



Qualifications and  
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



# Post-accreditation monitoring report: Royal Society for the Promotion of Health (RSPH)

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# Introduction

## Regulating external qualifications

Responsibility for regulating external qualifications lies jointly with three regulatory authorities:

- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS), 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 regulatory authorities 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 regulatory authorities 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 action plan will be agreed by the regulatory authorities and its implementation monitored.

The regulatory authorities 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.

## About this report

This report is the outcome of a monitoring activity carried out on the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health (RSPH) awarding body and was carried out by QCA on behalf of the regulatory authorities in November 2006. It draws together the regulatory authorities' findings on areas of corporate governance, resources and expertise, quality assurance and control of independent assessment, determination and reporting of results and registration.

This is the second post-accreditation monitoring activity on RSPH's activities and is focused on the sections of the regulatory criteria not previously covered by the Awarding Body Recognition Update (ABRU) for which there were no outstanding accreditation conditions.

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulatory authorities including the previous monitoring report and ABRU submission and scrutiny of RSPH's website. The monitoring team visited RSPH's head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation.

### **About the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health (RSPH)**

The Royal Society for the Promotion of Health is a charity. Since its foundation in 1876, its aim has been to promote continuous improvement in human health worldwide through education, communication and the encouragement of scientific research.

RSPH does this by promoting health to its members and other stakeholders through events and publications, to members of the public through its qualifications and to the food industry by certifying hygiene and packaging procedures within companies. For further information on the work of the RSPH please visit [www.rsph.org](http://www.rsph.org).

# Corporate governance

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

## Findings

1. The RSPH head of commercial activities provided the monitoring team with an overview of the organisation. The structure as described and documented is clear and fully understood by staff. Since completion of the ABRU in September 2005, RSPH has undertaken some restructuring to include the new role of examinations manager. A revised organisation chart and the job description for the new post was provided to the monitoring team and has also been sent to QCA to update the banked documents.
2. The organisation as a whole has an annual business plan and the RSPH awarding body works to the financial objectives and annual budget set by the governing council. The head of commercial services reports on the work of the awarding body in terms of numbers of candidates and qualifications to the council at its quarterly meetings.
3. RSPH does not have a documented long-term strategy but works closely with nine sector skills councils in planning the development of qualifications directly in response to industry demand. The qualifications department has an annual programme of reviewing the qualifications RSPH offers to ensure they are current and relevant.
4. Fees are reviewed annually by the head of commercial services and are published on the website.

## Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

## Observations

There are no observations for this section.

# 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. The work of the awarding body falls within the remit of the qualifications department. The head of commercial activities oversees the work of the department and there are 11 staff working on all aspects of the development and delivery of accredited and non-accredited qualifications.
2. The senior education officer works on the development of new qualifications and reviews existing ones and has also been responsible for managing the day to day work of two examinations officers who administer the examinations. One of the examinations officers recently left the organisation which provided RSPH with an opportunity to review the job roles. The outcome of this is that one examinations officer post has been upgraded to examinations manager. The role has been expanded to include management of the day to day operation of administering all examinations. This change will allow the senior education officer to concentrate on the other aspects of the role. The new post has been advertised and interviews are imminent.
3. A third senior post is that of senior compliance officer. This individual is contracted to deal with any compliance issues at centres and also carries out a programme of centre monitoring visits and spot checks on examinations.
4. RSPH contracts a team of 60 examiners to carry out item writing and reviewing and examining for all of its qualifications. Selection is a two-part process. One part is an analysis of the potential examiner's CV to ensure appropriate subject knowledge and the second part is an assessment exercise. Potential examiners are required to mark two candidate scripts and to compile five new questions for a specific qualification; this tests their assessment skills. Examiners are supervised by the senior education officer.
5. Examiners are required to declare any centres or organisations where they have an interest and this is recorded on a database together with the qualifications they are qualified to examine. Although examiners are appointed for specific subject areas some may work across several subjects if they have the appropriate expertise.

6. Examiners are contracted for each piece of work and new examiners can only undertake second marking until they become more experienced. Training events for examiners for each subject area are held annually and examiners are required to attend at least one event. If an examiner's performance is poor or they have difficulty meeting RSPH timescales, they are not contracted for further work.
  
7. RSPH owns a database to support its work but it is limited in the number of reports it can produce. RSPH has commissioned work on a new system to be introduced in 2007.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

There are no observations for this section.

# The quality assurance and control of independent assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 13, 36, 38-42, 56-58.

## Findings

1. RSPH currently has 25 accredited qualifications and they are all externally assessed. The foundation levels are assessed by multiple-choice questions and as the levels progress to intermediate and advanced the questions are extended into a mix of short answer questions and/or essays.
2. Candidates usually attend a course at an RSPH approved centre prior to taking the examination. Centres are provided with the specification which is also published on the RSPH website as are specimen question papers. The specifications for each qualification include information on the course, the assessment method and state the recommended qualifications and experience needed by tutors.
3. There are two qualifications that include a practical element to support the examination. The Foundation Certificate in Health and Safety in the workplace has a hazard spotting task where candidates examine RSPH photographs and identify the hazards. This task is marked by the tutor. Clear tutor guidance is provided and the candidate answers are recorded on a mark sheet.
4. The other practical task is in the Level 3 Certificate in Meat Hygiene and Inspection. Candidates have to look at samples of meat and are asked questions about things like the identity of the animal, the cut and what is wrong with it. RSPH has some guidance on the nature and type of the meat samples that should be used for this task but it is not clear who has access to this guidance. The guidance is insufficient in that it is very informal and does not provide for consistency. For instance, the number of samples to be used is not specified.
5. Examiners record a brief overall judgement of each candidate's performance and allocate a mark. RSPH staff stated that it is usual for examiners to have discussed and agreed the



type of questions they will ask prior to the test. Although the range of possible questions is limited, neither the questions nor the answers are recorded to provide a clear audit trail.

6. Question papers for the multiple-choice examinations are made up from questions stored in a bank. There are usually four versions of a paper for each qualification. RSPH staff note the version number sent to the centre to ensure centres do not receive the same paper twice. Staff also check that the centre is only issued with question papers for qualifications it is approved to deliver. The monitoring team witnessed this process and saw these checks being made.
7. Multiple-choice questions are reviewed when issues are identified by centres using the feedback sheets issued with each examination. These questions are then sent for moderation by at least two examiners who may recommend amendment or withdrawal from the bank. RSPH does not carry out any detailed analysis on the performance of individual questions for any of the qualifications and is not currently able to produce reports on this. It relies on centres to identify poorly performing questions in the lower levels, or on the RSPH staff who mark them and on the examiners feedback for the higher levels.
8. Examiners work in pairs to write questions for the short answer examination papers. This is sometimes done in workshops and sometimes by post or electronically. There is written guidance for examiners on how to write questions and produce mark schemes. The senior education officer reviews the question papers for language and punctuation and the papers are formatted into house style.
9. The majority of the lower level examinations take place on-demand. There is a published timetable of scheduled examinations for the higher levels. Centres request a number of examination papers using the *Examination paper request form* and must include the date of the examination. Requests for on-demand examination papers must be made five days prior to the examination and late entries are charged a higher rate. Entries for scheduled examinations are submitted three weeks before the examination date.
10. The examination package sent to examination venues includes the question papers in a sealed bag and a procedures sheet that details the conduct of the examination, invigilators instructions and candidate registration forms.
11. Candidates for the multiple-choice examinations sign both the *Candidate registration form* and the examination paper and these signatures are used as a check for authenticity. RSPH staff undertake random checks on signatures to ensure that they match. For the

higher level examinations, RSPH staff interviewed stated that candidates are usually known to employers or tutors and there are no formal arrangements to confirm authenticity. RSPH staff also stated that in some cases tutors may undertake invigilation which is not best practice. RSPH relies on centres to arrange invigilation but should ensure that tutors are only used where this is unavoidable.

12. One qualification is available to be taken in the medium of Welsh as part of a DELLS funded project and the multiple-choice question papers have been translated.
13. Completed answer papers for the multiple-choice examinations are marked by RSPH staff. Problems identified with a batch of papers or particular questions are brought to the attention of the senior education officer who will investigate. Initially, spot checks were made on marking to ensure accuracy but the senior education officer is satisfied that the staff that carry out marking are now sufficiently competent for this not to be necessary.
14. Completed answer papers for the higher level qualifications are usually sent to examiners via RSPH. If there is a time difficulty centres may be advised to send them directly to the examiner. Papers are 100 per cent double marked which eliminates the requirement for sampling and moderation. If there is a discrepancy in marking where agreement cannot be reached, RSPH sends the paper to a third examiner. Particular care is taken when the issue concerns a borderline mark. Examiners have three weeks to complete the marking and return scripts to RSPH.
15. Examiners write a report on each batch or cohort of papers marked and the senior education officer collates these to produce an annual report on the qualifications. Past pass rates are included in the annual report to allow comparison.

### **Accreditation conditions**

1. RSPH must ensure that it has documented assessment systems and procedures that produce results which are auditable, consistent and reliable. *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 56.

### **Observations**

1. RSPH may wish to consider reviewing its arrangements for confirming the identity of candidates at the scheduled examinations so that it can be assured of authenticity.

2. RSPH may wish to strengthen its guidance to centres relating to the invigilation of examinations to ensure that tutors are not used as invigilators on a regular basis.

# Determination and reporting of results

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 63-67.

## Findings

1. The double marking of question papers for the higher levels and the arbitration by a third examiner if needed is a robust system. All marks given are noted and the final agreed mark is also recorded on the script.
2. The majority of qualifications result in a pass or fail although some have a distinction grade for an achievement of 80 per cent or above. In order to achieve a pass, all the learning outcomes have to be met and the percentage of marks needed to achieve a pass or a distinction is stated in each qualification specification.
3. If there is more than one examination paper for the qualification or if there is a supporting practical element the same pass or fail arrangements apply and candidates will have to pass all elements in order to achieve.

## Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

## Observations

There are no observations for this section.

# Registration

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 11 and 12.

## Findings

1. Centres wishing to offer RSPH courses undergo an approval process to ensure they have sufficient resources to deliver the course and accommodate examinations. The number of approved centres changes and currently there are in the region of 1,000 centres. For the purposes of these externally assessed qualifications the only regulatory requirement of centres is to provide an appropriate examination venue and examination support service. Centres are not required to keep any assessment records. Spot checks are made on examinations by the RSPH compliance officer and a centre risk rating system is being developed.
2. Centres register candidates to take an examination. Centres requesting examination papers for the on-demand examinations are provided with a batch of candidate numbers appropriate to the number of examination papers they have requested for a particular examination. The centre allocates one of the numbers to each candidate taking the examination by listing them on the *Candidate registration form* and sending it back to RSPH with the completed examination papers.
3. Centres register candidates for the intermediate and advanced qualifications by completing an *Intermediate/Advanced Candidate registration form* at least three weeks before the examination. RSPH staff allocates candidate registration numbers on receipt of these forms.
4. Candidate registration numbers are allocated per examination and if a candidate takes more than one RSPH qualification they will receive different candidate numbers. It is not currently possible to track candidates progressing through the levels of qualifications.
5. Centres requesting examination papers for the scheduled examinations have to submit the *Candidate registration form* by a specific entry date for each qualification, usually three weeks prior to the examination. The form includes a registration date and an assessment date. The registration date is the first day of the course and the assessment date is the date of the examination.

6. RSPH staff enter candidate details on the database when the *Candidate registration form* is returned from marking immediately prior to a certificate being printed. The form indicates whether the candidate has passed or failed. If it is a pass a certificate is produced and the certificate number noted on the *Candidate Registration Form*. If the candidate has failed, a certificate of attendance is issued.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

3. RSPH should consider reviewing how it allocates candidate registration numbers in order to analyse progression of candidates through its qualification levels.