

Information and guidance for centres

This guide has been put together to ensure our centres have all the information needed to deliver Innovate Awarding qualifications.

It also includes other information, including how to become an Innovate Awarding centre and our policies and procedures. If you have any questions at all on our qualifications, services, policies or procedures, or you have ideas on how we can improve this guide, we would love to hear from you.

There are lots of good reasons for becoming an Innovate Awarding centre, including:

- quick and easy centre approval process
- free-of-charge centre approval – with no annual centre fee
- competitive fees – compare us to other awarding organisations
- two day certificate turnaround time
- consolidated invoicing
- risk-based quality assurance – targeted support, not a scattergun approach across all areas

Our contact details are:

Innovate Awarding

WestPoint
78 Queens Road
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 1QU

Telephone: 0117 314 2800

Email: contactus@innovateawarding.org

Web: www.innovateawarding.org

Innovate Awarding is recognised as an awarding organisation by the following regulators – Ofqual (in England), Qualification Wales (in Wales) and CCEA (in Northern Ireland)

Customer service

We offer a range of support and services to our customers, including assessment materials, guidance documents and training. Visit our website for more information – www.innovateawarding.org. Our Customer service charter and performance pledge details our commitment to our customers, including our response times, and can be found on our website at www.innovateawarding.org

Comments: we welcome your feedback and suggestions, whether on our customer service, policies, procedures, qualifications or assessment, and if you have any ideas that could improve on what we already do, we would very much like to hear from you.

Complaints: it is important to us that you let us know if you are not happy. We always try to do our best in everything we do, but if we haven't lived up to your expectations, then do please tell us and help us to put it right. Our complaints procedure is on our website – www.innovateawarding.org

Feedback: we thrive on getting things right. If we have done something well, please let us know. This will help us continuously improve our responsiveness to our customers.

Centre approval

If you want to start delivering Innovate Awarding qualifications or units, then you must gain approval from us. We have tried to make this as easy as possible.

If you would like to talk to someone first, then complete the centre approval enquiry form on our website – www.innovateawarding.org – and someone will be in touch straight away. Or you can call us on 0117 314 2800.

If you are ready to submit your formal application, then complete the centre approval application form on our website – www.innovateawarding.org.

Approval is subject to you meeting the regulatory and Innovate Awarding criteria, but we will run through this with you once we have received your completed centre approval application form.

Please visit www.innovateawarding.org for further information on centre approval including our fees.

Additional qualification approval

As an approved Innovate Awarding centre you can apply to deliver additional qualifications at your centre, or from any satellite centre.

An Additional qualification application approval form can be found on our website – www.innovateawarding.org.

Centre agreement

All centres wishing to deliver Innovate Awarding assessments or qualifications must sign an agreement which sets out the roles and responsibilities of both the centre and Innovate Awarding. For a copy of this agreement, please contact Innovate Awarding:

Telephone: 0117 314 2800

Email: contactus@innovateawarding.org

Qualifications

All of Innovate Awarding's qualifications are on the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF).

For an up-to-date list of the qualifications we offer, please visit our website - www.innovateawarding.org

Withdrawal of qualifications

Innovate Awarding will, from time to time, withdraw or make changes to its assessments or qualifications.

In such circumstances, the following procedures will be observed:

- planned changes will be communicated immediately to Innovate Awarding approved centres – we will try to give as much notice as possible and usually at least three months
- Innovate Awarding will confirm the last registration date, and if the qualification is being replaced by a like-for-like or similar qualification, then the centre will be given the new qualification number and informed of any differences in structure or assessment. If formal centre approval is required for the new or revised qualification, then we will advise you of this at the same time
- learners will be allowed 18 months, from date of initial registration, to complete the assessment or qualifications. We will confirm the last certification date
- Innovate Awarding will work with their centres to ensure that the withdrawal of a qualification does not disadvantage any learner

Please note: Delivery of qualifications is not allowed after the end date of the qualification.

Materials in other languages

Assessment specifications and assessment materials may be requested in Welsh or Irish and, where possible, Innovate Awarding will try to fulfil such requests.

In all cases where assessment materials are provided in other languages, Innovate Awarding will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the assessments in different languages ensure a consistent demand on learners.

Requests for materials in other languages should be made by completing the form available on our website – www.innovateawarding.org before registering learners.

Quality assurance

Innovate Awarding is responsible for external quality assurance monitoring and sampling of a centre's delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance and quality management systems, policies and processes.

This is delivered through a team of External Quality Advisors (EQAs) who are supported by, and report to, the Quality and Operations Manager at Innovate Awarding.

The Innovate Awarding EQA will recommend an on-going level of support to the centre (support being additional visits, telephone calls, action plans, remote access to e-portfolio systems, emails) based on their findings during their quality assurance/moderation visits, and we express the level of support as a 'risk rating'.

This risk rating is agreed between the EQA and centre after they have together considered the probability of something going wrong within their quality assurance processes, record keeping, resource levels etc., and the impact if it did go wrong. The level of ongoing support agreed with the centre is then tailored to suit individual needs, and this could be different for each Innovate Awarding qualification that a centre delivers.

The risk rating is applied as follows:

Risk rating	Risk level	Action
1	low	Minimum support, one or two EQA visits per year
2	low/medium	May be an action plan in place for a specific area, support in place which could be additional visits, or telephone contact at agreed intervals or EQA monitoring within e-portfolio systems
3	medium/high	Action plan in place to support the centre to rectify identified weaknesses, moving them to a lower risk rating within a defined period of time
4	high	Centre approval is not given or withdrawn

More detail on our approach to quality assurance can be found on our website – www.innovateawarding.org.

Moderation

The purpose of moderation (or verification) is to determine whether assessment is accurate and consistent to the agreed National Standards, whether internal moderation – conducted by the Centre – or external moderation – conducted by an Innovate Awarding External Quality Advisor (EQA).

Our EQAs will work with our centres, through external moderation and quality assurance, to ensure that internal assessment decisions made by the centre are accurate and fair, and without bias.

For more information on our moderation process, please visit our website www.innovateawarding.org

Administration

We use an innovative, web-based system that allows you to administer all aspects of your assessments with Innovate Awarding – such as registration, certification, tracking or amending learner details and viewing current or previous batches.

Once you are approved as a centre, you will receive a password to log in to our secure portal to access your own centre file. You can allocate different levels of access for different members of staff and roles within your centre, and you can monitor the level of activity, access and interaction that you have with us through the system.

Our system is available 24/7 and is very easy and intuitive to use.

Registering Learners

Learners must be registered no later than 25 percent into the learning programme in terms of time – so for a 36-week programme, registration should be before the end of week 9 and for a 12-week programme, before the end of week 4. To register a learner you will be required to submit certain information: learner's full name, date of birth, gender, Unique Learner Number (ULN), ethnicity, address and telephone number (if available).

Centres are able to cancel learner registrations at any time via the secure portal. Refunds on registrations will be given if the registration is cancelled within 10 working days. Cancellations made after this time will be charged.

Certificating learners

Certificating your learners is easy. The system cross-references against learner registrations and checks that the learner achievements you have submitted meet the rules of combination.

We send out learner certificates to our centres within two days via recorded delivery.

Replacement certificates are available: please visit our website for more details www.innovateawarding.org.

Direct Claim Status

If you have Direct Claim Status (DCS) you will be able to sign off your own certificate claim forms for that qualification without having to wait for our External Quality Advisor (EQA) to visit.

For information relating to DCS, and how you can apply, please look at our DCS policy on our website www.innovateawarding.org.

Malpractice and maladministration

Innovate Awarding has a responsibility to ensure that it does everything it can to prevent any malpractice and maladministration from occurring, and where it has already occurred, ensuring action is taken proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence.

To meet these requirements, we have a Malpractice and maladministration policy and procedure that is available on our website www.innovateawarding.org

Conflicts of interest

Innovate has to ensure that all assessments are carried out with integrity. To this aim, centres will need to have in place procedures for avoiding conflicts of interest and where a conflict of interest cannot be avoided, procedures for managing that conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest may arise within a centre where:

- An assessor has a vested interest in the outcomes of an assessment (e.g. an assessor assesses a family member or close friend)
- An assessor gains a financial reward based on assessments undertaken by them over and above normal pay/salary. (E.g. a bonus for number of achievements)
- An assessor internally verifies work they have assessed

Note: the above list is not exhaustive and centres are encouraged to contact Innovate Awarding with any specific queries.

Sanctions

Sanctions are only used to help process improvement or as a way of protecting the validity of assessments or to prevent fraud. They will always be proportionate to the extent of the risk identified and we will always talk our decisions through with the appropriate individuals before we take any action. Innovate Awarding personnel (or a member of our team of External Quality Advisors) will determine, through assessment and evaluation, the level or type of sanction and any associated action plan.

Sanctions are applied at qualification level. Our sanctions policy is available on our website - www.innovateawarding.org

Enquiries and appeals

We recognise that sometimes decisions are made that a centre (or learner) may wish to query. The enquires and appeals policy that sets out guidelines on grounds for enquiries and appeals and the process is available on our website – www.innovateawarding.org

Equality and diversity

Innovate Awarding is committed to giving everyone who wants to gain one of our qualifications an equal opportunity of achieving it in line with current UK legislation and EU directives, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the Equality Act.

Centres are required, as conditions of centre approval, to use an equality and diversity policy that works together with ours and that they also maintain an effective appeals process. We expect our centres to tell learners how to find and use their own equality and diversity and appeals procedures.

Reasonable adjustment and special consideration

All learners must be treated fairly and equally and we have developed a policy and process in support of this. Our policy, and application forms, can be found on our website, www.innovateawarding.org

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL recognises how the contribution of a learner's previous experience could contribute to a qualification or unit. Most learners using RPL will be seeking to use this approach for some, rather than all of the units within a qualification.

All centres offering Innovate Awarding qualifications will need a process in place for RPL. The stages involved in considering and confirming RPL are:

Stage 1: giving the learner general information, advice and guidance (IAG) about claiming credit

The learner can then make a decision about whether or not to use the RPL route. Information given should include administration processes, sources of professional support and guidance, timelines, appeals, and any fees and/or subsidies available.

Stage 2: pre-assessment – gathering evidence and giving information

If the learner decides to claim credit through RPL, they must collect evidence against the requirements of the unit(s). This may involve having an assessment plan or choosing other means of supporting them. The learner needs to be aware of the implications of the process, have sufficient support to make a viable claim and be able to make decisions about how to collect and present evidence against the learning objectives and assessment criteria.

Stage 3: Assessment/documentation of evidence

When a centre assesses evidence as part of RPL, they must follow a structured process for gathering and reviewing the evidence and making judgments about the learner's prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards, using the same process for reaching an assessment decision as for any other learner.

Stage 4: Feedback

After assessment, the centre must discuss the results with the learner and confirm whether or not they will be recommending the credits be awarded, giving support and guidance on the options available, including further learning and development (particularly in cases where the recommendation is to not award credit).

Stage 5: Awarding credit

All credits achieved through RPL are certificated by Innovate Awarding in exactly the same way as all other credits.

Stage 6: Appeal

Learners who wish to appeal against an assessment decision must follow the centre appeals procedure.

Data protection

Innovate Awarding takes the protection of data seriously. We have a data protection statement outlining how we, and our centres, comply with the current legislation on data protections. This statement can be found on our website, www.innovateawarding.org

Fees

Our pricing structure is transparent and straightforward. Our fees are published on our website in a clear format with no hidden charges.

Advance notice of at least 60 days will be given on any planned fee increases.

Unlike other awarding organisations, we do not charge an annual centre fee. Visit our website to compare our fees – www.innovateawarding.org

Invoicing

We have a policy available on our website which sets out our processes in relation to the issue, payment, retention and the content of invoices.

Visit our website www.innovateawarding.org for more information.

Use of the Innovate Awarding name and logo

As an Innovate Awarding approved centre you may advertise that you deliver Innovate Awarding qualifications. However, please note the following:

- 'Innovate Awarding' must be used in full rather than any abbreviation or alternative
- the Innovate Awarding logo may be obtained by emailing us: contactus@innovateawarding.org