

**Ofqual**  
■■■■■■■■■■



# **Post-accreditation monitoring report**

## **National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)**

---

November 2009

Ofqual/10/4768

## **Contents**

Introduction.....	3
Regulating external qualifications.....	3
Banked documents.....	3
About this report.....	4
About the NCTJ.....	4
Corporate governance.....	5
Findings.....	5
Accreditation conditions .....	6
Observations .....	6
Resources and expertise.....	7
Findings.....	7
Accreditation conditions .....	7
Observations .....	7
Application of assessment methods – .....	8
quality assurance and control of assessment.....	8
Findings.....	8
Accreditation conditions .....	10
Observations .....	10
Determination and reporting of results.....	11
Findings.....	11
Accreditation conditions .....	11
Observation.....	11
Registration and certification .....	12
Findings.....	12
Accreditation conditions .....	13

Observation.....	14
Malpractice .....	15
Findings.....	15
Accreditation conditions .....	15
Observations .....	16
Equality of opportunity, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.....	17
Findings.....	17
Accreditation condition .....	17
Observations .....	18
Customer service.....	19
Findings.....	19
Accreditation conditions .....	19
Observations .....	19
Enquiries and appeals .....	20
Findings.....	20
Accreditation conditions .....	20
Observations .....	21
Monitoring and self-assessment .....	22
Findings.....	22
Accreditation conditions .....	22
Observation.....	22

## **Introduction**

### **Regulating external qualifications**

Responsibility for regulating external qualifications lies jointly with three regulators:

- the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)
- the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), the regulator for Wales
- the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the regulator for Northern Ireland.

Following the accreditation of a qualification, the regulators systematically monitor awarding organisations against the requirements set out in the statutory regulations. The aim of this activity is to promote continuing improvement and public confidence in the quality of external qualifications.

Where an awarding organisation is found not to comply with relevant criteria, the regulators set conditions of accreditation. Even if an awarding organisation is compliant, the monitoring team may make observations on ways that the awarding organisation could change its systems and procedures to improve clarity or reduce bureaucracy.

Accreditation conditions and observations arising from this monitoring activity are specified at the end of each section of this report. Awarding organisations are required to produce an action plan to show how they will deal with accreditation conditions imposed as a result of a monitoring activity. The regulators will agree the action plan and monitor its implementation.

The regulators will use the outcomes of monitoring and any subsequent action taken by awarding organisations to inform decisions on the re-accreditation of qualifications, or if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation.

### **Banked documents**

As part of their awarding organisation recognition processes, the regulators require awarding organisations to submit certain documents to Ofqual for the purposes of 'banking' them centrally. Information from banked documents will be used to inform monitoring activities and may also affect the awarding organisation's risk rating.

A suite of documents has been identified as suitable for banking and are those considered to be the most crucial in supporting an awarding organisation's ability to operate effectively. In order to maintain the currency of the banked documents, awarding organisations are responsible for updating them as and when changes

occur. They are also reminded to review them at least annually at the time of completion of the self-assessment return.

## **About this report**

This is the first monitoring activity on the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) awarding organisation and was carried out between September and November 2009.

The monitoring focused on the regulatory criteria relating to the following key areas:

- corporate governance
- resources and expertise
- application of assessment methods – quality assurance and control of assessment
- determination and reporting of results
- registration and certification
- malpractice
- equality of opportunity, reasonable adjustments and special consideration
- customer service
- enquiries and appeals
- monitoring and self-assessment.

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulators, attendance at awarding organisation meetings and scrutiny of the awarding organisation's website. The regulators' monitoring team visited the NCTJ's head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation as well as visiting some of its approved centres.

This report draws together the regulators' findings from these monitoring activities.

## **About the NCTJ**

The NCTJ was founded in 1951. The awarding organisation offers qualifications in journalism, one of which is accredited at level 3. For more information on the NCTJ, visit its website at [www.nctj.com](http://www.nctj.com).

## **Corporate governance**

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

### **Findings**

1. The NCTJ Ltd is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Training activities are carried out by NCTJ Training Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary. The NCTJ Ltd is governed by a board of directors. The awarding organisation ultimately reports to this board through the journalism qualifications board, which is chaired by one of the directors.
2. There are also several subject boards. These set the examinations and advise on the syllabus. The subject boards report to the journalism qualifications board, which has a more strategic function.
3. A new committee, the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee, has recently been formed and met for the first time in September 2009. It is chaired by an independent person from the world of journalism. The committee's function is to monitor the awarding organisation's activities and maintain standards.
4. The monitoring team examined the minutes of the various boards and committee, together with organisation charts provided. It found that the management and governance of the awarding organisation was clear and robust. It considered that the creation of an independent quality assurance committee was good practice.
5. The monitoring team asked about the single named point of accountability for maintaining the quality and standards of all qualifications. The awarding organisation confirmed that it was the chief executive whose signature appeared on the certificates. The monitoring team recommended that the awarding organisation check that it had advised the monitoring team of this change since the monitoring teams records showed the qualifications and accreditation manager as fulfilling this role.
6. The potential for conflict of interest in terms of training activities, and how this was managed, was raised by the monitoring team. The NCTJ Ltd has a number of roles: it accredits courses of journalism in higher education; it provides distance learning for its own accredited qualifications; it trains in-house at selected companies for its unaccredited qualifications; and it is an awarding organisation.
7. In terms of number of staff, it is a small organisation and yet within this constraint it has separated the line management of the awarding organisation

from its other functions below chief executive level. The introduction of an independent Quality Assurance and Standards Committee gives some assurance that the management of the potential of conflict of interest will be reviewed.

8. The NCTJ provided the monitoring teams, in confidence, with details of its policy on fees. The arrangements described are satisfactory.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

1. The NCTJ should confirm to the regulators the name of the single point of accountability for maintaining the quality and standards of all qualifications.
2. The NCTJ should ensure that a review of the management of potential conflicts of interest is put into the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee's terms of reference.

## **Resources and expertise**

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 8 and 10.

### **Findings**

1. The NCTJ has approximately a dozen staff at its head office, eight of whom work on awarding organisation matters. In addition, it contracts with various other people as required, for example examiners and moderators. The organisation chart provided was clear.
2. Recruitment of staff was structured. The examinations team recruited from training providers and practitioners. The NCTJ showed the monitoring teams specimen personal profiles for job roles and suitable contracts in place. All new members of staff receive induction training. There are six-monthly appraisals. The NCTJ is an Investors In People (IIP) accredited company.
3. There is a chief examiner for each of the four subject areas examined plus up to 20 moderators. NCTJ person specifications exist for the moderators. Prospective moderators must submit curricula vitae (CVs).
4. There is no formal training given in question paper writing. However, all question papers are written by appropriately qualified examiners and reviewed by the subject board.
5. The IT infrastructure is outsourced to an external service provider. The finance/IT manager deals with any day-to-day issues as they arise. The server is kept on-site and is backed-up daily by a member of staff taking tapes home with them.
6. Throughout the monitoring activity, no evidence emerged that showed pressure on the resources required for running the awarding organisation, including IT and financial resources. The NCTJ is buying-in expertise to assist it with providing units for the new qualifications framework, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

There are no observations for this section.

## Application of assessment methods – quality assurance and control of assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 13, 36, 38–42, 49 and 56–58.

### Findings

1. The NCTJ uses a variety of assessment methods for the units that make up its only accredited qualification. One examination is shorthand, where a passage is read at various speeds according to the candidates' expected ability. The majority of units are assessed by means of a written examination. There is some coursework in one of the optional units and portfolios of evidence are used in two units, one of which is mandatory.
2. The concept of mandatory and optional units is clouded, however, as magazine journalists do not have to tackle up to four of the so-called mandatory units. There are three pathways for the qualification and the NCTJ must clarify the mandatory and optional units that make these up.
3. Portfolios and coursework are marked by centres and moderated by the NCTJ. Distance learning candidates have their work marked by the NCTJ.
4. There was a lack of clarity about the arrangements for retaining sufficient evidence of candidates' work or assessment decisions to monitor provision over time. The awarding organisation has two examination sittings per year where it retains all the scripts. Otherwise, the moderators keep all the scripts that they have moderated for 12 months before disposing of them. Portfolios are only kept if they have been copied for moderation purposes.
5. The awarding organisation should set out a policy that would ensure that the criteria for keeping sufficient evidence were met even if current arrangements change. The monitoring team acknowledge that the subject boards, and now the new Quality Assurance and Standards Committee, have the monitoring of standards from year-to-year and across specifications in their terms of reference.
6. The performance of examiners and moderators is monitored through written reports by the appropriate chief examiner, and these reports will in future go to the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee. Moderators who are supervised by the chief examiner of the relevant subject board report on the performance of centres' markers. The work of the chief examiner is reviewed by another member of the subject board.

7. Assessment is only carried out in English, although the NCTJ would consider other provision if there was proven demand.
8. Authentication of candidates' work is also a little confused. Examination invigilators request that photographic identification and portfolio evidence is signed-off, but there needs to be greater clarity in the phrasing of written procedures.
9. Guidance to centres on internal assessment is sound. Full assessment specifications are provided along with mark schemes. Exemplar material is provided at workshops for moderators and centre markers.
10. Moderators ensure that candidates' evidence is sufficient to prove competence and that the standard set is consistent across centres. Only six to eight moderators were used to cover 42 centres spread geographically across the United Kingdom. The monitoring teams considered this to be good practice as it aids standardisation. Feedback given to centres is clear and appropriate.
11. Two areas of work need to be addressed. The NCTJ has not indicated the extent to which candidates could be allowed to redraft work before it is assessed. Equally, no limits have been clearly set on the assistance that may be given to candidates with their portfolio work before it is assessed.
12. Guidance to external moderators was good practice in many respects. For example, sampling requirements were thorough and clearly set out with one exception: the impression was given that centres would know if they are to be sampled before they start the assessment.
13. Another area that the NCTJ might consider improving is how it maintains and makes use of the information provided by moderators on their declarations of personal interest.
14. Marking guides were of two kinds: specific for an examination paper; or generic for portfolio- or assignment-type assessments. The monitoring teams looked at several examples as well as related examination papers. In general, they were of a good standard, although isolated examples of unclear drafting were found and pointed out to the awarding organisation. These were in the minority and the monitoring team was satisfied with the way that the assessments and their related mark schemes were produced and used.
15. Although security arrangements for the distribution of papers were sound, the awarding organisation sought to reuse papers over a period of time. With this aim, the awarding organisation attempted to track which centre had received which paper, and within that centre, which candidates had sat which paper. The system was unnecessarily complicated because candidates may move from

centres and relied on the complete accuracy of members of staff to be correct. The awarding organisation put in place a new procedure to correct this weakness.

### **Accreditation conditions**

1. The NCTJ must clarify the pathways and mandatory units that make up its qualifications (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 6c and 49c).
2. The NCTJ must provide its internal assessors with information on the:
  - extent to which candidates can be allowed to redraft work before it is assessed (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraph 60c)
  - limits on the assistance that can be given to candidates with work that is to be assessed (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 60c and 60d).

### **Observations**

3. The NCTJ should set out more clearly its requirements for the retention of candidates' work or assessment decisions.
4. The NCTJ should provide clearer written guidance on the need to authenticate candidates' work.
5. The NCTJ should remove the ambiguity in its procedures headed *Marking and moderation* and *Standardisation of exam papers marked at approved exam centres* so that centres know if their work is to be sampled before they carry out assessments.
6. The NCTJ should review how it maintains and makes use of the information gathered from moderators' declarations to ensure that they are not asked to review work from any centres in which they have a personal interest.

## **Determination and reporting of results**

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 63–67.

### **Findings**

1. Each qualification requires the candidate to pass all required units. The National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ) suggests that the qualification is graded, but in fact this applies only to the units. Pass marks are set at 50 per cent by a decision of the directors. The industry requirement for shorthand is 100 words per minute.
2. Statistical information on pass rates with comparisons over time was found in board and committee minutes.
3. The bases on which decisions were made were open to monitoring.
4. A member of the regulators' monitoring team attended a board meeting and saw that this meeting concerned itself in some detail with matters relating to the examinations, such as level, content and currency of content as well as standards. Specific papers were reviewed.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observation**

7. The NCTJ should edit its entry in the NDAQ in liaison with Ofqual's web-based accreditation team.

## **Registration and certification**

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 11–12, 21–25.

### **Findings**

1. The vast majority of NCTJ candidates take courses at accredited training centres. Some attend distance learning provided via NCTJ or independent providers. A small minority apply as completely independent candidates.
2. Centres must apply for accreditation in order to offer NCTJ qualifications. This process begins with the completion of a self-assessment questionnaire. Following this, the NCTJ undertakes an advisory visit. Finally, the centre must complete an application form and undergo a panel visit. The panel writes a report on the centre, making a recommendation to the board of directors. If it is successful in its application, a copy of the report goes to the centre alongside a letter of accreditation.
3. New centres are monitored within 12 months and then on a rolling basis every two years. Centres also have the opportunity to attend workshops to assist them in the marking process for the internally marked assessments.
4. The awarding organisation advised that candidates were previously enrolled onto the course by completing a form and submitting it via their centre. This process was changed one month prior to the monitoring activity. The centre administrator now provides the candidate's name, date of birth and email address. This enrolls the candidate onto the course and triggers their web portal to become active. This is a new part of the website where the candidate will be able to view information, such as results.
5. The centre must register the candidates for examinations using an application form. The awarding organisation then sets up the examination session for that cohort and updates the candidate record on the database. At this point, the centre is invoiced.
6. Candidates who are on distance learning courses or independent apply for examinations by downloading an application form from the website and submitting it to the awarding organisation. They must submit their application a minimum of three weeks before the examination. Candidates' personal data is collected through registration and can be analysed through the use of reports.
7. The monitoring team scrutinised paperwork provided to centres and found that there is no written advice to centres that they need to allow right of access to the NCTJ and the regulators. This must be put in writing.

8. The awarding organisation advised that they would use the advisory visit to check that centres are using buildings for assessment that are accessible to all candidates. However, this was not stated in any documentation so could be easily missed. The NCTJ must make this a mandatory part of its procedures.
9. In order to generate certificates once the results have been submitted, the awarding organisation checks with the centre to ensure that the course has been completed. The database has several fields requiring manual update, such as the pathway and the date of issue. The certificates are then printed out and checked against the results list by the member of staff entering the results and by a second staff member.
10. The certificates come with a unique identifier pre-printed onto them. This number is logged on the database and in a spreadsheet once the certificate is printed. If any certificates are spoiled, the record is updated on the spreadsheet and the word 'void' is manually written across the invalid certificate. The monitoring team considered the security surrounding certificate processing to be robust.
11. The final certificates and a results list are sent out to the centre for dissemination to candidates. The awarding organisation requests confirmation upon receipt. However, distance learning or independent candidates must buy their certificates by downloading a form and filling it in. The monitoring team considered that this could lead to problems once the certification end date of a course had passed and advised the awarding organisation that certificates must be issued without delay to all candidates. Additionally, having checked the certificates, the monitoring team noted that the full name of the awarding organisation was not displayed. This needs to be inserted.
12. The NCTJ currently offers a pathway in media law. This is not issued to the same specification in Scotland as it is in England. However, the awarding organisation is using the regulators' logos on these certificates. The monitoring team considered that only qualifications provided to the same specification as within England, Wales and Northern Ireland may carry the regulators' logos. Additionally, the awarding organisation did not advise its clients that the regulators' logos only indicated accreditation within England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
13. Any candidates requiring replacement certificates must download and complete a form. These are issued with the word 'replacement' clearly displayed and the current date of issue. The awarding organisation needs to strengthen its identification requirements before issuing such replacements.

### **Accreditation conditions**

3. The NCTJ must have procedures that ensure each centre:

- undertakes to use buildings for assessment purposes that provide access for all candidates
  - agrees to provide the awarding organisation and the regulators with access to premises, people and records, and to cooperate with the awarding organisation's monitoring activities (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion a 11c and 11f).
4. The NCTJ must ensure that:
- the full name of the awarding organisation, as accredited, appears on the front of its certificates
  - all candidates, including independent candidates and distance learners, receive their certificates upon completing and passing the assessments without any delay (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion a 22a and 22b).
5. The NCTJ must ensure that the regulators' logos only appear on certificates provided to the same specification as within England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and advise their clients that these logos only indicate accreditation within England, Wales and Northern Ireland (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 21).

## **Observation**

8. The NCTJ should introduce a procedure for issuing replacement certificates that ensures satisfactory identification of the requester.

## Malpractice

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 28–31.

### Findings

1. The NCTJ publishes its malpractice procedure on its website. The policy covers malpractice on the part of candidates as well as centre staff. However, there is also reference within the published policy to Section D of the *Common code of practice* and the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ) guidelines for dealing with malpractice. The monitoring team considered that since the relevant versions of these documents were not published alongside the malpractice policy, the policy could not be considered to be fully published. The awarding organisation must take steps to address this.
2. The policy must require centres to report any cases of malpractice. While it is clear that the policy covers candidate malpractice, it is not clear that it includes malpractice by centre staff.
3. There is mention of the awarding organisation's power to stop certification. However, it needs to be made clearer that this step would be taken in cases of non-cooperation with malpractice investigations on the part of the centre, and that registrations may also be stopped.
4. The policy suggests that the centre must conduct its own investigations and report back to the awarding organisation. The awarding organisation must conduct its own investigations into cases of malpractice and it should be made clearer when a centre may be entrusted to make a preliminary investigation on behalf of the awarding organisation.

### Accreditation conditions

6. The NCTJ must publish a full malpractice policy (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 28).
7. The NCTJ must amend its malpractice policy to make explicit that centres must report any suspected malpractice on the part of candidates or centre staff and that failure to cooperate with any investigation may lead to certificates not being issued and future registrations not being accepted (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 29).

8. The NCTJ must conduct full investigations into cases of suspected malpractice (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 30).

## **Observations**

There are no observations for this section.

## Equality of opportunity, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 9 and 14–20.

### Findings

1. The *Equal opportunities policy* is a comprehensive document that makes reference to all relevant equalities legislation. Equal opportunities are considered at all stages of setting assessments as well as in the design of the syllabus.
2. The awarding organisation also publishes a *Particular needs, reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy*. This states that any adjustments applied will not invalidate the assessment requirements nor give the candidate an unfair advantage over those who have not had reasonable adjustments applied.
3. The policy was unclear on which types of adjustments may be made by the centre itself and which had to be made through the awarding organisation. The NCTJ advised that centres must contact them to approve all reasonable adjustments. The awarding organisation should consider clarifying this in its policy.
4. The special consideration part of the policy states conditions for eligibility. The awarding organisation advised that in practice special consideration was rarely applied and that candidates would be advised to re-sit on the next available date.
5. The NCTJ does not currently state the minimum evidence required to make an aegrotat. The awarding organisation advised that it does not make aegrotat awards. This must be stated in the special consideration section of the policy.
6. The application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration will be monitored by the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee. While this committee's terms of reference referred to overseeing reasonable adjustments and special consideration, there was no specific mention of monitoring these on a regular basis. The awarding organisation should consider including this in the terms of reference to ensure that it is not missed.

### Accreditation condition

9. The NCTJ must state whether it offers aegrotat awards (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 19b).

## **Observations**

9. The NCTJ should rewrite the reasonable adjustments part of its policy to clarify which adjustments a centre can make for itself (if any), and which adjustments the awarding organisation needs to determine.
10. The NCTJ should consider updating the terms of reference of the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee to incorporate the fact that it monitors the application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

## **Customer service**

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 32 and 33b.

### **Findings**

1. The NCTJ's customer services statement met the regulatory requirements, but had two areas where improvements should be made.
2. There was a misunderstanding about what the statement on bilingual communication should cover. It is not a statement about whether alternative language assessment will be offered, but about whether, in the case of Welsh and Irish, the awarding organisation will also communicate with its centres in those languages.
3. The information on fees was by reference to another document. The web-based link did not take the reader to the document.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

11. The NCTJ should keep in mind that if assessment occurs through the medium of Welsh or Irish, it will require an additional statement on its policy on communicating bilingually with centres.
12. The NCTJ should repair the web-link to its fees sheet.

## Enquiries and appeals

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 23–27.

### Findings

1. The NCTJ procedures only cover enquiries and appeals against assessment decisions. There are therefore a number of potential situations not covered, such as centres appealing against not being approved. This needs to be addressed. The NCTJ complaints procedure also contains material concerning marking of distance learning modules that should more properly be in the enquiries procedure.
2. Initially, an appeal is reviewed by a member of the NCTJ who has not been involved in the case. However, there is independence in the second stage of the appeals procedure and also the possibility of independent review.
3. The appeals procedure must indicate the likely timescale for dealing with the appeal at each stage and acknowledge the appeal in writing.
4. Where an appeal is successful, a clearer indication is required in the appeals procedure that the fee will be refunded.
5. Where a candidate appeals successfully, the awarding organisation must have provision for reviewing the position of other candidates who may be similarly disadvantaged, but did not appeal.
6. The appeals procedure should be revised. It would be useful to make clearer that any appeals against assessment decisions must focus on whether the awarding organisation followed correct procedures rather than challenging academic judgement. The appeals procedure is a little legalistic although this is not in breach of the regulatory criteria.
7. The annual self-assessment report to the regulators contains information on appeals, so clearly the awarding organisation is monitoring and evaluating annually on the operation of these arrangements. Its report on enquiries and appeals would be more meaningful if it included the numbers as well as the nature of the enquiries and appeals.

### Accreditation conditions

10. The NCTJ must ensure that its enquiries and appeals procedure covers areas other than just appeals against assessment decisions (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criteria 23 and 24).

11. The NCTJ must indicate at each stage the period within which the appeal will be considered (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 25e).
12. The NCTJ must, where the outcome of an appeal brings into question the accuracy of other results, take steps to protect the interests of all candidates, the integrity of the qualification and the integrity of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), criterion 26).

## **Observations**

13. The NCTJ should ensure that its enquiry and appeals procedure is clearer on:
  - acknowledging appeals at each stage
  - sending written accounts of the outcomes of the appeals
  - refunding fees where appeals are successful.
14. The NCTJ should ensure that its enquiries and appeals procedure is user-friendly and includes the references to distance learning materials that currently only appear in the complaints procedure.
15. The NCTJ should consider including the numbers as well as the nature of enquiries and appeals in its report on enquiries and appeals.

## **Monitoring and self-assessment**

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA/04/1293), paragraphs 20, 33–35 and 37.

### **Findings**

1. The NCTJ had submitted self-assessment reports to the regulators and therefore there was clearly some procedure in place to monitor its compliance with the regulatory criteria. The number of non-compliances identified by the regulators suggests that this procedure could be improved.
2. The awarding organisation provides opportunities for centres and candidates to contribute feedback through its customer feedback survey. The outcome of the survey is used to evaluate performance against the customer service standard.
3. The NCTJ has procedures in place to monitor the work of its centres and these are satisfactory.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observation**

16. The NCTJ should improve its procedures for monitoring its compliance with the regulatory criteria.

The qualifications regulators wish to make their publications widely accessible.  
Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

First published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in 2010

© Crown copyright 2010

© Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment 2010

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation  
Spring Place  
Coventry Business Park  
Herald Avenue  
Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346

[www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)