



Awarding body monitoring report for: The City and Guilds of London Institute (City & Guilds)

September 2008

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Introduction

Regulating external qualifications

Responsibility for regulating external qualifications lies jointly with three regulators:

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

Following the accreditation of a qualification, the regulators systematically monitor awarding bodies 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 body is found not to comply with relevant criteria, the regulators set conditions of accreditation. Even if an awarding body is compliant, the monitoring team may make observations on ways that the awarding body 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 bodies 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 bodies to inform decisions on the re-accreditation of qualifications, or, if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation.

Banked documents

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

A suite of documents has been identified as suitable for banking and are those that are considered to be most crucial in supporting an awarding body's ability to operate effectively. In

order to maintain the currency of the banked documents, awarding bodies 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

The monitoring activity for The City and Guilds of London Institute (City & Guilds) was carried out by Ofqual on behalf of the regulators in July 2008.

The monitoring focused on the regulatory criteria relating to the following key areas but specifically those relating to the qualifications development process against the City & Guilds application for access to the 5-day accreditation process:

- corporate governance
- resources and expertise
- qualifications development
 - planning
 - content and design of assessment
 - quality assurance of the qualifications process
- assessment arrangements
 - independent assessment
 - internal assessment

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulators, including the awarding body 5-day application and scrutiny of the City & Guilds website. The monitoring team visited City & Guilds' head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation.

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

About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is the UK's leading vocational awarding body for work-related qualifications offering over 500 different qualifications spanning 22 sectors. For further information on the work of City & Guilds please see www.cityandguilds.com.

Corporate governance

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

Findings

1. Since it was last monitored in 2003 City & Guilds has revised some of its governance arrangements. In March 2008 it appointed a new Director General with responsibility for the whole City & Guilds Group. A new post of Managing Director – Awards was also created. This role includes responsibility for the awarding body functions of the group, with the post holder being the single point of accountability for City & Guilds qualifications.
2. High-level organisation charts that reflected this change were available at the time of the monitoring, although more detailed charts were in the process of being revised for individual business areas.
3. City & Guilds is governed by a Council made up of 70 members. The Council elects 14 members to form the executive committee who are the trustees responsible to the charities commission. The strategic direction of the work of the City & Guilds and its day-to-day operation is overseen by the group board headed by the Director General.
4. The committee structure has also changed since the previous monitoring. There are now four main committees reporting to the executive committee whereas previously there were five. The current committees are nominations, finance and remuneration, audit and risk, and international. A further committee, the quality and standards committee, is formed of independent individuals for the purpose of hearing appeals.
5. The aforementioned changes to significant job roles and committee structures, including their terms of reference, require submission to Ofqual for banking as the information currently held is now out of date. The information banked should reflect the organisation chart in that the job titles should match those on the chart.
6. City & Guilds works to a five year strategic plan. Each area of City & Guilds business is structured as an individual business unit with each having its own functional and financial plans. These plans are required to meet the aims of the strategic plan. Each unit has named contacts to provide support services such as human resources, learning, and development and finance.

7. The City & Guilds Awards unit is broken down into four directorates. These include sales, marketing and customer relations, assessment and quality, product management and publishing.
8. City & Guilds has joint agreements and contracts with other organisations to provide a variety of services. The information held at Ofqual was not up to date but the most recent list of organisations with which City & Guilds has contractual arrangements was submitted for review prior to the monitoring.
9. Other information held at Ofqual includes the procedures that relate to qualifications development. These have evolved over time and therefore differ from those submitted in the original 5-day accreditation submission. City & Guilds staff made the current documents available for the monitoring. However, it is a requirement that the regulators are informed of any changes to the qualifications development process. City & Guilds must have a mechanism in place to submit updated processes for qualifications development to the regulators.

Accreditation conditions

1. City & Guilds must provide supporting documentation to the regulators demonstrating any changes to its corporate governance, including to its partnership arrangements and its committee structure (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 6a).
2. City & Guilds must have a procedure to inform the regulatory authorities of any changes to its procedures for qualifications development as specified in the terms and conditions for access to the 5-day accreditation system (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 6c).

Observations

1. Prior to the monitoring activity, City & Guilds was asked to resubmit any banked documents that were identified as being out of date to ensure Ofqual had the current versions. These were reviewed by the monitoring team and discussed with City & Guilds staff. The documents relating to customer service statements and enquiries and appeals require further amendment before being resubmitted for banking. It should be noted that it was very helpful for the monitoring team to have a list of banked documents together with their version numbers and dates as this was invaluable for the review process.

Resources and expertise

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 8 and 10.

Findings

1. City & Guilds employs over 1000 permanent staff, with approximately 700 examiners and over 800 external verifiers contracted as specialists. Additional numbers of external verifiers are contracted to work with partner organisations such as ILM and NPTC.
2. There is a performance management system for all staff that includes annual appraisal. Line managers are trained in performance review and giving feedback. Objectives are devolved from the strategic plan but staff performance is reviewed against generic core competencies mapped against each job role. Every member of staff has a personal development plan that is reviewed throughout the year.
3. To deal with the demands of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), City & Guilds has put together a special project team. The team includes staff that have the experience of working with the Scottish Qualifications Credit Framework. The remit of this team was to identify ways in which City & Guilds could best manage the QCF tests and trials process, and how to update and develop staff. This resulted in the design of a training programme that deals with how to assign credit and unit levels and the rationale behind doing so. It is a requirement that all staff involved in product development attend the training.
4. In addition to providing specialist training to staff with direct involvement in product development, the coordinated services team provides generic training workshops to all other departments and partner organisations. They are also starting a programme of centre briefing events. These workshops and events provide information on the QCF and explore its potential impact. Further information on the QCF is published on the City & Guilds intranet and on the website.
5. Specialists used for roles such as examining, verifying and product development are contracted according to demand. They are initially issued with generic terms and conditions contracts which are then enhanced with additional details regarding the specific areas of work.
6. Regular training events are held for specialists on particular subjects and their training is monitored. For instance, item writers have to prove their competence by attending training and submitting examples to product managers before being allocated work.

7. City & Guilds relies on its website for much of its communications with its customers. For example, it operates a 'walled garden' that allows centres to register candidates and a 'smart screen' from which candidates and tutors are able to access resources. There is a contingency group that reviews all aspects of its information technology requirements, including the operation of a disaster recovery plan. City & Guilds has also recruited an internal auditor whose remit is to evaluate risk management across the whole organisation. This evaluation will include the information technology systems.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Qualifications development – planning

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 1, 4 and 43–44.

Findings

1. City & Guilds has dedicated detailed and comprehensive systems and procedures in place to control the development and production of qualifications. Qualifications development work is the responsibility of the product management directorate. All qualifications development, whether new, revised or updated, follows a documented standardised process.
2. Proposals for new qualifications come from a variety of sources. These can include feedback from regional offices, customers and sectors, or can arise from specific situations such as changes to legislation. Product managers maintain good working relationships with their Sector Skills Councils, who are always included in any new product proposals.
3. The rationale for a new proposal is documented in an outline business case. It includes information on the wider market and other provision as well as the target audience and potential business benefits. The initial proposal is evaluated before a decision is made as to whether to proceed.
4. If the proposal is accepted a full business case is produced. The business case provides justification for the development based on cost, risks and business benefits. When complete, the business case is reviewed by the originator, the relevant sector senior manager and sector product managers prior to sign-off by the sector general manager. At the business case meeting a project plan is also produced allocating resources and a risk log is initiated.
5. Once signed off the business case is entered onto the Annual Plan Database (APD). The database holds information on qualifications development across all sectors. This allows ongoing development to be tracked and monitored.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Qualifications development – content and design of qualifications

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 33a and 45–55.

Findings

1. The documentation that City & Guilds has produced relating to qualifications development includes guidance on the design of qualifications, a phase process map detailing the milestones involved in the development and a more detailed quality assurance document that outlines the progress checks and stages in the production.
2. All qualifications are subject to an eight-stage phased process of milestones. This begins with the initial assessment of any proposal, the development and sign-off of a business case and defining the work required along with a project plan as described in the previous section.
3. Product managers are responsible for the operation of the project plan. They follow the defined milestones for production, including regular checks covering progress being made and updating the APD and risk log. Assessment development coordinators (ADCs) from specific sector teams are available to assist the product managers in the production of supporting materials. They maintain day-to-day contact with specialists contracted to develop units and/or assessment tasks.
4. Guidance for staff and specialists is provided in the document *Designing City & Guilds Qualifications*. It provides clear detail on the titling, design of different qualification types and principles of assessment, including the choice of appropriate assessment methods. There is detailed guidance on unit writing to be used in the development of qualification specifications.
5. Milestone 4 requires a full operational review to be carried out prior to any formal submission for accreditation. Part of this review includes engaging with stakeholders to review the appropriateness of the assessment methods and tasks. The product manager is also responsible for ensuring that internal systems have been put in place and confirming that capabilities exist to operate the new qualification.
6. There is an operational review template within the business case documentation. This is used to confirm that the qualification is still viable, has undergone all parts of the development process and can proceed to the accreditation phase. It is signed off by either the senior manager or the sector general manager.

7. The milestones culminate in product completion and project evaluation of the process along with a final evaluation of the product from customers and external stakeholders on the product once it is actually being offered in the qualifications marketplace.
8. Evidence was presented by the staff interviewed to demonstrate that full market research, sector involvement, stakeholder and customer feedback are used in the design and development of qualifications. This includes the trialling of new products at in-house and centre levels.
9. The quality assurance of the qualifications development process follows defined procedures. Additionally, these will be reviewed as part of the internal audit programme that is soon to be aligned to the City & Guilds ISO accreditation. The system of quality assurance for qualifications development is based and built around the existing published statutory regulations criteria. Staff indicated that the intention is to review this existing system against the finalised and published new QCF regulations.
10. Finally, all operational staff interviewed confirmed the process, operations and quality assurance relating to qualifications development as described in both the documentation and outlined by other senior staff interviewed.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Assessment arrangements – independent assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 13, 38–42 and 56–58.

Findings

1. As stated previously, the focus of this monitoring activity was on qualifications development. This includes ensuring the awarding body has produced sufficient guidance to all those involved in assessment prior to their launch. This can be guidance to item writers, examiners, verifiers, moderators and to centres to allow them to deliver the qualification. The guidance should also ensure that effective quality assurance procedures are in place that are capable of producing reliable results. This monitoring activity did not check the effectiveness of these procedures.
2. The monitoring team looked at examples of the guidance documents to support the level 3 Certificate in Mobile Air Conditioning Systems (5101). These included the qualification handbook for centres and candidates detailing the standards to be assessed, assessment methods and evidence required. Some qualification handbooks include sample questions and answers to assist centres and candidates. These are usually multiple-choice questions and answers. Staff confirmed that each accredited qualification has these handbooks.
3. All documentation to support the delivery of all qualifications can be downloaded from the City & Guilds website. The monitoring team noted that access to any testing specifications is password protected.
4. There are suitable arrangements to protect the security of question papers and mark schemes during both the development and evaluation stages. Specialists and writers evaluate and amend papers and mark schemes in-house during moderation meetings. Papers cannot be removed from the premises and changes to questions or mark schemes are made on-screen. Security access is required to all floors where papers are stored.
5. City & Guilds has based its security arrangements on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines. These arrangements include an incident reporting procedure and administrative requirements for centres regarding the storage of papers. All papers are bar-coded and sent from head office. If security were to be breached there is an automatic flag on the intranet. Each sector area has a 'current' contingency paper available as a replacement so that candidates are not disadvantaged. In addition the spot-checking of

examination venues is done by an independent organisation. The monitoring team is confident that all reasonable precautions have been taken.

6. Centres are required to use the JCQ instructions for conducting examinations together with a supplementary document from City & Guilds about invigilation requirements. This includes, for example, information on the supervision and checking of candidate identity.
7. Examiners have access to a number of generic documents to assist them in their role. In addition they have the document *Instructions for marking examiners*. This explains the arrangements for marking, administrative requirements and standardisation.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Assessment arrangements – internal assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 13, 38–42 and 56–62.

Findings

1. The monitoring team looked at the guidance that is provided to support the internal assessment of its qualifications, which should ensure quality assurance. As stated in the previous section the effectiveness of these procedures was not tested.
2. City & Guilds provides award-specific guidance to centres and candidates. The information and documents for each qualification are available on the website. Details of the responsibilities of assessors, internal verifiers and the awarding body's requirements for maintaining records are included within this documentation.
3. Centres are given clear information on the timelines for keeping assessment records in the publication *Ensuring quality – Policy and practice for externally verified and moderated assessment* (March 2008). City & Guilds uses this document to inform internal verifiers of the quality assurance arrangements for NVQs and VRQs. Additional documents are available, such as awarding body specific guidance on internal verification of N/SVQs. The awarding body also offers workshops for assessors and internal verifiers when new qualifications are launched.
4. External verifiers have *Ensuring quality* and the *External verifier's handbook* (February 2003) to assist them in their role. The latter document pre-dates *The NVQ Code of Practice (2006)* and neither includes any information on the requirement to take additional samples if standards are not being met. City & Guilds staff confirmed that this requirement is covered during training days.
5. The monitoring team is confident that centres, assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers are provided with suitable guidance to support the delivery of its accredited qualifications.

Accreditation conditions

- 3 City & Guilds must include information on additional sampling in the guidance for external verifiers (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 61d, (iii), and *The NVQ Code of Practice (2006)*, paragraph 64).

Observations

There are no observations for this section.