

Regulation and Guidance

Centre and Qualification Approval from the PMI

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1. Becoming an Approved Centre

1.1 How do you become an approved centre?

The PMI, as the awarding organisation for the Award, has to ensure that a potential centre has the resources to become an approved centre. This will mean ensuring that you can make appropriate arrangements for the delivery and assessment of the qualification.

Becoming an approved examination centre for the Award involves three stages:

- Stage 1** Completion of the application form
- Stage 2** Approval visit
- Stage 3** Compliance with the action plan and deadlines agreed during the approval visit

If you are already an approved centre for any of the PMI's vocational qualifications and would like to offer the Award, please complete the form to Add Another Qualification to an Existing Centre.

1.2 The application form

An application form for centre approval can be downloaded from the website. We can also provide the form by e-mail on request.

Section 1 Centre details

Please fill in the main details about your organisation and the likely number of candidates who will take the particular qualifications your centre wishes to be recognised for.

Section 2 Centre Contact details

The centre contact is the person who will have administrative responsibility for the centre and who will be the main point of contact with the PMI. Please see section 3.1 for further details about the responsibilities of the centre contact.

Section 3 Training and Assessment

This will provide the PMI with details about the training programme(s) that you intend to put in place for the delivery and assessment of the units that make up the/any qualification you are recognised to deliver.

1.3 Approval visit

Once we have received your application form, we will make arrangements for your centre to have an approval visit. This will usually take place within 6 weeks of the receipt of your application form.

The approval visit enables the PMI to ensure that you have the resources to administer the qualification. The outcome of the visit will be a report and an agreed action plan with timescales to enable you to meet any criteria you are unable to meet at the time of the approval visit.

You will be sent a copy of the report within 4 weeks of the approval visit and asked to give your formal agreement to the action plan. Centre approval is subject to your agreement to and compliance with any action plan.

You have a right of appeal against the outcome of the approval visit (see section 4.4).

1.4 Completion of centre approval

Centre approval is complete when you have been notified in writing by the Qualifications Team at the PMI. You will be sent a centre certificate confirming you are an approved centre.

This certificate is issued annually once you have paid your annual centre fee and continue to meet the criteria for running the qualification.

2. Responsibilities as an Approved Centre

2.1 There must be a designated centre contact

The centre contact is the person to whom the PMI will send all information about qualifications. A current candidate for any of the PMI's Vocational Qualifications may not be the centre contact.

The centre contact is responsible for all communication with the PMI and for carrying out the responsibilities described in this section. If the responsibilities are to be shared with more than one person, we will need to know who is authorised to sign the various forms used in the administration of the Award.

2.2 Candidate registration

- You may register candidates as soon as centre approval is complete. You must use the forms provided by the PMI.
- You must return the completed form to the PMI with the correct fee.
- We confirm your candidate registrations and send you a copy of the candidates' details, which we have entered on our computer. Please check these carefully and notify us of any errors as soon as possible. Certificates are issued using these records.
- You must inform candidates of their registration when you receive confirmation of the registrations from the PMI.

Unique Learner Number (ULN):

It is an Ofqual requirement that Awarding Organisations must capture the Unique Learner Number (ULN) for all candidates where possible. The Learner Registration Service (LRS) will allocate a ULN to every person undertaking education and training. The ten-digit number will remain with them for life and will not be recycled.

A ULN is not mandatory, however, if you are entering for qualifications on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) it is good practice to provide a ULN to take advantage of the flexibility of the new RQF qualifications where a ULN is included with a candidate registration.

The PMI will check the ULN and the candidate details with the LRS. Candidate details submitted to the PMI need to match those on the LRS exactly if there are any differences, THE PMI will be unable to validate the ULN.

For more information and to generate a ULN, please refer to the Learning Records Service – Learner Registration Area: www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk

2.3 Training and Assessment

Each unit (per qualification) is set to form the basis for a training programme to be delivered in-house as and when required. As an approved centre you will be required to outline how you intend to put this into place, how it will be carried out and by whom. There is space on the centre approval form for you to outline this.

Assessment is directly linked to the learning outcomes that are listed in each set of unit guidance notes. Assessment ideally should be carried out at the end of the training session for the unit in the form of a written question and answer test. The questions are either set externally by the THE PMI, or written in-house, and answers are marked on that basis either externally or in-house. Oral questioning is not acceptable – all questions and answers need to be documented for standardisation purposes.

2.4 Standardisation

It is vital that the PMI ensures there is standardisation of assessment of learning outcomes across all centres and candidates. To this end you will be asked twice per year (as a minimum) to provide an update on the current position of your candidates in terms of progress through the units (State of Play document).

The PMI will select at random a number of candidates per unit completed and their end of training session tests (questions and the answers) must be sent to the address designated by the PMI.

The PMI will review the tests and the assessments carried out against the unit learning outcomes and a report will be compiled and returned to the PMI with a copy to the centre. If there are any concerns or issues, then these will be relayed to the centre and any resulting action points monitored.

The PMI reserve the right to refuse future final certificates if standards of assessment are not met by a centre.

2.5 Special Assessment Arrangements

Under certain circumstances the PMI will authorise assessment arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements. However, any special arrangements will require the candidates to meet the national standards and will ensure that those candidates do not gain an unfair advantage over others.

- If you have any candidates for whom special assessment arrangements may be required, you must contact us in the first instance to discuss the options.
- You must make applications in writing to the PMI for special assessment arrangements, detailing the reasons why the special arrangements are required, for whom and for how long.
- Any special arrangements requested on medical grounds must be supported by written evidence of the medical grounds.
- Where we agree to special assessment arrangements, the details and the duration of these arrangements will be confirmed to you in writing.
- You must not implement special arrangements prior to receiving written confirmation from us that the proposed arrangements are acceptable.
- Requests for special arrangements should be made when the candidate is about to commence the unit concerned.

2.6 Applying for a final certificate

- An application for a final certificate can only be made once a candidate has completed all units that make up the qualification. You may apply for a final certificate for your candidates by completing the application form and returning it to us with the correct fee.
- Final certificates take approximately 10 working days to process. We will acknowledge your application and tell you when it will be processed.

2.7 Maintenance and retention of records

It is an important part of your role as a centre to maintain records of candidates and their achievements. You should keep copies of any communication and documentation connected with the qualification.

During each year we will write to you for an update on the progress of the candidates in your centre (State of Play document) and from that list we will select some end of training/unit tests for standardisation purposes. (see 2.4)

2.8 Maintaining approval status

Each year all centres must pay an annual centre fee and a new centre approved certificate will be issued. This is also dependent on meeting the requirements to run the in-house training and assessment in accordance with the PMI requirements by satisfying the standardisation outcomes.

If assessment standards are not met and maintained by a centre more frequent standardisation may be implemented by the PMI at a cost to the centre concerned, until such time as standards do meet requirements.

The PMI reserves the right to refuse continued approval to run the qualification should standards not be met and maintained by a centre.

2.9 Provision of information to The Pensions Management THE PMI

- You must keep us informed of any changes to candidate and centre contact details.
- For existing candidates, it is important that you inform us of changes of name and/or marital status.
- All certificates are issued on the basis of the information which we currently hold on our computer system.
- You must inform us when any candidate joins you from another centre or when a candidate leaves your centre.

3. The role of the PMI

3.1 Awarding Organisation

The PMI is the Awarding Organisation. We all aspects of the qualifications we offer and are responsible for their quality assurance.

3.2 Our commitment to you

Prompt service

The PMI is committed to providing a customer focused, prompt and professional service to all its approved assessment centres. All centres should have a copy of our Customer Service Statement which includes time scales for our administration. Centres requiring additional copies should contact the Qualifications Team (details below):

Help line

For enquiries:

- telephone the Qualifications Team on 020 7392 7400
- write to us at the PMI, 6th Floor, 9 Appold Street, London EC2A 2AP
- E-mail us on PMIQualifications@pensions-pmi.org.uk

We aim to deal with enquiries within 3 working days.

Regional groups

The PMI has a number of regional groups that welcome local members with an interest in pensions. They do not have to be Fellows, Associates or Students of the PMI. For details of your nearest group, please contact us or look on the main PMI website.

The PMI's website

Information about the Qualifications the PMI offers can be found on the [PMI's website](#) from which it is possible to download all documents and information connected with any one particular qualification

Equal opportunities

The PMI fully supports the principles of equal opportunities and is committed to satisfying these principles in all its activities and in its published material.

3.3 What should you do if you have a complaint?

If you have a complaint you may contact the Manager of the Qualifications team in the first instance to discuss the issue informally. Alternatively, you may submit a formal written complaint to the Director of Lifelong Learning. You should also do this if your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction through informal discussions.

We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 3 working days of its receipt and we undertake to investigate your complaint and report back to you within 10 working days of its receipt.

3.4 Appeals procedure

- Centres have a right of appeal against refusal of centre approval decisions.
- Learners have a right of appeal against assessment decisions.
- All appeals must be submitted in writing and include full details of the grounds for appeal.
- Appeals must be submitted by the centre contact to the Director of Lifelong Learning at the PMI.
- Appeals must be received within one month of notification of a decision against which the appeal is being made.

3.5 Charges:

- Appeals against centre approval decisions are free of charge.
- Appeals against assessment decisions are subject to an administration charge of half the current cost of an examination entry which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.
- A written outcome of the appeal will be sent to the person who submitted the appeal within 1 month of the receipt of the appeal.
- If the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome, a final appeal may be made to the PMI Lifelong Learning Committee. This must be submitted in writing to the Director of Lifelong Learning within one month of receiving the written outcome of the appeal. It will normally be submitted to the next Lifelong Learning Committee meeting. The appellant will be notified of the date when the appeal will be heard.
- A written outcome of the final appeal will be sent to the person who submitted it no later than 10 working days after the Lifelong Learning Committee meeting at which it was considered.

*All forms/policies mentioned throughout the document can be found on the [Wider Information Set \(WIS\)](#).

Appendix A - Glossary

Regulatory Body

Ofqual – the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations, regulate examinations, qualifications and assessments in England. It is their duty to ensure that all learners get the results they deserve and that their qualifications are correctly valued and understood

RQF – Regulated Qualification Framework

The RQF is a system for recognising skills and qualifications.

The RQF aims to provide for a simple yet flexible structure that allows for the maintenance and continuing development of a qualifications system that is:

- inclusive responsive accessible
- non-bureaucratic

Awarding Organisation

Organisations approved by Ofqual to offer units and qualifications that are placed on the RQF. the PMI is the Regulated Awarding Organisation.

Learners

Individuals taking the qualification

Centre Contact

The person appointed by the centre to be responsible for all communication with the PMI and for administering the Award in Pensions Essentials

Final Certificate

The certificate awarded to candidates on completion of the qualification.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are intended to be the clear articulation of what learners are expected to understand and be able to do in order to pass the unit. They should relate directly to the aims of the unit and relate directly to the assessment tasks of the unit

Assessment Criteria

These are the components that allow learners to be assessed against the Learning Outcome.