# Centre Guidance for Centre Recognition (Apprenticeship Assessment)

## Including CR1 Centre Recognition and CR2 Apprenticeship Assessment Approval

Guidance for organisations applying to become an approved Centre for centre-assessed apprenticeship assessment.

## Contents


1. Purpose of this guidance
2. Understanding the approval process
3. The Centre approval journey
4. CR1 - Centre Recognition
5. How CR1 will be reviewed
6. CR2a - Apprenticeship Assessment Approval application
7. What happens after successful CR2a
8. Induction training and initial standardisation
9. CR2b - Final readiness confirmation
10. What approval means
11. What you are committing to as an approved Centre
12. CASS, monitoring and EQA - what to expect
13. Maintaining approval and notifying changes
14. Submitting CR1 and CR2
15. Application checklist
16. Contact and support

## 1. Purpose of this guidance

This guide explains the process for becoming an approved Centre for apprenticeship assessment with Skills and Education Group Awards and/or BIIAB. It is intended to help you understand what information and evidence are required through CR1 and CR2, what happens at each stage, and the key responsibilities you will take on if approval is granted.

This guide focuses on the application and approval process. Once you have progressed through approval, the Centre Handbook, Apprenticeship Assessment Specification and other standard-specific guidance will provide the detailed operational requirements for assessment, internal quality assurance, records, CASS and ongoing Centre activity.

**Read this guide before applying.** Both CR1 and CR2 ask you to confirm that you have read and understood the relevant Centre requirements. The information you provide should describe your actual arrangements rather than simply repeat policy wording.

## 2. Understanding the approval process

There are two distinct approval stages. Both are required before live centre-assessed apprenticeship assessment can begin.

| Stage | Purpose | Important distinction |
|---|---|---|
| CR1 - Centre Recognition | Confirms that your organisation has appropriate governance, systems, policies, staffing, resources and quality assurance arrangements to operate as an approved Centre. | CR1 is organisation-level. It does not approve a specific apprenticeship standard, assessor or IQA. |
| CR2 - Apprenticeship Assessment Approval | Confirms that your organisation and proposed staff are ready to deliver and quality assure centre-assessed activity for a specific apprenticeship standard, or agreed group of standards. | CR2 operates in two stages: CR2a application/initial review and CR2b final readiness. CR2a alone does not authorise live assessment. |

Existing recognition as a SEG Awards/BIIAB Centre for qualifications does not automatically permit apprenticeship assessment. Apprenticeship assessment brings different responsibilities, controls and CASS requirements.

## 3. The Centre approval journey

| Step | What happens |
|---|---|
| 1. Submit CR1 and evidence | You submit the CR1 Centre Recognition application with the required organisation-level evidence. |
| 2. Submit CR2a and evidence | You submit CR2 for the relevant standard(s), together with proposed assessor/IQA CVs, certificates and CPD logs. |
| 3. CR1 and CR2a review | SEG Awards/BIIAB reviews your organisation-level readiness and may request clarification, additional evidence, a remote meeting or an approval visit. SEG Awards/BIIAB also reviews the standard-specific arrangements, staff competence, IQA arrangements and CASS/EQA readiness. |
| 4. Agreement, Handbook and materials | Where the application has progressed successfully, the Centre Agreement and Centre Handbook are issued and access is provided to the relevant materials/toolkit and controlled resources. |
| 5. Training and standardisation | Proposed Centre assessors and Centre IQAs complete the required induction training and initial standardisation activity. |
| 6. CR2b final readiness | SEG Awards/BIIAB checks that training, standardisation and any outstanding actions are complete and that the Centre is ready for live activity. |
| 7. Approval to assess | SEG Awards/BIIAB confirms Apprenticeship Assessment Approval. Only then may approved staff begin live centre-assessed activity for the approved standard(s). |

**Receiving materials is not approval to assess.** The Centre Agreement, Handbook, toolkit and controlled materials are provided to support preparation, training and standardisation. Live assessment must not begin until SEG Awards/BIIAB has confirmed successful CR2b and final approval.

## 4. CR1 - Centre Recognition

CR1 is the organisation-level application. It gives SEG Awards/BIIAB the information needed to decide whether your organisation has the overall governance, systems, controls and capacity required to operate as an apprenticeship assessment Centre.

### 4.1 Who should complete CR1?

- Organisations applying for Centre Recognition for apprenticeship assessment for the first time.

- Existing SEG Awards/BIIAB qualification Centres seeking to undertake centre-assessed apprenticeship assessment.
- Any organisation asked by SEG Awards/BIIAB to refresh or update Centre Recognition information.

If you are already recognised by SEG Awards/BIIAB for qualifications, complete Sections 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of CR1, plus any other section where your arrangements for apprenticeship assessment are different.

### 4.2 Pre-approval Advisory Meeting

If you have limited or no experience of delivering formal qualifications or apprenticeship assessment, you may request a pre-approval Advisory Meeting. An additional charge may apply. You should still complete CR1 as fully as possible so the Centre Recognition team can understand your organisation and the activity you intend to undertake.

### 4.3 Organisation details and key contacts

CR1 asks for the legal organisation details and the people who will hold key responsibilities. Ensure these details are accurate and consistent with your supporting evidence.

- legal organisation and trading name, where different;
- UKPRN and relevant Companies House or Charity registration details;
- Centre type, registered address and general contact details;
- Assessment Coordinator/Key Contact;
- Head of Finance;
- Quality Assurance Manager/Lead; and
- Head of Centre.

The people named should have sufficient authority to manage their area of responsibility and to receive, act on and communicate information from SEG Awards/BIIAB.

### 4.4 External recognition and approval history

You must provide relevant information about external recognition, monitoring and previous approval history. This helps SEG Awards/BIIAB understand the organisation's experience, quality arrangements and any existing risks.

- Ofsted, QAA, DfE/funding agency or other relevant inspection/monitoring information, where applicable;
- current approval with Ofqual-recognised awarding organisations, including the scope of approval and recent monitoring;
- other relevant accreditation or a referee able to comment on quality assurance arrangements where the above do not apply; and

- any previous Centre approval refusal, sanction or withdrawal, including the reason.

### 4.5 Quality systems and documents

Copies of the organisation-level documents listed in CR1 must be submitted with the application. They should be current, appropriate to the size and nature of your organisation and capable of being implemented in practice.

- Organisation Chart showing key contacts listed as well as delivery and quality assurance teams.
- Internal Quality Assurance procedure, including the sampling strategy.
- Procedures for examinations and invigilation, where applicable. You only need to include this if the standards you are applying for include an exam as the centre-assessed element.
- Malpractice and Maladministration procedure or policy.
- Access to Assessment / Reasonable Adjustments statement or policy.
- Complaints procedure or policy.
- Learner/apprentice enquiries and appeals procedure or policy. Even though all applications for appeals must come through BIIAB/SEG Awards, you will still need a statement which clearly explains this to apprentices.
- Staff recruitment, induction and development statement or policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.
- Conflicts of Interest procedure or policy.
- Statement on communication with the awarding organisation (see below)

**Statement on communication with SEG Awards/BIIAB**

This does not need to be a standalone policy. You may provide a short statement, procedure, or relevant section of an existing document explaining how your organisation will manage communications with SEG Awards/BIIAB.

Your statement should explain:

- who is responsible for receiving and responding to communications from SEG Awards/BIIAB;
- how important information, updates and actions will be shared with relevant Centre staff, including assessors and IQAs;
- how you will make sure communications continue to be received and acted upon during staff absence or changes in personnel;
- how changes to key contacts will be notified to SEG Awards/BIIAB;
- how requests for information, evidence or actions will be monitored and responded to within required timescales;

- how significant matters such as staffing changes, conflicts of interest, assessment incidents, malpractice/maladministration concerns or other changes affecting approval will be escalated to SEG Awards/BIIAB; and
- how important communications and decisions will be retained as part of your Centre records.

Your responses should show how arrangements will work in practice. During approval or later assurance activity, SEG Awards/BIIAB may ask to see records showing that procedures are understood and implemented.

### 4.6 Organisational readiness

Section 9 of CR1 contains open questions. Give practical, organisation-specific answers. The table below explains the type of information that should be covered.

| CR1 area | What to explain |
|---|---|
| Leadership and Governance | Who is accountable for apprenticeship assessment and how senior leaders will oversee quality, compliance and risk. |
| Operational Management | How activity will be managed day to day and how you will communicate with apprentices, employers, staff and SEG Awards/BIIAB. |
| Experience | Relevant experience of apprenticeship assessment, EPA, regulated qualifications or comparable occupational assessment. |
| Policies and Controls | How your policies support fair, valid, reliable and secure assessment, and how they are implemented. |
| Access for CASS, EQA and Monitoring | How SEG Awards/BIIAB will be given timely access to premises, systems, records, staff, apprentices and evidence. |
| Record Keeping and Information Security | How records will be accurate, complete, secure, retrievable and retained in line with requirements. |
| Conflicts of Interest | How actual, potential and perceived conflicts will be identified, declared, reviewed and managed. |
| Staffing and Capacity | How you will maintain sufficient competent staff and identify when additional assessor/IQA capacity is needed. |
| Staff Induction, Training and Monitoring | How relevant staff will be recruited, inducted, trained, standardised, supported and monitored. |
| Systems, Premises and Resources | The physical, digital and human resources available to support assessment and secure evidence management. |
| Continuous Improvement | How monitoring, CASS findings, complaints, appeals, feedback and internal review will be used to improve practice. |

### 4.7 Standards and declaration

List the apprenticeship standards you currently deliver and indicate those for which you intend to seek approval to assess. This is an indication of intended scope only; the relevant CR2 approval is still required.

The CR1 declaration confirms continuing commitments around records, access, conflicts of interest, significant changes and compliance with SEG Awards/BIIAB requirements. CR1 must be authorised by the Head of Centre.

## 5. How CR1 will be reviewed

All CR1 applications are subject to desk-based review. The review considers the completeness and quality of the evidence, the organisation's governance and experience, the suitability of its systems and policies, and any relevant risk or intelligence.

SEG Awards/BIIAB may request further information, additional evidence, a remote meeting or a face-to-face approval visit before deciding whether Centre Recognition can be granted. Where requirements are not yet met, actions may be set.

Centre Recognition confirms organisation-level suitability only. It does not authorise delivery, administration, assessment or internal quality assurance for a specific apprenticeship standard.

## 6. CR2a - Apprenticeship Assessment Approval application

CR2 is standard-specific. CR2a is the application and initial review stage. It is used to determine whether your proposed arrangements and staff are sufficiently ready to progress to the Centre Agreement, Handbook, materials/toolkit, induction training and initial standardisation.

### 6.1 Standard details

- organisation name and UKPRN;
- apprenticeship standard and pathway, where applicable;
- assessment plan/version;
- estimated first assessment date; and
- estimated number of learners in the first 12 months.

Forecasts should be realistic because assessment volumes can affect assessor capacity, IQA arrangements and the level of monitoring required.

## 6.2 Standard-specific approval questions

| CR2a area | What your response should demonstrate |
|---|---|
| Previous apprenticeship assessment experience | Relevant experience of this standard, similar standards, sector qualifications or similar assessment methods. |
| Sector and occupational experience | How your organisation's sector knowledge and occupational experience support credible assessment and quality assurance. |
| Standard-specific assessment requirements | How staff will understand and consistently apply the assessment plan, Standard Assessment Strategy, specification, criteria, mark schemes, grading descriptors and evidence requirements. |
| Assessor and IQA CPD | How occupational, assessment and quality assurance knowledge will remain current and be evidenced. |
| Internal quality assurance arrangements | How decisions will be sampled, assessor practice monitored, standardisation maintained and feedback/actions recorded and followed up. |
| CASS and EQA readiness | How standard-specific assessment evidence and records will be made available promptly for sampling, observation and monitoring. |

## 6.3 Proposed Centre assessors and Centre IQAs

List all proposed Centre assessors and Centre IQAs for the standard and provide the supporting evidence requested in CR2.

- name and email;
- assessor and/or IQA role;
- summary of occupational competence;
- current CV;
- relevant qualification certificates or equivalent evidence of assessment/IQA competence; and
- current CPD log relevant to the standard, sector and assessment method.

Centre assessors must have the occupational and assessment competence needed to make accurate and consistent decisions. Centre IQAs must have sufficient assessment, quality assurance and occupational understanding to provide effective first-line assurance. A person must not internally quality assure their own assessment decision.

Approval is individual and standard-specific. Approval for one standard does not automatically approve an individual for another.

### 6.4 Grouped CR2 applications

SEG Awards/BIIAB agree that one CR2 covers a group of standards where the same staff, evidence and arrangements genuinely apply.

### 6.5 CR2 declaration

The CR2 declaration confirms that you understand the staged approval process, will protect controlled materials, will not permit unapproved staff to undertake live assessment or IQA, will follow the relevant standard-specific requirements and will notify SEG Awards/BIIAB of changes that may affect approval. CR2 must be authorised by the Head of Centre.

## 7. What happens after successful CR2a

Where SEG Awards/BIIAB is satisfied that the CR2a submission is complete and sufficient to progress:

- the Centre Agreement will be issued for signature;
- the Centre Handbook will be provided;
- access will be provided to the relevant assessment materials/toolkit and controlled resources needed for preparation;
- required induction training will be arranged; and
- initial standardisation materials will be provided.

This application guide is intentionally high level once approval is reached. Detailed requirements for operating as a Centre, completing assessment and IQA, retaining evidence and participating in CASS will be set out in the Centre Handbook and standard-specific guidance.

Controlled assessment materials, handbooks and standard-specific guidance must not be shared, copied, published or used outside their permitted purpose. Access should be limited to authorised staff who need the material for approved apprenticeship assessment activity.

## 8. Induction training and initial standardisation

Proposed Centre assessors and Centre IQAs must complete the required SEG Awards/BIIAB induction training and deliver initial standardisation for the relevant standard before live activity begins.

Training and standardisation will cover assessment requirements, assessment methods, marking and grading, assessment records, IQA, evidence submission, conflicts of interest, reasonable adjustments, malpractice/maladministration, CASS/EQA expectations and use of relevant systems.

You must ensure that the relevant staff attend and complete the required activities. Any actions arising from training or standardisation must be completed before final readiness can be confirmed.

## 9. CR2b - Final readiness confirmation

CR2b is the final readiness stage. It takes place after the Centre has received the relevant materials and the proposed assessors and IQAs have completed the required induction training and initial standardisation.

SEG Awards/BIIAB will confirm that:

- required induction training and initial standardisation are complete;
- Centre assessors and Centre IQAs understand the standard-specific requirements;
- assessors understand how to apply the assessment criteria, mark schemes, grading descriptors and evidence requirements;
- Centre IQAs understand the standard-specific IQA requirements;
- the Centre understands evidence submission, CASS and EQA sampling arrangements;
- any actions arising from CR2a, training or standardisation have been completed; and
- the Centre is ready to begin live assessment and IQA activity.

Do not start live centre-assessed apprenticeship assessment until SEG Awards/BIIAB has confirmed that CR2b has been successfully completed and Apprenticeship Assessment Approval has been granted.

## 10. What approval means

Once final approval is confirmed, your Centre may undertake the centre-assessed apprenticeship assessment activity for the standard(s) and staff specifically approved by SEG Awards/BIIAB.

Approval is not open-ended permission to assess in any way the Centre chooses. Assessment and IQA must be carried out in accordance with the Centre Agreement, Centre Handbook, Apprenticeship Assessment Specification, standard-specific guidance, assessment records and any controlled materials provided.

The Centre Handbook will provide the detailed operational guidance you need once approved.

## 11. What you are committing to as an approved Centre

The application process is designed to make sure you understand the commitments that come with Centre status. In summary, an approved Centre is expected to:

- use only approved staff for the relevant standard and ensure competence, capacity, CPD and standardisation remain current;
- apply the required assessment and IQA arrangements consistently and complete appropriate IQA before submission;
- keep assessment materials and evidence secure;
- maintain accurate, complete and accessible assessment and quality assurance records;
- identify, declare and manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest;
- apply reasonable adjustment, special consideration, malpractice and maladministration requirements correctly;
- provide SEG Awards/BIIAB with access to premises, systems, records, staff, apprentices and evidence for CASS, EQA and Centre monitoring;
- respond to feedback and complete required actions within the timescales set;
- not communicate centre-assessed outcomes as final until SEG Awards/BIIAB has completed the required quality assurance and confirmed the result; and
- notify SEG Awards/BIIAB promptly of significant changes that may affect recognition or approval.

## 12. CASS, monitoring and EQA - what to expect

Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) is how SEG Awards/BIIAB assures itself that Centre assessment remains accurate, consistent and compliant. The detailed process will be explained in the Centre Handbook, but you should understand the following commitments before applying.

### 12.1 Centre monitoring

- Each approved Centre will have a risk rating which determines the frequency and type of monitoring.
- All active Centres will be monitored. Higher-risk Centres will be monitored more frequently.
- Newly approved Centres, or Centres newly approved for a standard, will normally receive an initial post-approval monitoring review after live activity begins.
- Monitoring may be desk-based, remote or face-to-face and may include review of records, IQA, standardisation, CPD, conflicts, complaints, actions and changes to Centre arrangements.
- Monitoring findings may range from an Advisory through Minor, Major or Critical non-compliance. Actions and timescales may be set, and risk ratings may change as a result.

### 12.2 EQA sampling of Centre assessment decisions

- Centre-assessed decisions are subject to EQA sampling before results are confirmed.

- The level of sampling is risk-based and considers both Centre risk and the individual Centre assessor's risk for that standard.
- SEG Awards/BIIAB or the EQA selects the sample. The Centre does not choose which evidence is scrutinised.
- Sampling can be widened, including to 100%, where concerns are identified.
- Findings from EQA sampling are categorised as a Minor Assessment Finding (MAF) or Critical Assessment Finding (CAF).
- Actions associated with findings may need to be completed before an apprentice result can be published. A CAF automatically increases the Centre assessor's risk rating for that standard.

### 12.3 Results and certification

Direct Claims Status does not apply to apprenticeship assessment. Centre-assessed outcomes are not final until SEG Awards/BIIAB has completed the required CASS and other quality assurance checks. Centres must not independently claim apprenticeship assessment results or apprenticeship completion certificates.

## 13. Maintaining approval and notifying changes

Centre Recognition and Apprenticeship Assessment Approval are continuing approvals. You must maintain the arrangements on which approval was based and notify SEG Awards/BIIAB promptly where significant changes occur to:

- governance, ownership or Head of Centre;
- key contacts;
- addition, removal or replacement of Centre assessors or Centre IQAs;
- assessor/IQA competence or capacity;
- significant changes in assessment volumes;
- assessment arrangements, systems, premises or resources;
- quality assurance arrangements;
- new or changed conflicts of interest; or
- other changes that may affect the Centre's ability to meet SEG Awards/BIIAB requirements.

Any new assessor or IQA must be reviewed and approved for the relevant standard before undertaking live activity unless SEG Awards/BIIAB has explicitly confirmed otherwise.

## 14. Submitting CR1 and CR2

CR1 and CR2 are currently completed and submitted as Word documents.

### 14.1 CR1 submission

Submit the completed CR1 together with the organisation-level documents and supporting evidence requested in the form.

### 14.2 CR2a submission

You can submit CR2a along with CR1 or after. When ready, submit the CR2 for the relevant standard(s) together with the required assessor/IQA CVs, certificates and CPD logs.

### 14.3 Where to send applications

Send completed application forms and supporting evidence to:
**centrerecognition@skillsedugroup.co.uk**

## 15. Application checklist

| CR1 - before submission | CR2a - before submission |
|---|---|
| CR1 completed as fully as possible. | Relevant standard(s), version, estimated first assessment date and forecast volumes completed. |
| Correct legal organisation details and UKPRN provided. | All standard-specific CR2 questions answered. |
| Required key contacts identified. | All proposed assessors and IQAs listed. |
| External recognition/monitoring and approval history declared. | Current CVs attached. |
| All required organisation-level policies/documents attached. | Relevant certificates/evidence of competence attached. |
| Organisational readiness questions answered with practical information. | Current CPD logs attached. |
| Standards for which approval may be sought identified. | Occupational competence summaries completed. |
| Declaration completed and authorised by the Head of Centre. | Declaration completed and authorised by the Head of Centre. |

**Before live assessment starts:** The Centre Agreement must be in place, required training and initial standardisation must be completed, any actions must be closed, CR2b must be successfully completed and SEG Awards/BIIAB must have confirmed final approval.

## 16. Contact and support

For queries about Centre Recognition, Apprenticeship Assessment Approval, CR1 or CR2, contact the Centre Recognition team:
**centrerecognition@skillsedugroup.co.uk**

Where you are unsure whether a proposed arrangement meets the requirements, contact us before assessment takes place so that the position can be agreed in advance.