



Leading learning and skills



Qualifications  
and Curriculum  
Development  
Agency

# Joint Advisory Committee for Qualifications Approval

## (JACQA)

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## Handbook for Awarding Organisations

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## Foreword

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Qualifications recognise young people's achievement and must act as a passport for progression to further study or to high quality employment with the opportunity for training. For that to work there has to be confidence that the qualifications offered to learners have real value. It is vital that there is choice and a range of options broad enough to respond to the widely differing interests and needs of young people. However, it is also vital that there is coherence and clarity in the system.

To achieve this, the Government set out, in the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper (2005)*, a 10 year reform programme which aims to ensure that our education system gives every young person the opportunities and support they need to unlock and realise their full potential. As part of the reform programme, the 14-19 Qualifications Strategy set out the Government's proposal that public funding should be channelled primarily into four National Routes (NRs) for young people (GCSEs and A-Levels, Diplomas, Apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning) and that a new Committee, the Joint Advisory Committee for Qualifications Approval (JACQA) should be established to carry out this important role. JACQA will scrutinise 14-19 qualifications, especially those that are not part of one of the four NRs and advise the Secretary of State (SoS) for Children, Schools and Families on their eligibility to receive public funding. This scrutiny will use the administrative arrangements for Section 96 of the Learning and Skill Act 2000 (the Section 96 Criteria).

The role of the new Committee is integral to the Government's overall strategy for reforming 14-19 qualifications and is a critical component for realising the Government's vision for transforming education and training for young people. In carrying out this role, JACQA must balance the requirement for qualifications that meet the needs of all young people and are easily understood by employers and Higher Education (HEI), focused around the four NRs, and the need to promote choice and innovation. The intention is not to affect a sudden and dramatic change in the qualifications offer but rather to adopt an evolutionary approach, taking account of the increasing availability and maturity of the NRs, but at all times safeguarding the interest of learners. Awarding Organisations (AOs), Sector Skills Councils and other stakeholders all have an important part to play in this transformation and we look to them to work with JACQA to help realise the Government's vision.

To support and deliver the Government's vision, we are keen to ensure that the role of JACQA and its activities are well understood by its core stakeholders. As such, we have designed this guidance document for AOs. It is to support them in the process of submitting qualifications to JACQA for consideration for funding eligibility. Underpinning this process is a set of Principles, which are designed to build on the Criteria used for scrutiny and provide AOs with greater context for how submissions will be judged. This in turn will support AOs in developing their submissions, where they are required.

The document further explains why JACQA was set up, how it operates and the Criteria and process for reviewing the funding eligibility of qualifications under Section 96 (the Termly review process). We recognise that the work of JACQA will evolve. Therefore, this document will be reviewed and updated periodically to take account of changes to policy and process.



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Joint Chair of JACQA



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THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS 44 PAGES INCLUDING TITLE PAGE

## Section 1: Introduction and background to JACQA

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1. This section provides an introduction to the role, remit and scope of JACQA in the wider context of the 14-19 Qualifications Strategy.

### Background

2. JACQA is a new non-statutory Committee that has been created to advise the Secretary of State for the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on the eligibility for public funding of 14-19 qualifications in England. It is jointly chaired by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)<sup>1</sup> and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) (subsequently the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA)) and membership includes representation from Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HEI) and employers. There is also a Wider Reference Group (WRG) of stakeholders that provide expert advice and guidance to JACQA.
3. JACQA aims to ensure that eligibility for public funding is directed at relevant 14-19 qualifications, in line with the objectives of the 14-19 Qualifications Strategy published by DCSF<sup>2</sup>. The strategy centres upon the need to:
  - raise the participation age to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015;
  - provide greater choice and opportunities for young people to engage in education and training in a way that is best suited to their individual needs, allow them to progress and prepare for life and work, including a reformed curriculum for 11-14 learners; and
  - create a qualifications system that is comprehensive and easily understood by employers, HEI and the general public, including the development of National Routs (NR), functional skills qualifications and a new framework of personal learning and thinking skills; and
  - ensure appropriate information, advice and guidance and the right personal and financial support arrangements are available.

### Role and remit of JACQA

4. The accreditation of qualifications by Ofqual is no longer the only pre-requisite to approval for public funding. In order to be eligible for public funding, 14-19 qualifications must now also meet the administrative Criteria for the eligibility of public funding of qualifications in England as set out in Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (the Section 96 Criteria). The Section 96 Criteria are detailed in Section 2 of this document.
5. The QCDA and the LSC/YPLA, which are the joint chairs of JACQA, have a legal duty to give advice on such matters to the SoS as he may request. However, decisions on whether to approve qualifications under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 remain with the SoS.

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<sup>1</sup> The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill is expected to transform QCA into QCDA and will also make Ofqual a completely separate organisation; it will also transfer LSC into YPLA and SFA as separate organisations. The Bill will also specify when these changes will take place. However, until Parliamentary approval of the Bill, both QCA and LSC remains the legal entities

<sup>2</sup> <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=CM+7354&>

6. To achieve this, JACQA will scrutinise qualifications against the Section 96 Criteria and based on evidence provided by AOs. In doing so, the presumption is that funding will be directed at 14-19 qualifications that form part of one of the four NRs. Equally there is a presumption against funding eligibility of new Stand Alone qualifications (those outside the four NRs) that have not previously been approved unless there is clear evidence to demonstrate that they meet the needs of a group of learners, employers or Higher Education Institutions (HEI) that cannot be met within the NRs.
7. JACQA's advice to the SoS will be based **entirely** on the extent to which a qualification satisfies the Section 96 Criteria; the rationale for its advice will set out in detail how JACQA believes a qualification has or has not satisfied those Criteria.
8. JACQA remit is to:
  - review and recommend funding eligibility for 14-19 qualifications that form part of one of the four NRs, on a fortnightly basis;
  - challenge and scrutinise the evidence submitted by AOs for Stand Alone qualifications and make recommendations on their eligibility for public funding, on a Termly basis;
  - advise the SoS for the DCSF on the funding eligibility of all 14-19 qualifications, incorporating Termly recommendations (see paragraph 69) – the SoS makes the final decision about the funding eligibility of 14-19 qualifications taking JACQA advice into consideration;
  - monitor and review the strategy, Principles and process for making recommendations for 14-19 funding eligibility to make certain that only those qualifications that continue to meet the differing needs of learners, employers and HEI attract public funds; and in particular to ensure that:
    - 14-19 qualifications represent good value for money;
    - funding eligibility is focused on the four NRs;
    - a clear rationale exists for recommending funding eligibility for Stand Alone qualifications.
  - retain a holistic view of the 14-19 qualifications offer through Biennial Reviews (carried out in 2009 and 2011) that will identify and recommend any actions or changes needed to ensure a clear and transparent qualifications framework and consider future strategies for determining funding eligibility; and
  - identify and recommend, where appropriate and necessary, on changes to the 14-19 qualifications offer, taking into account the differing needs of learners, employers and HEI through the Biennial Reviews.
9. The longer term aim is that by 2013 the qualifications offer for young people will be more streamlined and coherent, thereby reducing the complex array of qualifications currently offered. A major review will be carried out in 2013 to ascertain how all publicly funded qualifications are at that point combining to meet the needs of young people, employers and universities. The interim period up to 2013 will include a phased approach to the reduction of Stand Alone qualifications and the full delivery provision of the four NRs.
10. The NRs will provide, for the first time, a comprehensive and coherent qualification offer to better meet the needs of every young person in the future. Through providing a broad structure (as shown in Figure 1 below), the NRs offer considerable flexibility, including the opportunity to bring in the best of existing provision.

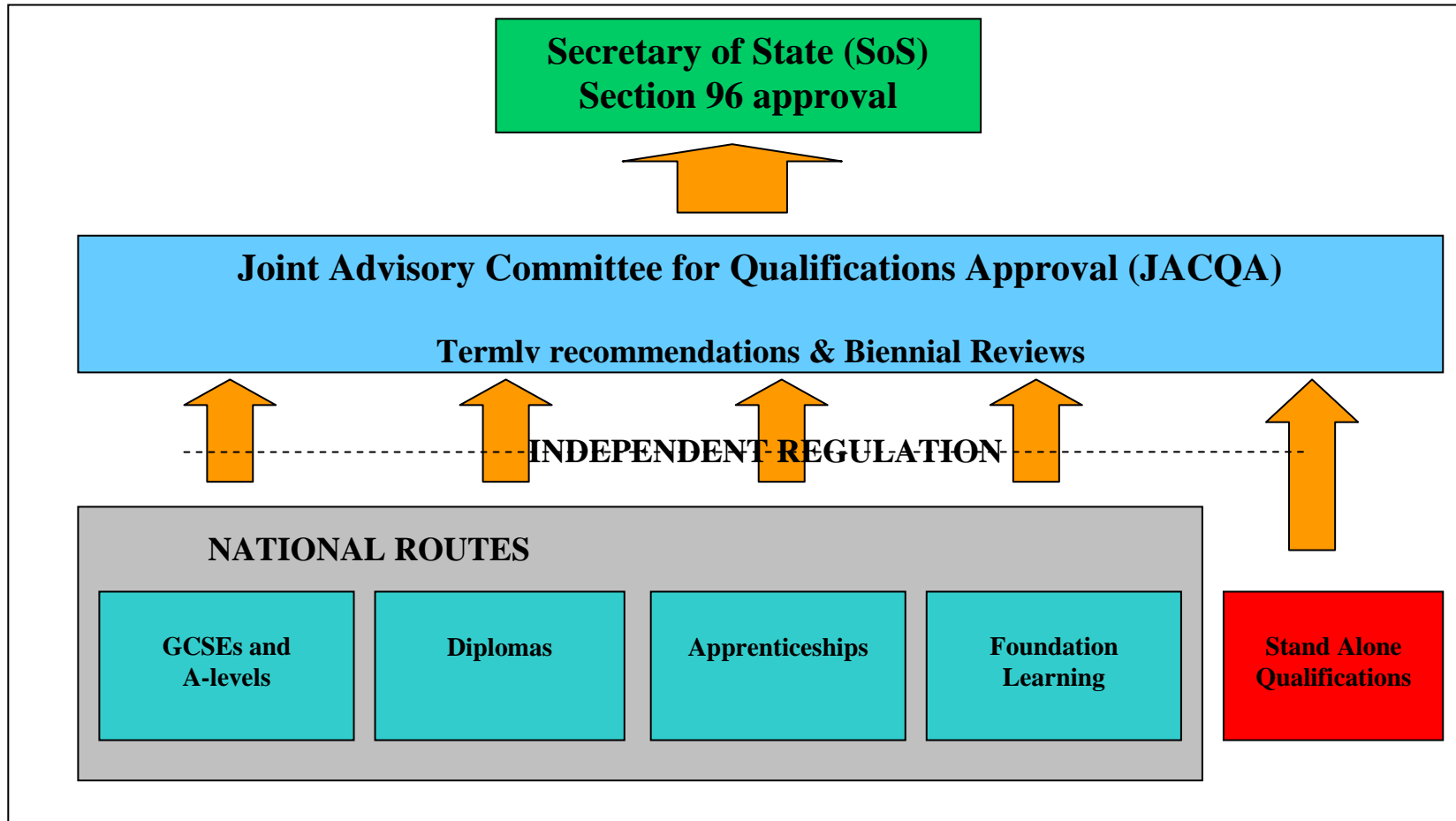


Figure 1

## Section 2: Criteria, Principles and evidence requirements

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11. This section provides further information about the Section 96 Criteria that will be used to judge eligibility for public funding. It also includes Principles to amplify the Section 96 Criteria, along with details of the type of evidence that AOs will need to provide with their submissions to JACQA.

### Section 96 Criteria

12. The Section 96 Criteria published by the DCSF will be used by JACQA to determine which qualifications should be recommended as eligible to receive public funding. There are six Criteria (A-F) but the extent to which these apply to individual qualifications will depend on the circumstances. The Criteria are set out below.
  - A. Prior accreditation by a regulatory body.
  - B. Suitability for age group (maturity, social well-being, health and safety).
  - C. Fit with National Curriculum (if offered at Key Stage 4).
  - D. Presumption in favour of funding qualifications in NRs.
  - E. Presumption against funding 'new' Stand Alone qualifications unless they meet specific needs of learners, employers and HEI.
  - F. Re-approval of 'existing' Stand Alone qualifications dependent on take-up and degree of coverage/maturity of NR.
13. A 'Stand Alone' qualification is defined as a qualification where the AO is only seeking approval for funding eligibility outside of the NR. This could for instance be a qualification, offered as a learning programme in its own right. **It is not a qualification which is which is in one or more of the NRs.**
14. All qualifications submitted to JACQA must meet Criteria A-C. Additionally:
  - qualifications intended as part of one or more of the four NRs must meet criterion D;
  - new Stand Alone qualifications must meet criterion E; and
  - existing Stand Alone qualifications must meet criterion F.
15. Until January 2010 the primary focus for JACQA is on new Stand Alone qualifications. Until that point, existing qualifications that are submitted for re-approval will be recommended for funding eligibility without any detailed scrutiny against Criterion F. Information about the future scrutiny/withdrawal of existing Stand Alone qualifications will be informed by the 2009 Biennial Review and communicated in the new year.
16. JACQA will not use any other Criteria to scrutinise qualifications or make recommendations to the SoS.

## Principles

17. JACQA has developed a set of Principles which aim to amplify each Section 96 Criterion. This is to provide a firm basis for consistent interpretation by AOs and enable JACQA to make appropriate recommendations in a fair and transparent manner. AOs should consider carefully how qualifications align with these Principles before submitting them to JACQA for scrutiny against the Section 96 Criteria.

## Evidence requirements

18. For each criterion there is one or more Principle and an indication of the type of evidence that AOs should provide when submitting qualifications to JACQA. AOs should ensure that the evidence provided is relevant and sufficient to enable JACQA to judge the eligibility of the qualifications against the Section 96 Criteria, taking account of the Principles. Further information about the provision of evidence as part of the JACQA process is given in [Section 3](#) (JACQA submission process).

<b>CRITERION A: Prior accreditation by a regulatory body</b>		
Only qualifications that meet high-quality standards shall be eligible for public funding. Accreditation by Ofqual (or a regulatory body recognised by them) will be expected to provide these assurances.		
<b>Principles</b>		<b>Evidence required</b>
A1	JACQA will not consider any qualification for funding eligibility unless it has received confirmation from Ofqual that the qualification has been accredited into the NQF or QCF.	JACQA will obtain details of the accreditation date and number (Qualifications Accreditation Number (QAN)) directly from Ofqual.  Awarding Organisations (AOs) should provide the full accredited qualification title and QAN in any correspondence with JACQA.



CRITERION B: Suitability for the age group		
Account will be taken of whether the qualification is suitable for the age-group in terms of maturity, social well-being and health and safety requirements		
Principles	Evidence required	
B1	<p>AOs should not normally seek approval in the 16-18 age group for a qualification that is intended for use 18+ and 19+.</p> <p>The 18+ age group should normally be used only for those qualifications that would be deemed unsuitable for learners under the age of 18</p>	<p>The current age groups for approval are 'pre-16', '16-18' and '18+'. Ofqual does not accredit qualifications to specific age groups.</p> <p>The AO must provide evidence that the qualifications are appropriate<sup>*1</sup> for the intended age groups, taking account of:</p> <p>Maturity of the cohort; Health and safety issues<sup>*2</sup>; Social well-being; and Confidentiality issues.<sup>*3</sup></p> <p>Evidence of support from the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) or other Standards Setting Body (SSB) should be provided for vocational qualifications. This evidence must make explicit, SSC/SSB endorsement of the suitability of the qualification for the age group or groups for which it is seeking approval, based on the fitness for purpose of the qualification in respect of maturity, social well-being and health and safety.</p> <p>Qualifications for use pre-16 will be reviewed by QCDA against the Principles and guidance for the approval of qualifications in this age group prior to their accreditation by Ofqual.</p>
B2	Qualifications that form part of one of the NRs and have been approved to the relevant NR catalogues will be deemed suitable for the intended age group(s).	
B3	Qualifications accredited at NQF/QCF Level 5 and above will not normally be recommended for funding eligibility for use by 14-19 year old learners.	
B4	NVQs will not normally be recommended for funding eligibility for pre-16 learners, except where they form part of Young Apprenticeship pilots.	
B5	Qualifications for use pre-16 must meet the specific requirements for the approval of qualifications in this age group, as set out in the regulator principles (common criteria) published by Ofqual.	

Note to support Evidence above

\*1 – 'Appropriate' in relation to pre-16 in this instance will be left to some extent to the interpretation of the accountable officer, as concise definitions are elusive. As a measure of guidance, however, there are areas in which suitability has been ascertained and situations in which JACQA feels it is entirely inappropriate for students to find themselves. These areas include, but are not limited to: (a) any situation which involves the direct or indirect exposure to the

slaughter of animals, any practical dealings with animal carcasses or the processing or separation of whole animal carcasses (as concerns qualifications related to the meat industry and those working in slaughterhouses) (b) any dealings with human remains (with regard to the mortician industry) (c) any practical dealings with nudity (such as full body massage qualifications offered by the cosmetology industry); this does not apply to academic understanding of human physiology and anatomy as encountered in the biological sciences (d) unsupervised exposure to power tools, sharpened tools or work with large machines.

\*2 - Health and safety issues are the responsibility of the awarding organisation and must conform to legislative standards/requirements, physical capabilities and limitations.

\*3 - Protection of confidentiality must apply not only to the learner, but to those with whom the learner may come in contact, including, but not limited to, situations involving counselling, the medical profession or health and social welfare

<b>CRITERION C: Fit with the National Curriculum</b>		
Where it is proposed to offer qualifications at Key Stage 4 in a National Curriculum subject, to be eligible for funding, qualifications must meet the requirements of any relevant programmes of study.		
<b>Principles</b>		<b>Evidence required</b>
C1	This criterion only applies to those qualifications intended for use at Key Stage 4 in a National Curriculum subject.	Where appropriate and necessary, JACQA will seek assurance from QCDA that checks were completed satisfactorily prior to accreditation. No additional evidence will normally be required from the AO.

**CRITERION D: Qualifications forming part of one of the National Routes**

Qualifications that form part of one of the following National Routes (NR) will generally be approved for funding: i) GCSE and A-Levels; ii) Diplomas; iii) Apprenticeship frameworks; and iv) Foundation Learning for 14-19 learners.

However, these qualifications will generally be approved to be offered only within the programme or programmes of which they form part, unless they also meet the Criteria for free-standing qualifications<sup>3</sup>.

<b>Principles</b>		<b>Evidence required</b>
D1	JACQA will not consider any qualification for funding eligibility as part of a NR unless it has been approved for use within that suite or framework. A qualification must have separate approval for each NR in which it is to be offered.	JACQA Secretariat will verify that the qualification has been approved as part of a NR as follows:  <b>GCSEs and A-Levels:</b> GCSEs and A-Levels are eligible for funding if they are accredited by Ofqual. No additional information is required from AOs.
D2	A qualification that has been approved as a component of a NR may also be delivered outside of the NR in certain circumstances.  The LSC/YPLA will provide guidance on the eligibility of NR component qualifications to receive public funding when delivered outside the NRs (e.g.: if delivered to a learner not intending to take the full NR). Separate approval as a 'Stand Alone' is therefore not required for qualifications that are components of NR.	<b>Diplomas:</b> Diploma Principal Learning and Diploma Project qualifications are eligible for funding if they are accredited by Ofqual. JACQA Secretariat will seek confirmation that qualifications intended for Diploma ASL have been approved and admitted to the ASL catalogue.  AOs should clearly indicate in their submission to JACQA, which Diploma(s) the qualifications are to be used for.
D3	Once a qualification has been approved for use in a NR, it will not require further approval in that NR, e.g. if a qualification has been approved for use in one Apprenticeship Framework it will not require further approval for use in another Apprenticeship Framework.	<b>Foundation Learning:</b> JACQA Secretariat will seek confirmation that the qualifications have been approved and admitted to the FL catalogue.  Continued overleaf

<sup>3</sup> DSCF is reviewing Criterion D with a view to amending it to align with the refined definition of Stand Alone qualifications, so that the final sentence of the Criterion reads "However, these qualifications will generally be approved to be offered only within the programme or programmes of which they form part."

		<p><b>Apprenticeships:</b>JACQA Secretariat will seek confirmation that the qualification is included within an Apprenticeship Framework. Evidence that the relevant SSC/SSB has approved the qualification for use in this Apprenticeship Framework will also be required before JACQA can recommend eligibility for funding under Section 96. AOs should clearly indicate which Apprenticeship Framework(s) the qualification is currently approved in.</p>

**CRITERION E: New free-standing qualifications**

There is a presumption against beginning for the first time to approve (as free-standing (Stand Alone)) qualifications outside the National Routes qualifications which have not previously been approved for use. Only where the introduction of the new qualification would meet the specific needs of a group of learners, employers or higher education institutions whose needs cannot be met by the National Routes, would the SoS approve the new qualification as a free-standing qualification.

This presumption applies to new qualifications within existing suites, but not to re-developed versions of pre-existing qualifications coming forward for re-approval.

**Principles****Evidence required**

E1

Qualifications will only be approved as Stand Alones where there is clear evidence that learner needs cannot (or cannot yet) be satisfied by qualifications in the NRs.

General

AOs should provide sufficient and appropriate evidence in their submission to JACQA to support approval of all new Stand Alone qualifications. This should demonstrate consideration of a wide range of issues that are relevant to the qualifications in question. In particular, AOs should state and provide evidence of: how the qualifications meet the specific needs of learners/employers/HEI/FE;

- how the qualifications aid progression for young people to NRs (where appropriate);
- whether or not the qualifications meet an agreed and identified national or regional priority for young people, identified through national or regional strategies
- the expected level of take up for the qualifications and the basis for any projected take-up. If the qualifications are expected to have low take up, i.e. below 100 publicly funded enrolments per year, then the reason for this must be given (e.g. specialist qualification that targets a niche group of learners and/or market);

Continued overleaf

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the qualifications contribute to the objectives of the 14-19 <u>Qualifications Strategy</u> published by DCSF ; and whether or not the qualifications have been identified in a SSC 14-19 Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) Annex and details of this as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><u>SSC/SSB Support</u></p> <p>Evidence of support from SSCs/SSBs must be provided for vocational qualifications. Such evidence must include explicit confirmation that the qualification meets the specific needs of a group of learners, employers or HEI that are not yet covered by the NRs, rather than a generic endorsement of the qualification.</p> <p>It is the AO's responsibility to obtain evidence of SSC/SSB support and include this with the submission to JACQA.</p>
E2	<p>If a QCF qualification does not have a predecessor NQF qualification, or has significantly changed, it will be considered to be new.</p>	<p>If a qualification is intended to replace a previous version on the NQF, AOs should clearly state the title and QAN of the NQF version(s) being replaced and provide information to indicate what changes have occurred in their migration from NQF to QCF.</p> <p>For QCF qualifications, AOs' will be asked to confirm their rationale for seeking funding under Criterion E. They will also be asked to confirm that the qualification is either new or has significantly changed from the predecessor NQF qualification. Evidence might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether there has been a change in the National Occupational Standards;</li> <li>• if the size of the qualification has fundamentally changed (for example GLH);</li> <li>• if the content of the qualification has fundamentally changed.</li> </ul> <p>Continued overleaf</p>

		Evidence of estimated take-up, including a justification for low take-up (if below 100 publicly funded enrolments per year) should also be made available for the predecessor NQF qualification along with estimated take up for the revised QCF version.
E3	<p>If a qualification is intended to be moved into a NR, it may be approved for a limited time period, with or without conditions.</p> <p>Time limited approval will not be considered for less than six months and approval will be for a minimum of twelve months.</p>	<p>Stand Alone qualifications may in some instances be approved for a limited time period, with or without conditions, if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are intended to be part of a NR but the NR is not yet fully developed;</li> <li>• meet a gap or a short term need and do not fit within a NR;</li> <li>• are planned to be withdrawn.</li> </ul>
E4	<p>Where approval has already been given for a limited time period JACQA may consider extending the approval period providing any conditions have been met or the AO can demonstrate that circumstances beyond its control have prevented the qualification meeting agreed conditions.</p> <p>If a qualification is intended to be moved into a NR, the schedule, commitment and reasoning why the qualification cannot be first admitted as a NR must be clearly stated.</p>	<p>Where a qualification is being developed in the current absence of suitable provision within the four NRs, AOs will be expected to demonstrate how the need for that qualification is expected to change with the development of the NRs and to indicate where the qualification might be integrated with one or more of the NRs over time. Evidence should be provided to show what plans have been made to integrate the qualification with a NR, the process that will be followed and the timeline that has been agreed for this with stakeholders.</p> <p>If the qualification is not intended to be integrated with the NRs over time, AOs will be expected to set out their plans, including timeline, for withdrawing the qualification or provide a clear justification for retaining the qualification at the point of re-approval.</p>



### **CRITERION F: Re-approved free-standing qualifications**

To continue to be approved as a free-standing qualification, an awarding body must demonstrate that a qualification has significant uptake for the under 19 age-group (typically, this will mean at least 100 certifications per year). Or if not, that there is a clear case that the qualification meets a specific need (of a group of learners, employers or higher education institutions) and which cannot be met in other ways.

Where a qualification has significant uptake, the following judgments will be made:

- a) Whether there are qualifications within the national suite which can meet the needs of young people, employers, universities and wider society as well as or better than this qualification. If this is not yet the case, then, where the qualification represents good value for money, it would continue to receive public funding.
- b) If (a) is the case, whether the effectiveness of the qualifications within the national suite in meeting these needs has been demonstrated in practice in a sufficiently wide range of circumstances for this judgement to be made with confidence. If this is not yet the case, then the qualification would continue to receive public funding.
- c) If (a) and (b) are the case, whether the qualifications within the national suite are nationally available. If there are parts of the country which have access to the qualification under consideration, but not yet the relevant parts of the national suite, then the qualification would continue to receive public funding.

If conditions (a) – (c) are in place, the qualification would not continue to be eligible for public funding. In determining whether conditions (a) – (c) are met, the SoS will take advice from the Joint Advisory Committee on Qualifications Approval, representing the views of employers, HE, and the education and training system. This Committee will undertake a Biennial Review of the 14-19 qualifications available to young people to inform their decisions.

If condition (c) is not met, but it is clear that it will shortly be met, or if it appears to the SoS that all the conditions may shortly be met, a decision may be made to continue approval only for a defined period, shorter than the period of accreditation.

Where a decision is made to withdraw approval from a qualification which has previously been approved, it may be appropriate to continue approval for a short period, in order to enable institutions which have been offering it to make a smooth transition to alternative qualifications.

<b>Principles</b>		<b>Evidence required<sup>4</sup></b>
F1	<p>Qualifications will continue to be approved as Stand Alones only where there is clear evidence that learner needs cannot (or cannot yet) be satisfied by qualifications in the NRs.</p>	<p><u>General</u></p> <p>AOs should provide sufficient and appropriate evidence in their submission to JACQA to support approval of all new Stand Alone qualifications. This should demonstrate consideration of a wide range of issues that are relevant to the qualifications in question. In particular, AOs should, in addition to the factors set out in a) to c) above, state and provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the qualifications contribute to the objectives of the 14-19 Qualifications Strategy published by DCSF - see <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/14-19nextsteps/">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/14-19nextsteps/</a>;</li> <li>• whether or not the qualifications have been identified in a SSC 14-19 Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) Annex and details of this as appropriate. Explicit evidence of support from SSCs/SSBs should be provided. It is the AO's responsibility to obtain evidence of SSC/SSB support and include this with the submission to JACQA.</li> </ul>
F2	<p>If a QCF qualification is intended to replace a previous version on the NQF, JACQA will treat this as a re-approval under Criterion F.</p> <p>Qualifications in this category will need to seek re-approval under Criterion E.</p>	<p>If a qualification is intended to replace a previous version on the NQF, AOs should clearly state the title and QAN of the NQF version(s) being replaced and provide information to indicate what changes have occurred in their migration from NQF to QCF.</p> <p>For QCF qualifications, AOs will be asked to confirm that the qualification is developed from an existing NQF qualification, and provide information detailing the changes. AOs' will be asked to confirm their rationale for seeking funding under Criterion F.:</p> <p>Continued overleaf</p>

<sup>4</sup> Whilst there is a shared set of Principles and evidence required for Criterion E and F, it is important that any evidence provided by an AO demonstrates a different emphasis. For example, submissions under Criterion F are likely to include a level of historical data and trends as evidence.

		<p>Evidence might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether there has been a change in the National Occupational Standards;</li> <li>• if the size and structure of the qualification has fundamentally changed (for example GLH);</li> <li>• if the content of the qualification has fundamentally changed.</li> </ul> <p>Evidence of actual take-up, including a justification for low take-up (if below 100 publicly funded enrolments per annum) should also be made available for the NQF qualification along with predicted take up for the revised QCF version.</p>
F3	<p>If a qualification is intended to be moved into a NR, it may be approved for a limited time period, with or without conditions.</p> <p>Time limited approval will not be considered for less than six months and approval will be for a minimum of twelve months.</p>	<p>Stand Alone qualifications may in some instances be approved for a limited time period, with or without conditions, if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are intended to be part of a National Routes(NR) but the NR is not yet fully developed;</li> <li>• meet a gap or a short term need and do not fit within a NR;</li> <li>• are planned to be withdrawn.</li> </ul>
F4	<p>Where approval has already been given for a limited time period JACQA may consider extending the approval period providing any conditions have been met or the AO can demonstrate that circumstances beyond its control have prevented the qualification meeting the agreed conditions.</p>	<p>Where a qualification is being developed in the current absence of suitable provision within the four NRs, AOs will be expected to demonstrate how the need for that qualification is expected to change with the development of the NRs and to indicate where the qualification might be integrated with one or more of the NRs over time. Evidence should be provided to show what plans have been made to integrate the qualification with a NR, the process that will be followed and the timeline that has been agreed for this with stakeholders.</p> <p>If a qualification is intended to be moved into a NR, the schedule, commitment and reasoning why the qualification cannot be first admitted as a NR must be clearly stated.</p> <p>Continued overleaf</p>

		<p>If the qualification is not intended to be integrated with the NRs over time, AOs will be expected to set out their plans, including timeline, for withdrawing the qualification or provide a clear justification for retaining the qualification at the point of re-approval.</p>
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## Section 3: JACQA submission process

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19. This section provides information and guidance about the process for submitting qualifications to JACQA. It further sets out the detailed timescales to which the JACQA Secretariat and AOs will be required to meet. These timescales will commence with the publication of this handbook. This will ensure that JACQA provides feedback in a timely manner and AOs understand the timescales they are working to.
20. Qualifications that are submitted to JACQA for funding eligibility go through key stages leading up to the decision by the SoS whether or not the qualification is approved or rejected for public funding eligibility. The stages are set out below.
  1. Early Dialogue (optional);
  2. Accreditation;
  3. Determination of level of scrutiny required;
  4. Conduct verification/analysis;
  5. Termly Review;
  6. Recommendations;
  7. SoS Decision.

## JACQA Termly End-to-End Process

21. An overview of the end-to-end Termly process is shown below (figure 2). There are eight stages in the process detailed below and in this Section.

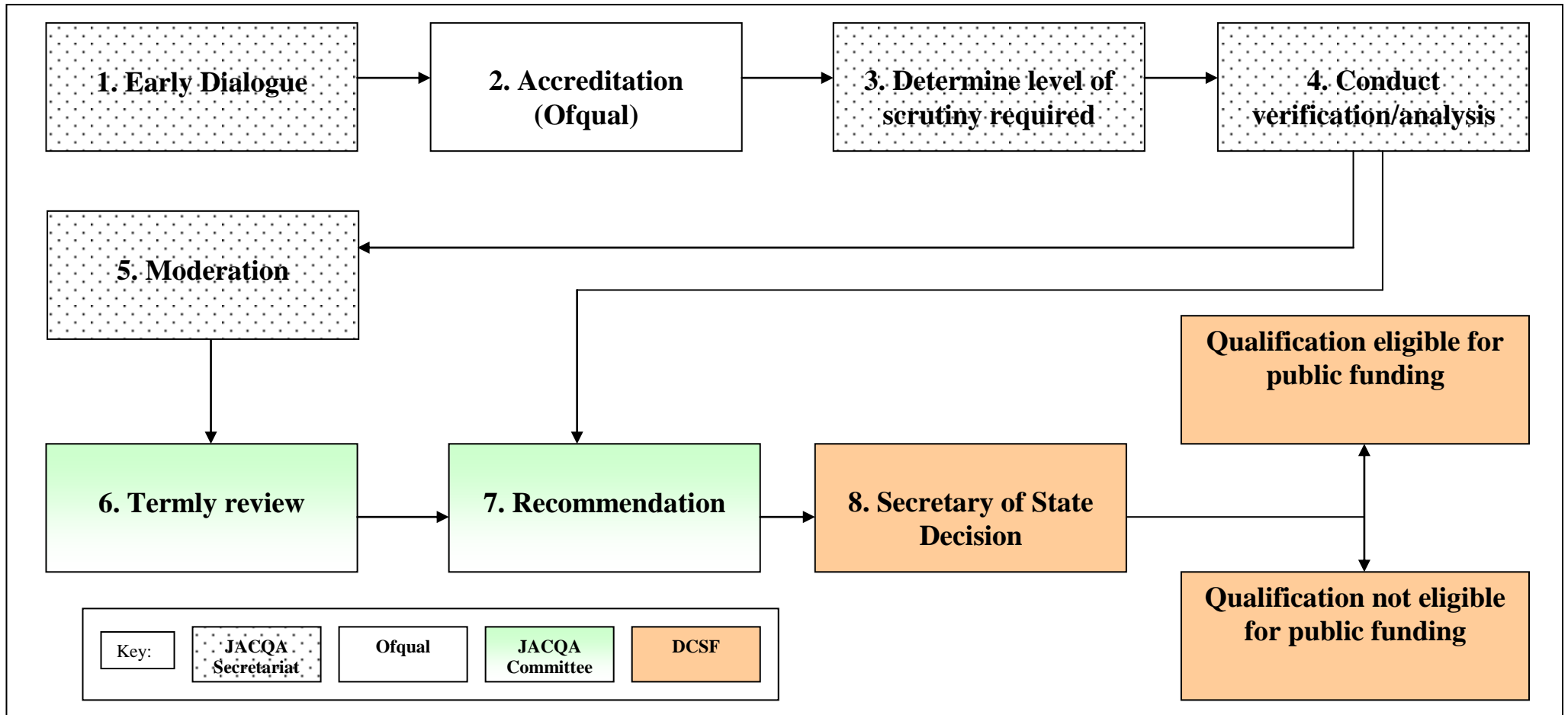


Figure 2

## Stage 1 - Early dialogue

22. Early two-way dialogue between JACQA Secretariat and AOs is encouraged where at all feasible and should be initiated as early as possible prior to submitting qualifications to JACQA for scrutiny.
23. Early dialogue will focus on ensuring that AOs:
  - understand the objectives of the 14-19 Qualifications Strategy and have access to relevant and up to date guidance and other materials;
  - understand the JACQA scrutiny process and the Criteria that JACQA will use to make recommendations on the eligibility of qualifications for public funding under Section 96;
  - are aware of what type of evidence is needed and when it needs to be provided to support submissions to JACQA, particularly for new Stand Alone qualifications; and
  - have the opportunity to provide feedback to inform the further improvement of JACQA Principles and processes as these evolve over time.
24. JACQA Secretariat will engage in dialogue with AOs on both an individual and collective basis, through one to one meetings or attendance at events or seminars. The Secretariat will be putting in-place regular surgeries to support the early dialogue process.
25. After the 2009 Biennial Review has been completed, JACQA will review its approach to early dialogue with a view to working with AOs on their longer term strategies for 14-19 qualification reform. This is likely to focus on the alignment of Stand Alone qualifications to the NRs and the withdrawal of qualifications between 2010 and 2013, in line with any strategy that emerges for this.
26. Additionally, AOs are encouraged to engage in early and on-going dialogue with JACQA, SSCs and other stakeholders, as appropriate, at key points during the qualifications development process. This will help to minimise any potential problems prior to submission to JACQA and avoid unnecessary delays in funding approval.

## Stage 2 - Accreditation

27. JACQA will only consider qualifications that have been accredited by Ofqual (or a regulatory body recognised by them) and assigned a Qualifications Accreditation Number (QAN). The process for accrediting qualifications is completely separate from the process for determining the eligibility for public funding of 14-19 qualifications offered in England.
28. Although the processes of accreditation and funding approval are entirely separate, in order to keep systems streamlined and avoid unnecessary repetition and burden on AOs, some of the information you enter in the Web-based Accreditation (WBA) system as part of the accreditation process will be used later by JACQA to help determine recommendations on funding eligibility. Information contained on the *Provision/Rationale* screen, located under the *Objectives* tab, will be especially helpful. All information submitted via WBA, including evidence for JACQA must be entered before your qualifications are submitted for accreditation.

## Providing information via WBA

29. Information you enter on the *Overview - Age Range* (Figure 4) screen (also referred to as the 'JACQA screen') will be used solely by JACQA to: a) determine whether or not funding is being sought under Section 96; and b) identify age ranges and funding categories that need to be considered as part of the funding approval process. The information you enter on these screens will also determine how JACQA processes your submission, i.e. whether or not a detailed scrutiny of the qualification against Section 96 Criteria is required.
30. You will need to select the age ranges the qualification will be offered in by highlighting the appropriate age categories as shown in figure 4 below.

Offered In			Age Ranges
	Yes	No	
England	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre 16,16-18,18+,19+
Wales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre 16,16-18,18+,19+
Northern Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre 16,16-18,18+,19+

**Figure 4**

31. If you want the qualification to be eligible for public funding for 14-19 year olds in England you will need to select 'Yes', as shown in Figure 5. If no funding is required for 14-19 year olds select 'No'.



<b>If the qualification is intended for use by learners aged 14-19 in England, do you want it to be eligible for public funding?</b>	Yes	No
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**Figure 5**

32. If you select yes to the above you will then be asked to select which categories funding is sought in. The funding categories are:

- **GCSE/A-level** - Accreditation by Ofqual is sufficient and no further scrutiny by JACQA is required;
- **Diploma Principal Learning/Project** - Accreditation by Ofqual is sufficient and no further scrutiny by JACQA is required;
- **Diploma/ASL** - By selecting 'Diploma ASL' you are confirming that you have held dialogue with the QCDA Additional & Specialist Learning (ASL) Team and that the qualification meets the requirements for admission to the ASL catalogue. JACQA will not recommend funding eligibility for Diploma ASL until the qualification has been approved by the ASL team and admitted to the ASL catalogue;
- **Foundation Learning** - By selecting 'Foundation Learning' you are confirming that the qualifications have been developed in line with the aims and purposes of Entry and Level 1 qualifications set out in the FL Qualifications Strategy and are ready for admission to the FL catalogue. JACQA will not recommend funding eligibility for FL until the qualification has been approved and admitted to the FL catalogue;
- **Apprenticeships** - By selecting 'Apprenticeship' you are confirming that the relevant SSC(s) has confirmed that the qualification is/will be included in the relevant framework(s) and that evidence of this will be provided. JACQA will not recommend funding eligibility for Apprenticeship until the qualification has been approved as part of a framework by the relevant SSC(s) and is indicated as such on the Learning Aims Database (LAD);
- **Stand Alone** - By selecting 'Stand Alone' you are confirming that the qualifications is not part of any of the NRs and that you have sufficient and appropriate evidence to justify the qualification's eligibility for public funding as a Stand Alone qualification. If a qualification has been submitted for funding in any of the NRs it will not be considered for Stand Alone funding.

If your intention is for the qualification(s) to form part of one of the NRs at some point in the future but they are not yet ready for admission to the NR, it may be possible for JACQA to consider funding eligibility for these as Stand Alone on a time limited basis. See principle E4 in Criterion E.

33. If you have selected 'Stand Alone', then you will need to provide evidence to justify funding eligibility by option A or B:

**Option A - Electronic** - Completing the remaining fields on the WBA JACQA screen as shown below. The information is picked up automatically by JACQA once the qualifications have been accredited by Ofqual, thereby streamlining the process and reducing the time required to complete the scrutiny process. Option A should only be used if you have given explicit written permission for JACQA to access the information in this way. This is provided via Ofqual;

**Option B - Manual** - Completing an evidence template which will be sent to you by JACQA after the qualification is accredited by Ofqual (see paragraphs 41-43).

34. If you have not given consent for JACQA to access information directly from the WBA, or you have not included your evidence on the WBA, JACQA Secretariat will send you (by e-mail) an 'Evidence Template'. This will normally be within 15 working days of the qualification being accredited by Ofqual.
35. You should complete and return the evidence template to JACQA Secretariat at [JACQA@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:JACQA@qcda.gov.uk), within 10 working days. **Note: The qualification is not considered formally submitted for funding approval until the evidence template has been received by the JACQA Secretariat.** Key dates relating to the submission of evidence for new Stand Alone qualifications are given at [Section 5](#).
36. AOs are specifically directed to the guidance detailed in sections B and E of the Evidence Template.

## Providing evidence to support 'new' Stand Alone qualifications on WBA

37. Information to support your submission for funding eligibility of a 'new' Stand Alone qualification under Section 96 should be included on the Age Ranges page of the WBA as follows in figure 6:

The screenshot displays a form with four criteria for funding eligibility, each with a corresponding text input field. The criteria are:

- Criterion B - Suitability for age group:** Please specify how the qualification is suitable for the 14-19 age group in terms of maturity, social well-being and health and safety requirements. (See Criterion B guidance for further information)
- Criterion C - Fit within the National Curriculum:** If the qualification is offered at Key Stage 4 within the National Curriculum, please state how the qualification satisfies the requirements of any relevant programmes of study.
- Criterion E - new free standing qualification:** If this is a new free-standing qualification, please state how the qualification meets the specific needs of a group of learners, employers or higher education institutions whose needs cannot be met by the national qualification suites and frameworks. (See Criterion E guidance for further information)
- Criterion F - existing free standing qualification:** Only complete this section if the following applies:
  - 1) ownership of the qualification has transferred from one Awarding Organisation to another
  - 2) the qualification is a revised version of one that was previously accredited in the NQF and which has since been accredited to the QCF (if this option applies see guidance for Criterion F).

The form includes a 'Done' button at the bottom left.

**Figure 6**

38. AOs should make sure that they have included sufficient and appropriate evidence, as detailed for each criterion in [Section 2](#) of this document. Additionally, AOs should provide the name and contact details of the person who JACQA should contact if additional information or clarification is needed.

### Stage 3 - Determine level of scrutiny required

39. Every two weeks JACQA Secretariat downloads a list of all qualifications that have been newly accredited by Ofqual and will review the information you provided on WBA. Particular attention is given to the age groups and categories for which you are seeking funding for each qualification and any other information; this determines the level of scrutiny that JACQA will apply when considering funding eligibility.
40. Qualifications that are submitted as part of one or more of the four NRs will need to be verified as part of a NR. Stand Alone qualifications are subject to a more rigorous scrutiny process before a recommendation on funding eligibility can be made.

### Stage 4 - Conduct verification/analysis

#### National Routes

41. Qualifications submitted as part of one or more NRs are automatically recommended for funding eligibility once they have been verified as part of the appropriate suite or framework. The verification process varies depending on which NR(s) funding is being sought for.
  - **For GCSE/A-Level and Diploma Principle Learning and Diploma Project** accreditation by Ofqual is sufficient and no further scrutiny by JACQA is required.
  - For qualifications indicated as **Additional or Specialist Learning (ASL)** JACQA Secretariat will check that these have been approved and admitted to the ASL/Diploma catalogue. It is strongly recommended that you engage in early and on-going dialogue with the Diploma ASL Team at QCDA to ensure you fully understand the Principles, process and timelines for submission of ASL provision, as well as the publication dates for the catalogue. This will help to avoid unnecessary delays in getting your ASL provision listed on Section 96. Qualifications will not be put forward for Section 96 approval by the SoS until they have been approved and admitted to the Diploma ASL catalogue.
  - For qualifications that are intended for use within the **Foundation Learning (FL)** JACQA Secretariat will check that these have been admitted to the FL catalogue. To qualify for admittance to the FL catalogue the qualifications must be accredited onto the QCF and be developed in line with the aims and purposes of Entry and Level 1 qualifications, as set out in the FL Qualifications Strategy. It is strongly recommended that you engage in early and on-going dialogue with the FL team at QCDA to ensure that you fully understand the requirements for FL provision. Qualifications will not be put forward for Section 96 approval by the SoS until they have been approved and admitted to the FL catalogue.

- For qualifications that are intended for use in one or more **Apprenticeship Frameworks** JACQA Secretariat will check that these have been approved as part of the framework(s) by the relevant SSC/SSB and identified on the SSCs SQS AP database. It will help us verify your qualification if you can tell us which framework(s) it is approved or intended for.

It is strongly recommended that you engage in early and on-going dialogue with the relevant SSC/SSB to avoid unnecessary delays in getting your provision listed on Section 96. Qualifications intended for use within Apprenticeship frameworks will not be put forward for Section 96 approval by the SoS until they have been approved for use by the relevant SSC/SSB. See also Principle D3.

42. If we are unable to find your qualification in a published catalogue or secure assurance that it has been admitted to an Apprenticeship Framework, we will notify you by e-mail within 15 working days of the qualification being received by JACQA.

### **New Stand Alone qualifications**

43. As set out in the 14-19 Qualifications Strategy there is a general presumption **against** starting to fund for the first time Stand Alone qualifications and that as far as possible, qualifications for 14-19 year olds should fall within one or more of the NRs. Therefore, new Stand Alone qualifications are subject to a more detailed scrutiny against the Section 96 Criteria.
44. When submitting new Stand Alone Qualifications for funding approval, the onus is on you as an AO to supply sufficient evidence to demonstrate how your qualification meets the Section 96 Criteria, specifically Criteria B and E.

### **Reviewing the evidence**

45. The evidence you provide, either on WBA or on the evidence template will be used as the primary basis on which a recommendation for funding approval will be made to the SoS. JACQA Secretariat will review this and following moderation will prepare a report for the next scheduled JACQA Termly meeting. The report will include a provisional recommendation on funding eligibility for each qualification, along with a summary of the evidence provided by you to justify that recommendation.
46. It will be helpful if you can provide a full, but succinct, explanation of why you are seeking eligibility of public funding for the qualifications, along with any supporting information, e.g. letters of support/endorsement. In this respect, it is crucial that the evidence and supporting materials you submit are sufficient, robust and relate explicitly to the Criteria, Principles and evidence requirements specified in Section 2 on this document. For new Stand Alone qualifications, the Criteria, Principles and evidence relating to Criteria B and E are especially pertinent.

## Dealing with insufficient or inappropriate evidence

45. The JACQA Secretariat will consider the suitability and sufficiency of your evidence against Section 96 Criteria. If following initial scrutiny and prior to the deadline for submissions, the Secretariat considers that there is insufficient or inappropriate evidence you will be contacted and asked to provide the additional evidence to enable the secretariat to proceed with your submission.
46. All additional evidence must be received by JACQA Secretariat at least 20 days prior to the next scheduled Termly meeting to ensure that paperwork can be prepared for the moderation stage in good time. If you are unable to meet this deadline you should notify the JACQA Secretariat, in writing, to confirm one of the following actions:
  - a) proceed with the existing evidence;
  - b) put the submission 'on hold' pending further investigation;
  - c) withdraw the qualification from the JACQA process.
47. If a) above is selected, this is likely to result in a recommendation of 'not eligible' for public funding.
48. If b) above is selected the submission will be put 'on hold' until the next scheduled meeting of JACQA (i.e. 3-4 months later). If the required evidence is not submitted by the deadline date for submission of evidence for that meeting the submission will be withdrawn from the JACQA process and you will be notified accordingly.
49. If c) above is selected, you will need to make a re-submission to JACQA if you want the qualification(s) to be re-considered for funding eligibility.
50. If you do not contact the Secretariat before the deadline date option b) will be selected automatically and you will be notified accordingly.
51. Good planning and early dialogue with JACQA will help to minimise these problems. If your original submission was received too close to the date of the next Termly meeting it may not be possible to process your submission.

## Stage 5 - Moderation

52. The moderation stage (which takes place approximately a fortnight prior to the Termly meeting) which is for Stand Alone qualifications only; enables the secretariat to review all the submissions to ensure consistency of recommendations made to the Committee. The JACQA Secretariat will consider the suitability and sufficiency of your evidence against Section 96 Criteria.
53. Occasionally, the moderation meeting may indicate that further information is required and additional evidence or clarification may be sought (from either you or an additional source) to enable the Secretariat to make a recommendation to the Committee. If we are seeking information from you, we will send an 'Additional Evidence Form'. This will need to be returned to the JACQA Secretariat ([JACQA@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:JACQA@qcda.gov.uk)) within five working days.

## The role of Sector Skills Councils and/or other key stakeholders

54. SSCs have been formally requested by DCSF to develop their Sector Qualification Strategies (SQS) and accompanying Action Plans to cover 14-19 provision. SQS and Actions Plans should therefore provide a firm basis for SSCs to influence the development of 14-19 provision and, if appropriate, to inform JACQA recommendations on funding eligibility of Stand Alone vocational qualifications by supporting, or otherwise, AO submissions to JACQA.
55. SSC advice and support (and where appropriate SSB advice and support) on Stand Alone vocational qualifications is needed in relation to:
  - The suitability of the qualifications for the intended age group(s), i.e. 14-16, 16-18 and 18+ (Criterion B of Section 96); and
  - The need for and appropriateness of the qualifications to be eligible for funding as Stand Alones when viewed in the context of sector plans for developing the NRs, especially Diplomas, Apprenticeships and Foundation Learning – for instance, to meet specific learner, employer and HEI needs that are not yet covered by the NRs, or that meet particular niche market requirement (Criterion E of Section 96).
56. Additionally, SSC/SSB advice on the likely approval of vocational qualifications as part of Apprenticeship Frameworks may be required, if AOs have indicated their intent to include them in these frameworks (against Criterion D of Section 96).
57. The manner in which SSC/SSBs provide this advice and support, either through AOs or directly to JACQA, does need to be considered carefully in view of the need to ensure this is appropriate and timely, but also to keep bureaucracy to a minimum. JACQA has been in discussion with the Alliance and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to revise the SQS Action Plan Database as a source of information for JACQA. The SQS AP Database now starting to contain key information for JACQA to reduce the burden on SSCs/SSBs of providing duplicate information to multiple sources.
58. In exceptional circumstances where information is not provided via the SQS AP Database AOs may ask for SSC/SSB support (in the form of letters or e-mails) for qualifications that they have submitted, or are intending to submit to JACQA. This support, if provided, should focus specifically on the appropriateness of qualifications for 14-19 learners and will be used by JACQA (as part of the evidence put forward by AOs) to determine eligibility for public funding against Section 96. This is distinct from letters that are provided to support or endorse the general desirability of a qualification for a given sector at the point of accreditation by Ofqual.
59. It is the responsibility of the AO to obtain this support either through the SQS AP Database, letter or e-mail. JACQA may, by exception, contact an SSC directly if there is a need to clarify any information provided. JACQA has provided SSC with a standard template letter that can be adopted and adapted by SSCs/SSBs has been provided as part of a wider communication to this group of organisations if the SQS AP Database does not provide the information required.



## Existing Stand Alone Qualifications

60. Existing Stand Alone qualifications, i.e. qualifications that have been re-accredited by Ofqual with little or no change and retain their original QAN will normally be treated as re-approvals in line with Criterion F. However, until January 2010 the primary focus for JACQA will be on new Stand Alone qualifications (see above). For the time being therefore, most existing qualifications that are submitted as re-approvals will automatically be recommended for funding eligibility, without any detailed scrutiny.
61. JACQA will, from January 2010, increasingly turn its attention to a more detailed scrutiny of existing qualifications; especially those with low take up, i.e. below 100 publicly funded enrolments per year. The Biennial Review will make recommendations about the phased withdrawal of existing qualifications. Information about the future scrutiny/withdrawal of existing Stand Alone qualifications will be communicated after the 2009 Biennial Review. Once determined and published JACQA will work to that timetable for the withdrawal of funding eligibility from existing qualifications. AOs should be familiar with, and take account of the published timetable for these actions.
62. **Existing qualifications considered under Criterion F will only be approved for funding until December 2012. This will apply regardless of whether or not the accreditation end date goes beyond 2012.**

## QCF Provision

61. Qualifications that are accredited onto the QCF receive a new QAN by default. This is because the qualifications are required to conform to the new QCF regulatory requirements. However, it is recognised that many of these qualifications are in fact revised versions of qualifications that were previously accredited on the NQF. In view of this, JACQA will regard all QCF qualifications as re-approvals and give them approval dispensation to 2012 providing AOs confirm that they are revised versions of NQF provision and provide supporting information.
62. If a qualification is intended to replace a previous version on the NQF, you should clearly state the title and QAN of the NQF version(s) is replacing and provide information to indicate where any significant changes have occurred in its migration from NQF to QCF. Evidence of take-up, including a justification for low take-up (if below 100 enrolments per annum) should also be made available for the NQF qualification along with estimated take up for the revised QCF version. This information should be provided on the WBA or on the evidence template provided by JACQA Secretariat.
63. If you do not confirm that qualifications are revised versions of NQF provision and provide the supporting information indicated in the above, the qualifications will be regarded as 'new' for the purposes of JACQA scrutiny and evidence against Criterion E of Section 96 will be sought.
64. All QCF qualifications that are submitted to JACQA for scrutiny must meet Criteria A-C of the administrative arrangements for Section 96, irrespective of whether they are to be treated as new or existing.

65. As indicated above, the 2009 Biennial Review will make recommendations about the phased withdrawal of existing qualifications. This will include a phased programme of work during 2010 to review all qualifications going into QCF and to take a view on whether they will continue to be eligible for public funding post 2012. In undertaking this work, JACQA will prioritise for review, QCF qualifications that have been changed significantly in their migration from NQF.

## **Stage 6 - Termly review**

66. JACQA Termly Committee Meetings are held four times a year. The key meeting dates and deadlines are set out in Section 5. At each meeting the JACQA Secretariat will present a report to the Committee for all new Stand Alone qualifications that have been submitted for scrutiny within the deadlines for the meeting. The report will include a summary of all the evidence provided by you (including, if applicable any additional evidence) and a provisional recommendation on funding eligibility for each qualification. The JACQA Committee will review this evidence against Section 96 Criteria in order to make its final recommendation on funding eligibility.

### **What happens following a Termly Committee meeting?**

67. The JACQA Committee will recommend either to approve/not approve a qualification for funding eligibility. The AO will receive feedback of this outcome within five days of the Termly meeting. The recommendation will be provided to the SoS in the next advice unless JACQA is informed by the AO that they wish to withdraw the submission.
68. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may seek further clarification before a recommendation is made to the SoS. In these cases the AO and/or relevant organisation will be notified of the outcome, the clarification required and what, if any, action is required of them. A recommendation will be communicated as soon as possible.

## Stage 7 - Recommendation

69. JACQA will submit fortnightly advice to the SoS in respect of:
- NR qualifications that meet the relevant requirements of the NR (see paragraph 41);
  - recommendations for approval for existing Stand Alone qualifications that have been submitted for re-approval.
70. In addition, following each Termly meeting JACQA will provide advice to the SoS in respect of new Stand Alone qualifications that have been recommended for approval by JACQA. The rationale supporting each recommendation and any additional evidence/points made by the AO through the process for 'Dealing with insufficient or inappropriate evidence' (see paragraphs 45-51)
71. For Stand Alone qualifications, JACQA Secretariat will send you an e-mail to confirm the recommendation JACQA will be making to the SoS, within five days of the JACQA Termly meeting.
72. The JACQA recommendation for a qualification's funding approval end date will normally align with its accreditation end date. However there may be some circumstances where the dates do not align for example where; time limited approval is recommended (see also principle E4 under criterion E).

## **Stage 8 - Secretary of State Decision**

73. The SoS will take account of JACQA recommendations before making a final decision about which qualifications should be eligible for public funding under Section 96.
74. Qualifications that are approved as eligible to receive public funding will normally appear on Section 96 within two weeks of the SoS having made a final decision.
75. There will be no further communication about qualifications that are not approved as eligible to receive public funding.

## Section 4: Other information and guidance

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76. This section provides further information and guidance about the processes that JACQA uses to process urgent submissions, address queries, ensure security and confidentiality of information, data protection and freedom of information.

### Dealing with urgent submission of Stand Alone qualifications

77. When planning qualification development and delivery you are strongly advised to take account of the time required for JACQA to complete the scrutiny process, submit advice to the SoS, and for the SoS to make final decisions on the eligibility of qualifications for public funding. Depending on when the qualifications are accredited by Ofqual, this can take up to three months. Particular attention should therefore be given to the schedule of Termly meetings and to the published dates for accepting submissions (see Section 5) to ensure that delays are not encountered. It is your responsibility to do this.
78. In very exceptional circumstances, JACQA may consider reviewing new Stand Alone qualifications between scheduled meetings if you can demonstrate an urgent need for a recommendation on funding eligibility. The only circumstances in which this may be considered are as follows:
- the qualification has been accredited by Ofqual; and,
  - there is a legitimate reason why the qualification needs to be reviewed outside the normal schedule of JACQA meetings and this has the support of key stakeholders, which can be evidenced; and/or
  - a strong case can be made to support funding eligibility and there is adequate and tangible evidence to support this in terms of meeting Section 96 Criteria; and/or,
  - there is a strong commitment from the AO to provide a full and complete submission to JACQA to enable JACQA scrutiny to be undertaken in the short timescales. Any need to seek additional information from the AO will result in JACQA being unable to process the paperwork within the short timescales; and/or,
  - there is likely to be a significant impact on learners and programme delivery or implementation of government policy if there were to be a delay in the qualifications appearing on the Section 96 list; and/or,
  - other significant risks have been identified.

79. JACQA will not consider requests for qualifications to be scrutinised outside the normal course of Termly meetings on an exceptional basis unless you provides clear, complete and unambiguous written evidence. Nor will JACQA consider requests if they are:
- received less than six weeks before the next scheduled meeting;
  - the result of poor planning and timetabling on the part of the AO.
80. JACQA Committee will come to a view, advised by the JACQA Secretariat, as to whether or not the evidence provided is sufficient to justify exceptional consideration. A JACQA decision on whether an submission should be so considered will be final and not subject to further correspondence.

### **The process for urgent submissions**

81. If you would like to request that a new Stand Alone qualification is scrutinised outside the normal course of JACQA meetings, you must send a written justification for this to [JACQA@gcda.gov.uk](mailto:JACQA@gcda.gov.uk). The written justification should give details of the qualification (including title and QAN) and the reasons for the request.
82. On receipt of your request JACQA Secretariat will review the justification and seek a view from JACQA Committee members. A final decision will be taken by the Joint Chairs and you will be notified (normally within five working days of the request being made) by email.
83. If JACQA agrees to review the qualification outside the normal course of JACQA meetings the JACQA Secretariat will collect evidence of the qualification's suitability for eligibility of public funding under Section 96 by either:
- reviewing the evidence provided by you on the WBA, if this has been made available; or
  - asking you to complete and return an evidence template (within five working days).
84. JACQA Secretariat will review the evidence against Section 96 Criteria, produce a summary and circulate to Committee members for consideration, within five working days.
85. If the evidence is insufficient the Secretariat will notify you and request additional information before circulating to Committee members. Additional information should be submitted within three working days of the request being made. JACQA Secretariat will then review this and submit a summary of all the evidence to Committee members in line with paragraph 51-60 above.
86. Members will review the evidence and respond to JACQA Secretariat with any comments on the submission, within five working days.

87. A final recommendation on funding eligibility will be agreed by the Joint Chairs of JACQA, taking into consideration the views of the JACQA Committee. You will be notified of the outcome, within five working days and the recommendations will then form part of the next fortnightly advice to the SoS.

## **Re-submissions**

88. AOs can resubmit a qualification and re-apply to JACQA where they have either withdrawn the qualification (at any stage of the process prior to Committee submission) and/or previously applied to JACQA for funding eligibility for a single or suite of qualifications and been rejected.
89. The AO must clearly state the qualification(s) it is re-submitting (by referencing the QAN(s)) and provide a justification for the re-submission. The justification must provide new or pertinent previously un-submitted information as well as specifically addressing the feedback provided by the JACQA Committee in relation to qualifications that have not previously been approved.



## **Data protection, confidentiality and security of information**

90. The security and confidentiality of data and other information provided by you as part of your submissions to JACQA is of critical importance. To provide some assurance about this, the following Principles have been adopted:
- all data and other information will be stored in accordance with the Principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only be available to JACQA and its Secretariat.
  - access to data and other information, provided by you and held on the WBA has been given to JACQA on a view only basis. JACQA Secretariat is unable to change information or add comments in any data field;
  - data and other information provided via the WBA will be used by JACQA Secretariat to prepare submissions to the Committee. This information will be clearly marked 'Protect – Commercial' and held securely in a document management system;
  - data and other information from the WBA or evidence templates will contain only information that is essential for JACQA to judge the eligibility of qualifications for public funding under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and which can inform JACQA advice to the SoS;
  - data and other information held on the WBA or evidence templates will contain only information that is essential for JACQA purposes will not be disclosed to QCDA or LSC staff that are not members of the JACQA Secretariat;
  - all core members of JACQA (the Committee) are required to sign a statement of confidentiality and disclose any interests that could be perceived as a potential conflict of interest.
91. The advice that JACQA provides to the SoS will not be published nor will minutes of the Termly meetings, as recommendations relating to individual qualifications are commercially sensitive.
92. Recommendations to approve qualifications as eligible for public funding which are accepted by the SoS will be made public through the section 96 website, which includes a list of all qualifications which are approved as eligible for public funding.
93. JACQA will publish an annual report in December each year, which will summarise the advice given to the SoS during that year.

## Freedom of Information

94. JACQA is not a public authority named under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) but information held by QCDA and/or LSC, as joint chairs of JACQA, may be requested to release information under the FOIA.
95. Interested parties who wish to make a FOI request should refer to information provided on the following websites:
  - [www.lsc.gov.uk/Information\\_request.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Information_request.htm)
  - [www.qcda.gov.uk/4980.aspx](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/4980.aspx)
  - [www.dcsf.gov.uk/foischeme/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/foischeme/)
  - [www.ico.gov.uk/for the public/access to official information.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_the_public/access_to_official_information.aspx)
96. Upon receipt of a FOI request JACQA will determine if the information requested is held by QCDA and/or LSC and whether or not it can be disclosed.
97. Where appropriate relevant AOs will be informed and their views regarding disclosure will be sought and taken into account.

## Section 5: JACQA Termly meeting dates & submission deadlines for 2009/10

JACQA Termly Committee meetings	Final deadline for submitting all evidence	Advice sent to DSCF
Mon 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2009	Mon 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2009	Wed 7 <sup>th</sup> October 2009
Tue 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2009	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2009	Wed 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2010	Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2009
Thu 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2010	Thu 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2010
Thu 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2010	Thu 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2010	Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2010

### ***Process & Timeline for approval of qualifications within National Routes***

JACQA receives notification of accreditation	JACQA subjects qualification to light touch scrutiny	Qualifications recommended for funding eligibility are sent to SoS for approval every 2 weeks	Approved qualifications will be updated on s96 website
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**JACQA recommendations will generally be made within two weeks of submission\*\***

\*\* provided qualifications can be verified as being included in the relevant National Route

### ***Process & Timeline for Approval of Stand Alone Qualifications***

AO Submits Qualification via WBA, (including JACQA evidence where agreed)	JACQA receives notification of accreditation	JACQA sends Evidence Template or obtains evidence from WBA	JACQA subjects qualification to detailed scrutiny & may request additional evidence from AO	Qualification is assessed at Termly meeting & recommendation is made	Qualifications recommended for funding eligibility are sent to SoS for approval recommendation	Approved qualifications will be updated on s.96 website
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**JACQA recommendations will generally be made within three months of submission**

## Contact information

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For further information about JACQA, please email  
[jacqa@gcda.gov.uk](mailto:jacqa@gcda.gov.uk)

The DCSF website also contains some useful  
information about JACQA:

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19)

Other useful websites:

Accreditation information by Ofqual  
<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/63.aspx>

LSC funding policy  
<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/>