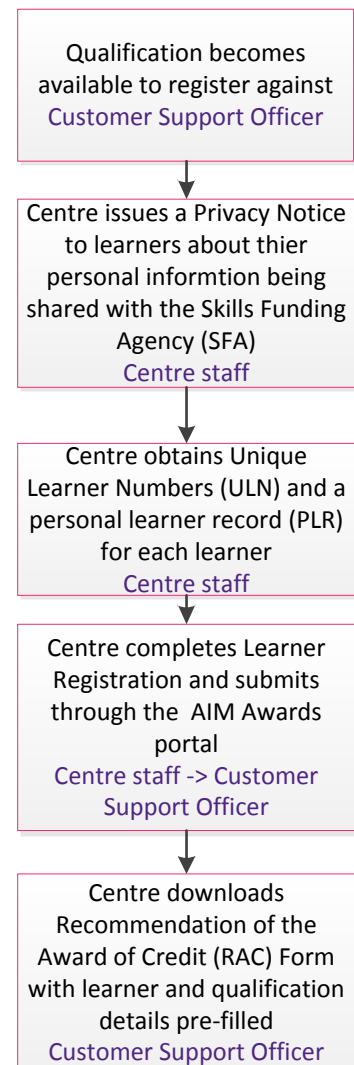## Registering learners – the AIM Awards Registration and Awards Portal

Once you have approval to offer a qualification we will send the person that sent in the Qualification Approval Form an email inviting you to register learners via the AIM Awards Online Portal.

Qualification becomes available to register against
Customer Support Officer

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Centre issues a Privacy Notice to learners about thier personal informtion being shared with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
Centre staff

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Centre obtains Unique Learner Numbers (ULN) and a personal learner record (PLR) for each learner
Centre staff

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Centre completes Learner Registration and submits through the AIM Awards portal
Centre staff -> Customer Support Officer

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Centre downloads Recommendation of the Award of Credit (RAC) Form with learner and qualification details pre-filled
Customer Support Officer

You will need to set up accounts in order to use the Portal to carry out administration of your centre. You will need to discuss this with your Customer Support Officer and provide us with details of the staff that require accounts. We will send you a **Portal Guidance** document which provides full details about using the Portal and we can provide training if required. The AIM Awards Online Portal allows you to:

- Register learners
- Submit documentation, including Course Amendment Forms
- Review learners and runs
- Upload completed **Recommendation for the Award of Credit** (RAC) forms
- Authorise RAC claims for certification

You must ensure that learners are registered onto the correct programme on the Portal (a programme is your chosen set of units from your approved qualification) and check that the correct units are listed. You must check all learner registrations carefully in order to avoid Maladministration and Malpractice. Please note that registrations will not be processed until the annual centre recognition fee has been paid.

Once learners are registered an RAC form will be produced for each programme. You will be able to download your RAC forms within **four weeks of receipt** of correctly submitted registrations.

The RAC is used to claim the learners' achievements at the end of the course and so the details must be checked carefully as these will appear on any certificates issued. RACs are allocated a Run Number which is used to identify them in communications.

Please inform us **within 14 days of receipt** of any changes that need to be made to the details on the RAC. We reserve the right to charge for replacement certificates issued as a result of inaccurate information provided by centres. For further information on RACs and claiming achievement please see page 16.

Late registration fees

Timely registration of learners allows us to certificate in a timely fashion as per our service standards, and is a condition of the Centre Agreement. A late registration charge per learner will be charged for registrations submitted after the deadlines specified below in addition to the normal registration charge. Charges are detailed in our **Fees and charges**.

- For courses of **15 weeks or less**, the Learner Registrations should be submitted **within 25 working days of the start date**
- **For all other courses, the Learner Registrations should be submitted within 60 working days of the start date**
- If when you come to register your learners you are over the above deadlines the portal will ask you to confirm this is correct.

Maladministration

Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in non-compliance with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications. Examples of potential maladministration include:

- A learner being registered against different units with different dates of birth (eg due to a typo or administration error) which could lead to learners not receiving the correct certificates
- Assessor ticking the wrong boxes on the RAC which could lead to learner receiving credit for units they have not completed

Maladministration is always taken seriously by AIM Awards and our regulator Ofqual. Full details of types of malpractice and how we deal with incidents of potential malpractice are defined in our **Malpractice** policy document.

Documents you will need:	Standard Learner Registration Template Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC) Fees and charges Malpractice Portal Guidance
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	G5.1

Assessing learners' work

Setting assessments

You need to be very clear about what will be assessed on the course. In order to ensure that learners achieve the qualification(s) they are registered on, they must provide evidence that they have achieved all units specified in the Rules of Combination for that qualification. These are described in the **Qualification Specifications**.

Initial assessments may be put in place before the start of the course to establish the level each learner is working at in order that you register them on to the correct level of qualification.

Formative assessments should be planned at various points throughout the course to establish how well each learner is progressing and to provide each learner with developmental feedback to help them improve.

Summative assessments are the tasks that you plan to gather the evidence for each learner for each unit.

These summative tasks should be devised to ensure that each learner provides evidence that they have achieved all Assessment Criteria for all Learning Outcomes for each of the units. All assessment tasks and methods should comply with the principles of assessment in that they should be**:**

- Open, Transparent, Fair and Inclusive
- Continuous
- Reliable, Consistent and Rigorous
- Relevant and Valid
- Sufficient
- And allow learners to produce work that is Authentic

You must ensure that all learners are assessed in:

- English in England
- English or Welsh in Wales and
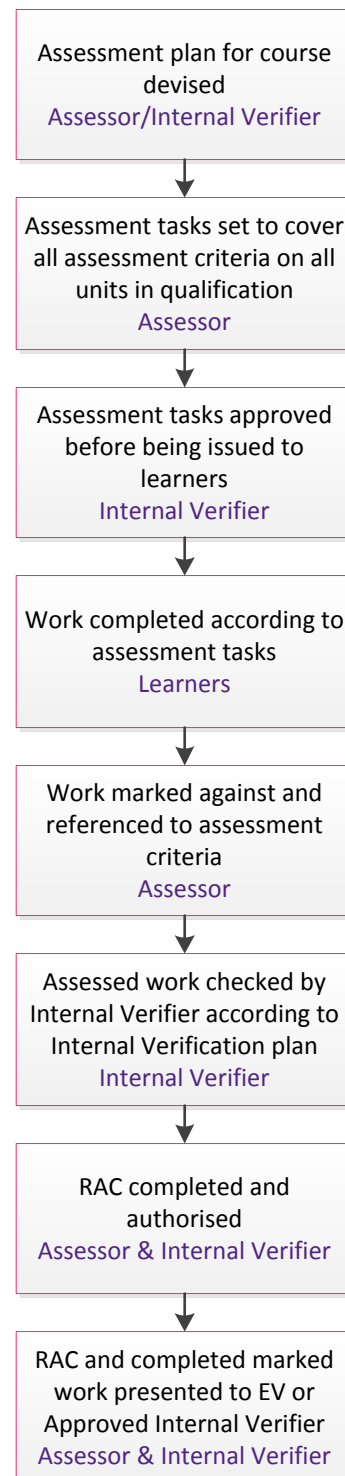- English or Irish in Northern Ireland

unless they are being assessed in a qualification specifically about learning a foreign language.

Where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, for example an Examination, learners must complete the assessment under those conditions other than where any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration require alternative conditions (see next section of handbook).

Please note for some qualifications, for example Functional Skills, assessments are devised, issued to centres and marked by the Awarding Organisation. Full detail on registration, assessment, invigilation and quality assurance is provided in the **Qualification Specification** for those qualifications.

Approval of assessment tasks

Once suitable assessment tasks have been devised they must be approved by the Internal Verifier before being given to learners. The Internal Verifier will ensure that the tasks meet the principles of assessment, and that they allow learners to provide sufficient authentic evidence against all of the assessment criteria.

Assessment plan for course devised
Assessor/Internal Verifier

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Assessment tasks set to cover all assessment criteria on all units in qualification
Assessor

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Assessment tasks approved before being issued to learners
Internal Verifier

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Work completed according to assessment tasks
Learners

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Work marked against and referenced to assessment criteria
Assessor

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Assessed work checked by Internal Verifier according to Internal Verification plan
Internal Verifier

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RAC completed and authorised
Assessor & Internal Verifier

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RAC and completed marked work presented to EV or Approved Internal Verifier
Assessor & Internal Verifier

Conflict of interest

You must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a Learner (including Verification) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

Marking

You must ensure that evidence generated by individual learners in an assessment is generated by that learner, ie that plagiarism does not occur.

Once learners have completed work against the assessment tasks the assessor must mark the work against the assessment criteria to ensure that it is sufficient, appropriate, authentic and at the correct level for the unit. It is good practice to check work in progress and give learners developmental feedback to help them improve (formative assessment).

Assessors must make it clear to the internal and external verifiers where in the work achievement of each assessment criteria has been evidenced. Once the work has been marked and signed off as meeting the assessment criteria by the assessor final feedback should be provided to the learner. The assessor must tick the RAC to indicate which unit(s) each learner has achieved and then sign to confirm the certification.

The completed marked work should be presented to the Internal Verifier for sampling according to the internal verification plan. Once this process has been completed the internal verifier must sign the RAC.

The work, completed assessment and IV documentation and completed RAC should be presented to the External Verifier or Approved Internal Verifier (AIV) (if the centre has Direct Claims Status for the completed qualification).

Recognition of Prior Learning and credit transfer

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and transfer of credit exist to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment. Learners may claim RPL or transfer of credit against a whole unit or several units.

The potential for a learner to undertake RPL or credit transfer relies on the course tutor or assessor carrying out effective interview and initial assessment of learners to establish their previous qualifications and experience. A maximum of 70% of a qualification can normally be achieved through equivalency (credit transfer). At least 30% should be gained through new learning. Your funding may be affected if a learner achieves more than 50% of the assessment through RPL.

Credit Transfer offers learners the opportunity to transfer credit from previously accredited unit achievement from within the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) to count towards their qualification. This is possible when the rules of combination for the qualification allow for equivalent units or the learner has completed units from within the qualification previously.

1. The **Course Tutor/Assessor** will check the qualification rules of combination to see what units are allowed as equivalencies

2. The **Learner** will provide evidence of qualifications and units achieved

    Evidence: Original certificates

3. The **Course Tutor/Assessor** must complete an **RPL and Credit Transfer Form**, have it countersigned by the **Internal Verifier** and submit it to their AIM Awards Customer Support Officer

    Evidence: RPL and Credit Transfer Form

4. Verified signed copies of the certificates should be presented alongside the RAC as evidence to the **EV** or **Approved Internal Verifier** for final approval

    Evidence: Verified copies of certificates, RAC

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process of assessing and validating learning or achievement that has not been certificated or accredited previously towards the qualification being studied. Qualification achievement from outside the QCF can be submitted via an RPL claim (**Exemption**). RPL is a negotiated process between learner and assessor and the learner must provide evidence of prior work, learning or achievement to fully satisfy the assessment criteria.
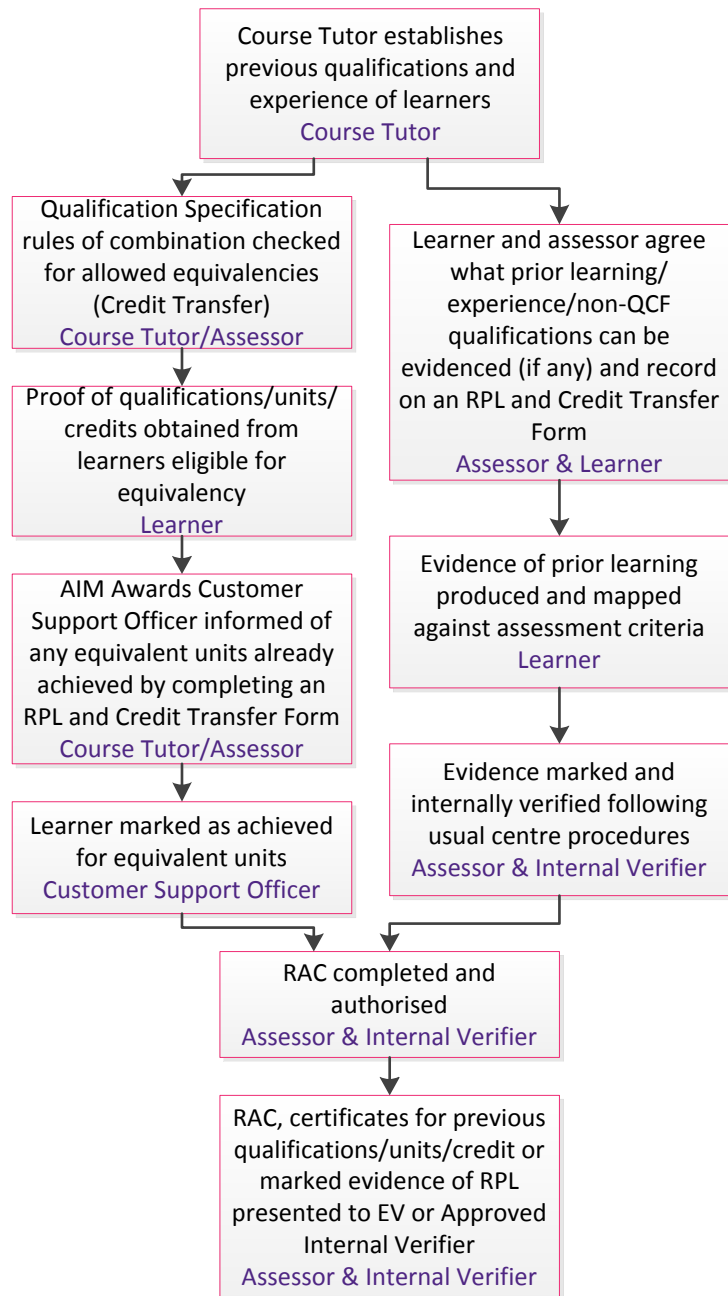
1. The **Learner** and **Assessor** agree what previous learning/experience/non-QCF qualification achievement can be evidenced towards an RPL claim and complete an **RPL and Credit Transfer Form**

2. The **Learner** will provide evidence of prior learning (for example *work experience records, statements from employers, essays, portfolios of evidence, certificates of achievement of non-QCF qualifications*) and map it to the assessment criteria being claimed against

   Evidence: Portfolio of evidence

3. The **Assessor** and **Internal Verifier** will follow their usual centre processes for marking, quality assuring and approving the submitted RPL evidence ensuring it meets the requirements of the unit(s)

   Evidence: Assessment records, IV records

4. The RPL and Credit Transfer Form and RPL evidence must be presented alongside the RAC to the **EV** or **Approved Internal Verifier** for final approval

   Evidence: RPL and Credit Transfer Form, RAC

We reserve the right to exclude the use of RPL in cases such as:

- Licence to practice
- Health and safety requirements
- Regulated professions
- Work placements

Please note that where Credit Transfer or RPL is used towards achievement of a qualification, you will still be charged the full fee for the qualification being claimed.

The AIM Awards website has a set of sample forms that you can use for setting and recording of assessment activity, and for internal verification of the task and marked work.

Documents you will need:	Internal assessment task/brief Internal record of achievement/feedback sheet Internal quality assurance documentation Recommendation for Award of Credit (RAC) RPL and Credit Transfer Form
Documents we will use:	External Verification Report
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	A4.5, C2.3, G2.1

Handling disabilities and events that may effect learner's ability to be assessed

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The nature of any reasonable adjustments depends on the particular requirements as well as on the qualification and assessment methods. Reasonable adjustments are generally not appropriate where the learner's particular difficulty directly effects performance in the actual attributes to be assessed.

Most of our units and qualifications are assessed through internally set and internally assessed assessments. For this type of assessment the Internal Verifier may give permission for reasonable adjustments for a learner without having to apply to AIM Awards for approval, provided that such arrangements do not confer an unfair advantage. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

Low vision aids, overlays	Use of a Practical Assistant
Brailing of non-secure assessment material	Use of a Communicator
Amplification, taped questions and responses	Transcription of a learner's written responses
Supervised rest breaks	Word processor
Use of a Reader	Use of a Prompter
Use of an Writer/Typist/Scribe	Use of Sign Language

The Internal Verifier must approve and record the details of all reasonable adjustments made at the discretion of the centre and must make this available for External Verification.

Strict regulations apply to the implementation of externally set and externally marked assessments taken under examination conditions. If reasonable adjustments are required for any learners taking a qualification assessed in this manner you must consult with and get approval from your allocated Quality Reviewer.

Full details can be found in our **Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations** policy.

Special considerations

Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury, or
- some other event outside of their control

which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.

You should note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date rather than apply special considerations.

You should complete and submit a **Request for Special Consideration form** for each learner requesting special consideration with supporting evidence, which may include medical/psychological evidence or a statement from the invigilator/verifier.

Documents you will need:	Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Request for Reasonable Adjustments Form Request for Special Consideration Form
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	G2.2, G6.1, G7.1

How to quality assure

For full details refer to "How we Quality Assure"

Internal Verification

Internal Verification (IV) is the process by which you regularly sample and evaluate assessment practices and decisions and act on the findings to ensure adherence to the principles of assessment. It involves two key processes, Verification and Standardisation and is carried out by one or more Internal Verifiers. Systems will vary between Centres according to what is appropriate.

An Internal Verification Plan must be developed before the assessment cycle begins to indicate what will happen, when, who is involved and how it will be recorded. When planning IV activity the verifier must take into account delivery sites, number of assessors, range of units, unit levels, assessment methods, borderline cases, reasonable adjustments and any issues arising from previous IV or EV. The Internal Verifier should specify the sample of assessed work from each assessor that they want to see and when and it is important that the sample is sufficient to form a view on the consistency and validity of the assessment. The sample size should be sufficient to ensure that the issues in the list above have been considered and should not be decided by a rule of thumb. It must cover all units and should be increased for new qualifications or assessors new to units and qualifications. IV of the assessment task should take place before tasks are distributed to learners

1. A sample of work in progress should be internally verified in year to ensure that assessment is being carried out effectively and that the assessment tasks are fit for purpose
2. A final sample of completed marked learner work should be verified at the end of the course
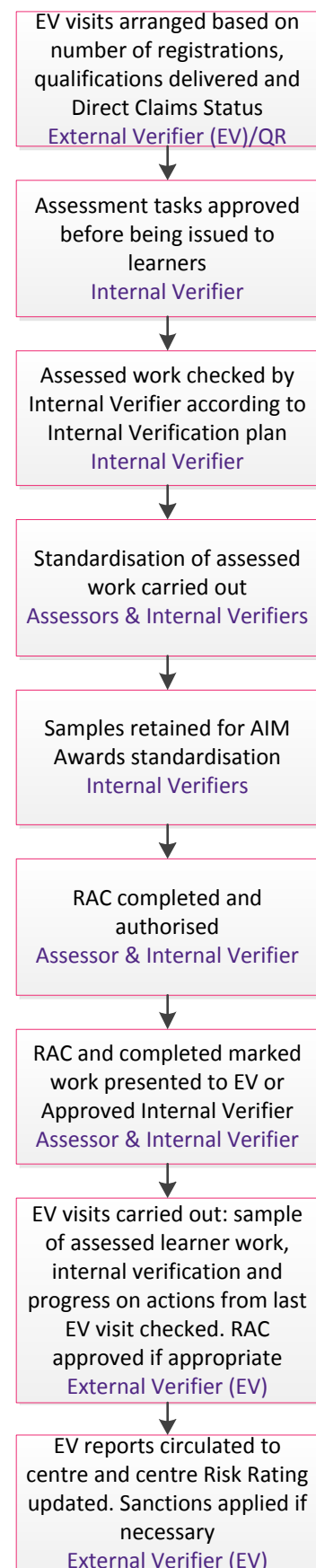
Standardisation

You must

- Plan and undertake standardisation of internally set tasks and the outcomes of internal assessment
- Contribute assessed material to AIM Awards standardisation activity

Standardisation ensures that the assessment criteria for a qualification, unit or component are applied consistently by assessors and verifiers. You must retain a minimum of two samples of assessed learner work for each unit for one year which should represent every assessor (photocopies or scans are acceptable). These samples should be used for internal standardisation and retained for AIM Awards standardisation.

Internal Standardisation is the standardisation of assessment practice where there is more than one tutor/assessor delivering the same or similar courses and making assessment decisions for learners.

AIM Awards standardisation is where as an Awarding Organisation we monitor the assessment and quality assurance of specific units and qualifications across our centres. To do this we collect retained samples from centres, either by asking for you to submit them (post or email) or by the External Verifier (EV) collecting samples when visiting the centre.

EV visits arranged based on number of registrations, qualifications delivered and Direct Claims Status
External Verifier (EV)/QR

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Assessment tasks approved before being issued to learners
Internal Verifier

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Assessed work checked by Internal Verifier according to Internal Verification plan
Internal Verifier

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Standardisation of assessed work carried out
Assessors & Internal Verifiers

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Samples retained for AIM Awards standardisation
Internal Verifiers

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RAC completed and authorised
Assessor & Internal Verifier

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RAC and completed marked work presented to EV or Approved Internal Verifier
Assessor & Internal Verifier

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EV visits carried out: sample of assessed learner work, internal verification and progress on actions from last EV visit checked. RAC approved if appropriate
External Verifier (EV)

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EV reports circulated to centre and centre Risk Rating updated. Sanctions applied if necessary
External Verifier (EV)

External Verification

Once your learner work has been completed, assessed and verified internally according to your IV plan, it should be presented for external verification. You will be allocated a number of external verification visits in each academic year according to your historic and planned number of learner registrations. Every September we will inform you of the number of visits and the name of the External Verifier (EV) you have been allocated, and you must let us know when you would prefer your EV visits to happen. The sooner you let us know the more likely it is that we can visit at your requested dates. Your EV will be in contact in advance of the date to agree specific details.

On the day of the visit the EV will expect to be able to look at all completed and assessed learner work that is being claimed for on the RAC(s). You will need to make records of assessment, IV documentation, feedback to learners, any reasonable adjustments applied and the completed RACs available for the EV to review. If the EV is satisfied with the standards of assessment and verification they will sign to approve the RAC and return it to our office for processing. The EV will give verbal feedback and complete a report for each qualification that has been reviewed which will be emailed to the centre **within 24 hours**. These qualification EV reports and a summary centre EV report will be sent to your named quality contact **within four weeks**. You can request additional chargeable EV visits in addition to those allocated.

Sanctions and Malpractice

If the EV is not satisfied with the standards of assessment or verification they may choose to apply Sanctions. Our sanctions range from not approving the RAC until further work, assessment or verification activity has been carried out, through to at the worst case removing centre approval. These are described in our **Sanctions** policy. Sanctions may also be applied as a result of a Quality Review visit or other identified issue.

If during the course of an EV or Quality Review visit we identify any potential Malpractice (for example plagiarism, false claims) then we will instigate a Malpractice investigation. Depending on the nature of the Malpractice we may ask your quality contact to conduct an investigation and report the findings back to us, or in other cases we may carry out the full investigation ourselves. Once the investigation has been concluded we will inform you of the outcome and any sanctions that will be applied. If the potential Malpractice is deemed to have the potential to lead to an Adverse Effect (ie something that could prejudice certain learners, affect the standards of or public confidence in qualifications) then we must inform our regulator Ofqual who may wish to carry out their own investigation. As per the centre agreement you have a duty to assist us or Ofqual in carrying out any reasonable monitoring or investigations.

Quality Review of centres

In addition to EV visits we carry out a cycle of external quality assurance in the form of Quality Reviews. During Quality Reviews (QR) and EV visits you are assessed against a set of criteria which create an overall risk rating of Green, Amber or Red. These QR visits are to ensure that you are still able to comply with the terms of the centre agreement and that centre policies and procedures are appropriate and consist of meetings with senior staff, assessors, internal verifiers and learners. A QR report will be sent to your named quality contact **within four weeks** and any areas for improvement are noted, action planned and monitored.

New centres receive their first Quality Review visit 12 months after approval and following QR visits are scheduled based on the centre's risk rating. Green centres receive a visit after three years, Amber centres after 18 months and Red centres will require immediate intervention.

Documents you will need:	How we Quality Assure Sanctions Malpractice
Documents we will use:	External Verification Report by qualification External Verification Report by centre Quality Review Report
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	C2.3

Applying for Direct Claims Status

Direct Claims Status (DCS) is where we recognise named individuals at your centre as Approved Internal Verifiers (AIVs) authorised to sign the RAC instead of an EV for specific qualifications/courses. Where DCS is granted the AIV takes on the responsibility of the EV for those qualifications and therefore the AIV must only approve the RAC when they are satisfied with the standards of assessment and verification that have taken place.

DCS relates only to an individual AIV within a particular centre and is not transferable, either between verifiers or between centres. DCS can be withdrawn at any time if either the practice of the AIV or centre falls below the expected standard.

You can nominate appropriate staff to become a AIVs by completing and returning the **Direct Claims Application Form** to the AIM Awards quality team. Completed DCS Application Forms are considered by the quality team and either approved, approved with conditions or rejected. In order to be considered for DCS the following criteria must be met:

- You have at least two EV reports with no actions set, showing excellence or continuous improvement in internal quality assurance
- You have appropriately qualified and/or experienced staff nominated to be Approved Internal Verifiers (AIVs)
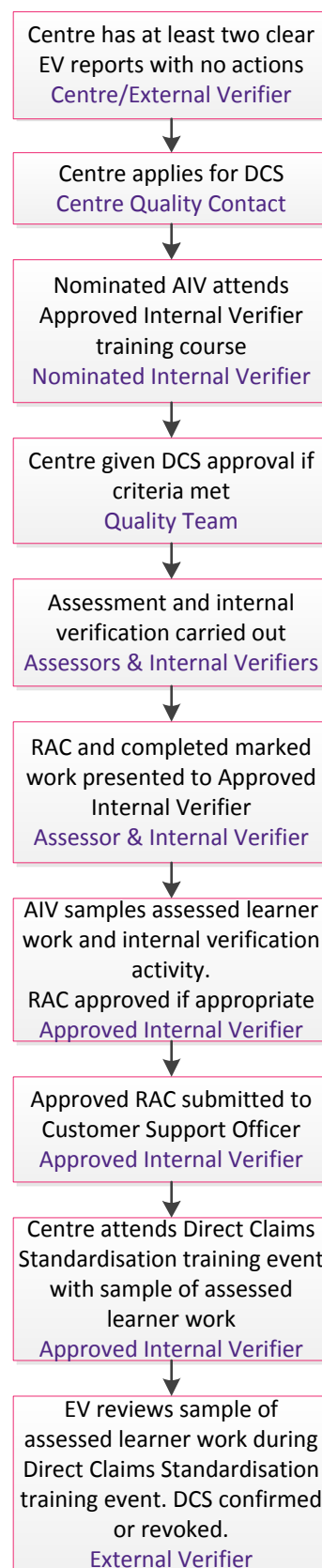
Centre staff nominated to be an AIV must meet the following criteria:

- Have at least 2 years current experience of Internal Verification
- Have attended one of our Approved Internal Verifier training courses and passed the written test
- Ideally AIVs will hold a recognised Internal Verification or Internal Quality Assurance qualification (such as IQA, D34, V1)

Once you have DCS for a qualification/course then those courses will not require External Verification. Once the AIV has approved the RAC it must be returned to your Customer Support Officer who will process it assuming that the AIV has authority to approve that RAC. However unless you have DCS for all approved qualifications then you will still require EV visits for those qualifications that you do not have DCS for.

Direct Claims Status can be extended to additional qualifications/courses either at the point of qualification approval (on the QAF) or by submitting another DCS application form.

All Approved Internal Verifiers must attend a minimum of one DCS Standardisation event per academic year. At these events AIVs must bring a sample of internally verified assessed work to be scrutinised by our EVs and QRs, along with evidence of your internal quality assurance activity. At the same time your AIVs will undertake some training, updating and sharing of practice with the other AIVs in attendance. We will provide details of these events annually to your AIVs.

Centre has at least two clear EV reports with no actions
Centre/External Verifier

↓

Centre applies for DCS
Centre Quality Contact

↓

Nominated AIV attends Approved Internal Verifier training course
Nominated Internal Verifier

↓

Centre given DCS approval if criteria met
Quality Team

↓

Assessment and internal verification carried out
Assessors & Internal Verifiers

↓

RAC and completed marked work presented to Approved Internal Verifier
Assessor & Internal Verifier

↓

AIV samples assessed learner work and internal verification activity.
RAC approved if appropriate
Approved Internal Verifier

↓

Approved RAC submitted to Customer Support Officer
Approved Internal Verifier

↓

Centre attends Direct Claims Standardisation training event with sample of assessed learner work
Approved Internal Verifier

↓

EV reviews sample of assessed learner work during Direct Claims Standardisation training event. DCS confirmed or revoked.
External Verifier

Documents you will need:	Direct Claims Status Application Form
Documents we will use:	External Verification Report by qualification

Getting results and certificates

Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC)

RACs are issued for each run of learner registrations per qualification/course. The RAC will contain the course code, title, learners' names and registration numbers as well as the unit names and codes for the units identified on the 'Units on Run' section of the portal. The RAC must be checked on receipt to ensure the details are correct in terms of the spelling of learners' names, the required units and Unique Learner Numbers. **Please be advised that the exact names on both the LR and RAC are those used on certificates**.

Once the learner work has been assessed the assessor must tick or mark 'achieved' each unit that has been successfully achieved by each learner. The assessor and internal verifier and EV or AIV must sign the RAC once they are satisfied that the work, assessment and verification meets the required standard. The EV will take completed RACs back to the office for processing, or the AIV should return the original copy by post to the office. Where you have AIM Awards Portal access you may be able to complete these steps online.

Timescale for issue of results

Once a correctly completed RAC with all signatures has been received by us, certificates and a summary of credit achievement will be produced and issued by post to your internal Centre Administration Contact within 6 working weeks. Learners that have achieved a qualification will be issued with a Qualification certificate with details of the qualification and units achieved. Learners that have not achieved a qualification will be issued with a Unit Certificate with details of the units and credits achieved. **Please be advised we reserve the right to withhold certificates if fees are outstanding at the time of despatch**.

Certificates will be sent to the centre who registered them, not necessarily where the course was delivered. You are responsible for the distribution of the certificates to learners. To ensure prompt certification all RACs must be completed, approved by an External Verifier or Approved Internal Verifier and returned to AIM Awards within 3 months of the end date of the course.

Ordering replacement certificates

In certain circumstances you are able to request replacement or amended certificates on behalf of your learners. In most cases we will require the learners' original certificates in order to make amendments, unless they have been lost or damaged. Where we do not receive the originals the replacement certificates are labelled as "Reprinted" with the date of reprinting. A record of replacement certificates issued is kept.

You can request amended certificates for the following:

- Spelling error in learner name
- Transposed names (ie surname and forename wrong way around)
- Incorrect results

Where a certificate has been lost you can request a replacement. If the learner has lost the certificate and is asking for a replacement you must ensure that you have obtained and approved valid proof of identity from the learner. Learners may request replacement certificates where a centre ceases to exist.

In order to request amended or replacement certificates you must complete a **Replacement Certificate Form** and pay our replacement certificate fee (detailed on our **fees and charges**). We will issue replacement certificates **within 10 working days** of receipt of a valid claim.

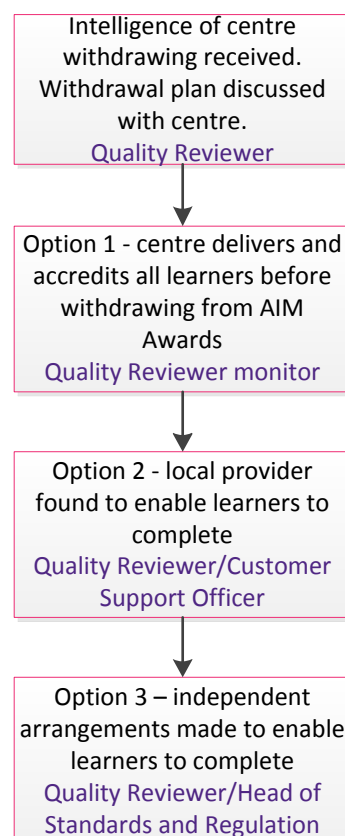| **Documents you will need:**	Replacement Certificate Form Fees and charges
Documents we will use:	Log of Replacement Certificates Certification Process
Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	H6.1, I3.3, I4.1, I4.2

Withdrawing centre recognition

If for any reason you decide to no longer offer AIM Awards qualifications/units or are in a position that you must cease trading then you must inform us as soon as possible. It is paramount that the interests of the learners are not jeopardised. It is expected that you will make all efforts to ensure that provision is made for existing learners who are currently engaged in a programme of study to allow them to complete before withdrawing from offering our provision. You must inform us what your contingency plan is in these circumstances at the time of notification of intent to withdraw.

If you must withdraw from the delivery of units or qualification part way through an academic year or delivery cycle, then you must inform us as soon as you know and we will do everything we can to help learners make alternative arrangements for completing their qualification.

If completion at your centre is not possible, we will provide the learners with a list of approved AIM Awards Centres who offer the qualification that they wish to complete and help learners make contact with these centres. If this is not possible we will make independent arrangements for the learners to complete their qualifications. We will hold any credits and units achieved by learners until such time as they are able to complete the full qualification.

Intelligence of centre withdrawing received. Withdrawal plan discussed with centre. Quality Reviewer	
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Option 1 - centre delivers and accredits all learners before withdrawing from AIM Awards Quality Reviewer monitor	
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Option 2 - local provider found to enable learners to complete Quality Reviewer/Customer Support Officer	
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Option 3 – independent arrangements made to enable learners to complete Quality Reviewer/Head of Standards and Regulation	

Related Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:	C2.3, C2.4

Appendix 1 – Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (GCRs) applying to whole document:	Condition A4 Conflicts of interest Condition B5 Representations regarding qualifications Condition C1 Arrangements with third parties Condition C2 Arrangements with Centres Condition G2 Language of the assessment Condition G5 Registration of Learners	Condition G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments Condition G7 Arrangements for Special Consideration Condition H5 Results for a qualification must be based on sufficient evidence Condition H6 Issuing results Condition I3 The design and content of certificates Condition I4 Issuing certificates and replacement certificates

AIM Awards Responsible staff:	**Specific GCRs referenced:**
Admin	G2.1, G5.1, I3.3, I4.1, I4.2
All staff	A4.5, B5.2, C1.1, C1.2, C2.1, C2.2, C2.3, C2.4, C2.5, G6.1, H5.1, H6.1
Business	G2.2, G7.1