

1.0 Policy

To deliver its strategic policy aims of excellence in: Quality of Practice, the Learner Experience, Stakeholder Relationships, Innovation and Cost Management, Advance Assessments will ensure that the qualifications it designs are of benefit for Learners, supported by potential Users, and are fit for purpose. The qualification design and development process will also assure compliance with Ofqual rules and conditions, particularly:

Condition E1: Qualifications having an objective and support

Condition E2: Requirements on qualification titling

Condition E3: Publication of a qualification specification

Condition E4: Ensuring an Assessment is fit for purpose and can be delivered

Condition E5: Assurance that qualifications comply with the conditions

Condition E6: Submitting qualifications to the Register

Condition E7: Total Qualification Time

Condition E8: Credit

Condition E9: Qualification and Component levels

Condition E10: Recognition of Prior Learning

Condition H3: Monitoring the specified levels of attainment for a qualification

Where qualifications are Higher Education (UK) qualifications, Advance Assessments (AA) will also comply with the HE Quality AA Code, particularly:

Principle 1: Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards

Principle 7: Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

AA will achieve this by employing the forum facility within its online platform to; gather feedback, manage the development process, and record feedback and decisions made within the development of each qualification. The online process was introduced in 2023 and will be continuously improved using feedback as recorded on form AA_OF_30B.

1.1 Ofqual definitions

Taken from the Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition. Accessed on 28/06/2024.

1.1.1 Adverse Effect

An act, omission, event, incident, or circumstance has an Adverse Effect if it –

- (a) gives rise to prejudice to Learners or potential Learners, or
- (b) adversely affects –
 - (i) the ability of the awarding organisation to undertake the development, delivery or award of qualifications in a way that complies with its Conditions of Recognition,
 - (ii) the standards of qualifications which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, or
 - (iii) public confidence in qualifications.

1.1.2 Centre

An organisation undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to Learners on behalf of an awarding organisation. Centres are typically educational institutions, training providers, or employers.

1.1.3 Component

A discrete part of a qualification which –

(a) focuses on specific areas of the knowledge, skills and understanding assessed for the qualification, and

(b) has a specific set of criteria against which Learners' performance will be differentiated.

1.1.4 Endorsement

A reference in the title of a qualification acknowledging that the Learner is focusing or has focused on one or more particular areas of knowledge, skills and understanding which form part of the qualification (as encompassed in the qualification title). (For instance, in GCSE Art and Design – Textile Design, Textile Design is an Endorsement of GCSE Art and Design.)

1.1.5 Guided Learning

The activity of a Learner in being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

For these purposes the activity of 'participating in education or training' shall be treated as including the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

1.1.6 Learner

A person who is registered to take a qualification and to be assessed as part of that qualification.

1.1.7 Reasonable Adjustment

An adjustment made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

1.1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning

The –

(a) identification by an awarding organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a Learner –

(i) prior to that Learner taking a qualification which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, and

(ii) which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and

(iii) recognition by an awarding organisation of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded

1.1.9 Total Qualification Time

The number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required, in order for a Learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

Total Qualification Time is comprised of the following two elements –

- (a) the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and
- (b) an estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but not under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

1.1.10 Total Qualification Time Criteria (or 'TQT Criteria')

The TQT Criteria are criteria that are set and published by Ofqual for –

- (a) the purposes set out at section 146(1)(b) of the Act, and
- (b) the purpose of determining the number of hours of Total Qualification Time that should be assigned to a qualification by an awarding organisation.

The TQT Criteria may be set out in more than one document.

1.1.11 Users of qualifications

Persons who have a legitimate interest in the qualification or type of qualification made available by the awarding organisation, which may include –

- (a) Learners and Learners' representatives,
- (b) Centres,
- (c) Teachers,
- (d) employers and employers' representatives,
- (e) further and higher education establishments,
- (f) schools,
- (g) government departments and agencies, and
- (h) professional bodies.

2.0 Procedure

2.1 The AA Centres and Assessment Manager is responsible for implementation of this procedure.

2.2 **Qualification objective:** The first stage in AA qualification design is to determine a clear and accurate objective. The objective may be determined following:

2.2.1 Feedback from likely Users

2.2.2 Information on the requirement for qualifications from relevant government departments and agencies. In the UK this will include the

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), which publishes Occupational Standards and the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours required of successful practitioners in those occupations.

- 2.2.3 Information on the requirement for qualifications from other informed Users, for example educational establishments and professional bodies.

The objective of a new qualification will be determined by the Centres and Assessments Manager and, along with supporting evidence, presented to the Governing Body for review. Once the Governing Body has approved a qualification objective, the Centres and Assessment Manager will research likely Users, including employers and training providers and enter the AA qualification procedure described in this document.

The Centres and Assessment manager may appoint Subject Matter Experts to author and contribute to development at this point. Authors/developers will be appointed according to the appropriate Person Specification and Competence Appraisals. Appointments will be made according to AA_OP_01 Appointment and Induction Policy and Procedure.

This qualification design and development procedure uses the AA online platform to seek the views of potential Users of the qualification regarding its objectives, title, content, assessment and likely progression for qualification graduates.

- 2.3 Qualifications to have support:** The views of a range of potential Users will be sought using the AA online platform. This will be achieved by publishing an outline specification, that includes an objective, title, overview of content and assessment methods and asking for feedback using closed and open questions in an asynchronously operated online feedback form. Feedback will be purposively sought from a range of informed Users who may be employers, subject matter experts and training providers (Centres and potential Centres).

- 2.3.1 The AA qualification development process will broadly follow a 'Delphi'¹ Style' multi-round questioning process to determine the fitness for purpose of each qualification designed and developed.
- 2.3.2 Records of responses will be held on the AA online platform, alongside the responses and corresponding development actions taken by AA. Responses will be anonymised by the AA online platform. The Centres and Assessment Manager will ensure these records are held for the duration of any related award being available from AA and are held in compliance with GDPR regulations.

- 2.4 Requirements on qualification titling:** Each qualification that AA designs will include the following in its title.

- 2.4.1 The name 'Advance Assessments'.
- 2.4.2 The Level of the qualification
- 2.4.3 The type of qualification (where the qualification has a type)
- 2.4.4 A concise indication of the content of the qualification
- 2.4.5 Any Endorsement known at the time
- 2.4.6 Ofqual restrictions on terms used within qualification titles will be complied with. This means that AA will only use terms:
- 2.4.6.1 'Award' to indicate a small-sized qualification (i.e. a qualification that has a TQT value of 120 hours or less)

¹ Brown, B. (1968) "DELPHI PROCESS: A Methodology for the Elicitation of Opinions of Experts". *ASTME Vectors 3 No 1*

2.4.6.2 'Certificate' to indicate a medium-sized qualification (i.e. a qualification that has a TQT value in the range 121-369 hours)

2.4.6.3 'Diploma' to indicate a large-sized qualification (i.e. a qualification with a TQT value of 370 hours or more).

2.4.7 **Amendments to titles** – Should there be a revision to the level assigned to a qualification the Centres and Assessment manager will ensure that the qualification title is amended as soon as reasonable practical and prior to the enrolment of any new Learners.

The Centre and Assessment Manager will ensure that this information is included in the qualification title on the Ofqual Register or any other register where the qualification is held. As far as practicable, The Centre and Assessments Manager will make sure that Users have sufficient information to identify any similar qualifications that may be available, and the AA qualification cannot be considered misleading.

2.5 Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning: Qualification specifications will include Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning time values. These should:

- 2.5.1 Be broadly in line with similar qualifications. Where there is a difference between the time values assigned to an AA qualification and similar qualifications, AA will collect evidence and justify any differences.
- 2.5.2 Reflect feedback from potential Users during the development of the qualification.
- 2.5.3 Consider, and if necessary, make amendments following feedback from Users of the qualification.
- 2.5.4 Total Qualification Times and Guided Learning times will be assigned, in hours, to each qualification AA designs. The values of these times will be assigned in accordance with the Ofqual criteria in effect at the time of qualification design. Where there is an update in Ofqual criteria, AA will review values assigned. A record of revised time determinations for each qualification will be maintained in the private development areas provided for each qualification on the AA online platform.

2.6 Credit levels in Qualifications: AA will assign values for credit to each qualification, or Component of a qualification. The value for credit to a qualification must be equal to one tenth of the Total Qualification Time assigned to the qualification, rounded to the nearest whole number. Where AA makes any revision to the number of hours that it has assigned to a qualification in respect of any element of Total Qualification Time, AA will review each value for credit that it has assigned to that qualification and any Component of that qualification and revise the value as appropriate.

2.7 Qualification and Component levels: AA will assign one or more levels to each qualification it designs. Where AA assigns credit to any Component of a qualification it will assign a level to that Component. Levels will be kept under review through the Qualification and assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_07). Descriptors that will be referred to when assigning a level are:

- 2.7.1 The Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition, Condition E9 - Qualification and Component levels.
- 2.7.2 For Higher Education qualifications, the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies.
- 2.7.3 **Revision of Qualification levels.** Through its Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_07), AA will review qualification levels.

- 2.7.4 Where AA or Ofqual determine that a qualification level must be reviewed AA will revise the level, or withdraw the qualification as specified by Ofqual and in accordance with specific instructions from Ofqual and in accordance with the General Conditions of Recognition.

2.8 Monitoring the specified levels of attainment for a qualification: Before setting the level of attainment for a qualification which it makes available, AA will review the specified levels of attainment set for:

- 2.8.1 The qualification previously, where applicable
- 2.8.2 Similar qualifications available from AA
- 2.8.3 Similar qualifications made available from other awarding organisations

AA will use the results of this monitoring to ensure that the specified level of attainment it sets for the qualification will promote consistency in measuring the levels of attainment of Learners over time and between similar qualifications.

2.9 Publication of a qualification specification: All AA qualification specifications must clearly set out the following:

- 2.9.1 The qualification's objective
- 2.9.2 Any other qualification which a Learner must have completed before taking the qualification
- 2.9.3 Any prior knowledge, skills or understanding which the Learner is required to have before taking the qualification
- 2.9.4 Any units which a Learner must have completed before the qualification will be awarded and any optional routes
- 2.9.5 Any requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or before the qualification will be awarded
- 2.9.6 The knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of the qualification (giving a clear indication of their coverage and depth)
- 2.9.7 The method of any assessment and any associated requirements relating to it
- 2.9.8 The criteria against which Learners' levels of attainment will be measured (such as assessment criteria or exemplars)
- 2.9.9 Any specimen assessment materials
- 2.9.10 Any specified levels of attainment
- 2.9.11 Where AA is required to make such an assignment under [General Condition E7 \(Total Qualification Time\)](#), the number of hours which it has assigned to that qualification for each of Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning
- 2.9.12 Any value for credit which AA has assigned to that qualification and any Component of that qualification
- 2.9.13 The level or levels which AA has assigned to that qualification and any Component of that qualification.

Compliance with these specification requirements, what the specification requires of a Learner, and how the qualification is fit for purpose will be confirmed by an Independent Reviewer who has met the AA Person Specification for the role and the AA Competence appraisal for the qualification in question, using form AA_OF_30A to 'sign-off', the specification.

Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose and can be delivered: Prior to publication of a qualification specification, AA will prepare an online qualification assessment area that provides information about each assessment contained within a qualification on the AA online platform. The document: 'Assessment Materials and Qualifications Writing

Protocol 2022_V1' gives guidance on assessment materials and qualification writing. Assessments will be designed in accordance with policy and procedure AA_OP_30 Setting and Delivering an Assessment. Prior to release of the qualification assessment/support area, an Independent Reviewer who has met the AA Person Specification for the role will review the assessment/support area and the issues raised from this process will be acted upon. An ongoing review of the qualification fitness for purpose and User support for qualifications will be completed through the Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_07). The qualification specification will describe:

- 2.9.14 The authentic evidence a Learner needs to generate for assessment.
- 2.9.15 The specific level of attainment a Learner needs to reach to achieve differentiated levels of attainment.
- 2.9.16 Guidance to Assessors that is sufficient to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainments by Learners.
- 2.9.17 Each assessment must permit Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them.

2.10 Assurance that qualifications comply with Ofqual conditions: Before a qualification is submitted to the Register a meeting will be held to confirm the qualifications is of benefit for Learners, supported by potential Users, has had an appropriate risk level assigned to each assessment within a qualification, and is fit for purpose. The quorum for this meeting will be:

- 2.10.1 The Centres and Assessment manager.
- 2.10.2 An author/developer of the qualification.
- 2.10.3 A member of the Governing Body, who will act as chair.
- 2.10.4 Other authoritative delegates with specialist subject or market knowledge may be included.

Form AA_OF_30B will act as an agenda and record of the decisions made validating the qualification. All those invited to the meeting will have prior access to the qualification development area (forum) and qualification assessment area on the AA online platform.

The meeting will also confirm the qualification meets the relevant Ofqual Conditions, particularly:

- 2.10.5 Feedback from potential Users has been reviewed and their views on the benefits the qualification would provide to Learners have been considered
- 2.10.6 The clarity of the qualification's objective and the extent to which it is likely to meet its objective
- 2.10.7 The rationale for the proposed assessment framework, and the extent to which it would facilitate the valid assessment of the required knowledge and skills
- 2.10.8 The achievability of the plans for the awarding organisation and/or Centres to recruit, train, standardise and monitor the performance of assessors to facilitate valid assessment
- 2.10.9 The qualification's assessment arrangements are subject to ongoing review and risk assessment within AA_OP_07, Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure.
- 2.10.10 Risk levels for each assessment included in the qualification specification have been included in the AA_OP_26, Centre Assessment Standard Scrutiny policy and procedure .

Following the review meeting any improvements agreed will be acted on by the Centres and Assessment Manager. Lessons learned from previous accreditation decisions will be considered as a method of strengthening AA's approach to qualification review and 'sign off' of qualifications.

2.11 Submitting qualifications to the Ofqual Register: The review meeting referred to in item 2.11 above will be used to confirm that the qualification is:

2.11.1 In a form that may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

2.11.2 Contains only accurate information

2.11.3 Contains all information about the qualification that is requested.

2.12 Recognition of Prior Learning: AA operates a Recognition of Prior Learning policy and procedure (AA_OP_31). This policy and procedure enables AA (or a recognised Centre) to recognise appropriate prior learning and/or attainment and use it as valid evidence to be assessed or be awarded qualifications that comply with AA's Conditions of Recognition.

3.0 Forms/Documents associated with this procedure

3.1 Form AA_OP_30A Qualification Independent Reviewer Report

3.2 Form AA_OP_30B Qualification Review and Compliance Meeting Agenda and Record

3.3 Ofqual Level requirements (including level descriptors). Available at [Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section E - Design and development of qualifications - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3.4 The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies 2nd Edition Updated February 2024. Available at: [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(qaa.ac.uk\)](#)

3.5 AA Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_07)

3.6 AA Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny policy and procedure (AA_OP_26)

3.7 AA Setting and Delivering an Assessment policy and procedure (AA_OP_32)

3.8 AA Recognition of Prior Learning policy and procedure (AA_OP_31)

3.9 Assessment Materials and Qualifications Writing Protocol 2022_V1

4.0 Document Revision History

4.1 Following improvement identifications and review with colleagues, the Centres and Assessment Manager is responsible for revisions of this policy/procedure and completion of the table below, before issue of the amended policy/procedure.

Date (most recent first)	Revision(s)	Reason for revision(s)	New Version Number	Approved by (Initial)