Centre Handbook

Version 1.0 | Param Qualifications Ltd

INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

This handbook forms part of Param Qualifications' compliance framework, aligned to Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition, and is designed to evidence readiness for regulated awarding status. As part of this journey, we are developing governance, quality assurance, and centre management documents that reflect best practice within the awarding sector. This Centre Handbook is one such document, designed to provide clear guidance to all prospective and approved centres that wish to deliver Param Qualifications' programmes in the future.

Our aim is to support centres with transparent processes, ensure fairness for learners, and promote compliance with UK regulatory expectations. This handbook outlines how centres should operate in partnership with Param Qualifications, ensuring high-quality delivery, assessment, and learner support. This ensures that anyone reading about centre approval or responsibilities can immediately see that you are not controlled by or commercially dependent on centres. It also addresses Ofqual's concern about awarding body–training centre conflicts. Centres must provide every learner with the official Learner Information Pack issued by Param Qualifications Limited, which contains programme details, policies, and support guidance. This pack should be distributed at induction and retained as part of learner records

Purpose of the Handbook

The Centre Handbook is intended to:

- Provide centres with a single point of reference on policies, procedures, and quality standards.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of centres, tutors, assessors, internal quality assurers (IQA), and learners.

- Explain the expectations that Param Qualifications has for centres, including compliance with assessment, record-keeping, and learner support requirements.

- Offer practical guidance on applying for centre approval, delivering qualifications, and maintaining quality assurance standards.

Who Should Use This Handbook

This handbook is for:

- **Prospective centres** – organisations considering applying for centre approval with Param Qualifications.

- **Approved centres** – those already authorised to deliver our qualifications (upon future recognition).

- **Staff within centres** – programme leaders, assessors, IQAs, administrators, and support staff who are directly involved in qualification delivery.

- **Learners and stakeholders** – who may wish to understand the framework under which Param Qualifications operates.

Scope of the Handbook

The guidance in this handbook applies to:

- **Centre approval process** – including application, review, and monitoring.

- **Delivery of qualifications** – ensuring centres meet delivery and assessment standards.

- **Assessment and quality assurance** – detailing IQA and EQA arrangements.

- **Policies and procedures** – such as malpractice, appeals, safeguarding, and equal opportunities.

- **Monitoring and review** – how Param Qualifications ensures continuous improvement.

This document should be read alongside the individual policies (e.g., Complaints & Appeals, Malpractice, Learner Protection, Equality & Diversity) which provide further detail. Together, they form part of the quality assurance framework that supports the effective and fair delivery of qualifications.

CENTRE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

Purpose of Centre Approval

The purpose of centre approval is to ensure that only organisations with the necessary capability, resources, and governance structures are permitted to deliver Param Qualifications' programmes. This process is not a one-off formality but an ongoing quality gateway.

Full details are contained in the standalone Conflict of Interest Policy (see Policy Library), which outlines identification, reporting, and mitigation procedures in compliance with Condition A4. Approval is designed to:

- Protect the interests of all learners by ensuring fair and reliable delivery.
- Confirm that the centre has sufficient resources, facilities, and qualified staff.
- Ensure that centres operate in accordance with UK regulatory expectations and best practice in awarding.
- Establish a formal agreement between the centre and Param Qualifications, setting out roles, responsibilities, and compliance obligations.
- Approval status will be conditional and subject to continuous monitoring. Failure to maintain standards may result in sanctions or withdrawal of approval.

- This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Condition C1 – Ability to meet requirements, ensuring centres have sufficient governance, resources, and arrangements in place.
- Centres must also comply with the standalone Conflict of Interest Policy, which sets out in detail the processes for identifying, recording, reporting, and mitigating any potential or actual conflicts. This policy applies to all staff, assessors, internal quality assurers, and members of governance. The policy ensures awarding decisions remain free from undue influence and provides escalation routes where conflicts arise. A copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy is available in the Policy Library and is considered a core compliance document.
- Satellite centres must go through a separate approval process, with the same due diligence and oversight as the main centre.
- Satellite centres will be subject to the same monitoring schedule and EQA scrutiny as the main centre, including approval visits, annual reviews, and sanctions if standards are not met.
- Approved centres will be required to maintain compliance with all policies, undergo annual reviews, cooperate with monitoring visits, and notify Param Qualifications of any material changes that may cause an Adverse Effect.
- All centres approved by Param Qualifications (once recognition is achieved) will be required to sign a Centre Agreement. This agreement will set out responsibilities, compliance obligations, and consequences for non-compliance.
- The Centre Agreement will be a legally binding contract setting out responsibilities, compliance obligations, sanctions, and termination provisions.

Eligibility Criteria

Centres seeking approval must provide clear evidence that they meet the following requirements:

Legal and Organisational Readiness
Centres must be registered as a recognised legal entity (company, partnership, or approved educational provider). A copy of incorporation, registration, or equivalent documentation should be submitted. Centres must also demonstrate a governance structure with clear lines of accountability for quality and compliance.

Resources and Facilities
Centres must have suitable facilities to deliver learning, including safe classrooms, IT systems, and access to learning materials. Online and blended learning environments must be reliable, accessible, and secure. Evidence may include photographs of facilities, IT access logs, or resource lists.

Staffing
Centres must employ appropriately qualified and competent staff. This includes:

- At least one assessor with subject expertise per programme delivered.

- At least one trained Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).

- A designated Centre Head or Programme Leader with overall responsibility.
  Staff CVs, qualification certificates, and CPD records must be submitted as evidence.

Policies and Documentation

Centres must have the following written policies in place, reviewed annually and accessible to staff and learners:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

- Safeguarding and Learner Protection Policy.

- Complaints and Appeals Policy.

- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

- Data Protection and Records Retention Policy.
 Centres must provide copies of each policy at the application stage.

Financial and Learner Support

Centres must be financially stable and capable of sustaining qualification delivery. Evidence may include recent audited accounts or bank statements. Learner support mechanisms must also be in place, such as academic advice, pastoral care, and systems for reasonable adjustments.

Centre Application Process

The approval process will follow clear and transparent stages. Each stage requires specific evidence.

Stage	Description	Evidence Required
Initial Enquiry	Centre expresses interest in approval.	Enquiry form
Application Submission	Centre submits formal application with supporting documentation.	Completed form, staff CVs, policies, financial statements
Document Review	Param Qualifications reviews submitted evidence.	Internal review report
Approval Visit/Interview	An EQA or approval officer verifies systems and facilities through interview or site visit.	Visit/interview notes
Decision	Outcome issued: Approved / Approved with Conditions / Not Approved.	Approval outcome letter
Centre Agreement	Successful centres sign a formal agreement.	Signed contract

Enquiry

Application Form

Document Review

Approval Visit

Approval Decision

Centre Agreement Signed

Ongoing Monitoring
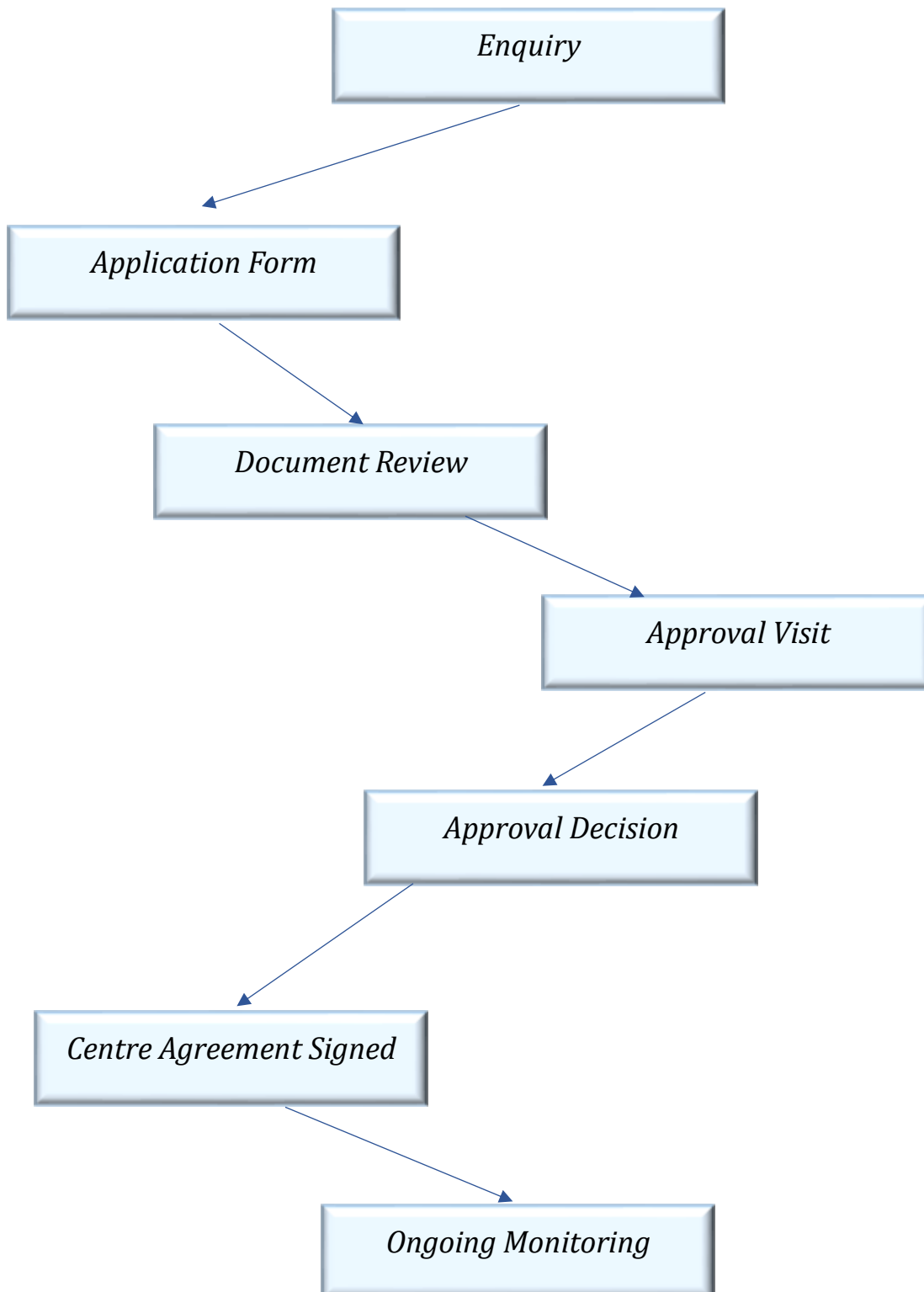
Ongoing Centre Requirements

Approval is not permanent and centres must demonstrate ongoing compliance. Approved centres are required to:

- Adhere to all Param Qualifications' policies and updates.

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date learner, assessment, and IQA records.

- Provide access to External Quality Assurers (EQAs) during monitoring visits.

- Notify Param Qualifications within **10 working days** of any significant changes (e.g., staffing, ownership, premises).

- Participate in annual reviews, audits, and any regulatory monitoring.

- Put in place robust learner protection measures, including teach-out arrangements where delivery cannot continue.

Ongoing Compliance Checklist:

- ☐ Annual self-assessment completed.

- ☐ IQA sampling plan implemented and reviewed.

- ☐ Learner feedback collected and acted upon.

- ☐ Policy reviews recorded with version control.

- ☐ EQA visit reports filed with actions closed.

Centre Fees & Charges (Indicative)

- Application/centre approval fee.
- Learner registration/assessment fee.
- Certificate replacement fee.
- Satellite site approval fee.
- Policy for invoicing and payment terms.

Fees will be published annually and must be paid before approval, registration, or certification is confirmed.

Suspension or Withdrawal of Approval

Centre approval may be suspended or withdrawn where serious non-compliance is identified. This may include:

- Evidence of malpractice or maladministration.

- Failure to comply with monitoring requirements.

- Risks to learner interests, including unsafe or unfair practices.

- Repeated failure to address issues identified in EQA reports.

Sanctions will be applied proportionately and may include:

- **Advisory Notes** – highlighting areas for improvement.

- **Formal Action Plans** – with deadlines for compliance.

- **Suspension of Approval** – temporary halt on learner registrations or certifications.

- **Withdrawal of Approval** – permanent removal of centre status.

Centres will always receive written notification of sanctions and will have the right to appeal through the Appeals Policy. This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions C1 (Centre capability), A4 (Conflicts of Interest), and B3 (Notification of Events).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF CENTRES

Centres approved to deliver Param Qualifications' programmes must establish clear roles and responsibilities. These roles ensure that qualifications are delivered with integrity, assessments are consistent and fair, and learners are protected at all times.

Approval is conditional on centres demonstrating that:

- Each role is assigned to competent staff.

- Responsibilities are clearly documented and communicated.

- Staff are supported through training, supervision, and continuous professional development (CPD).

Failure to maintain these responsibilities may result in sanctions, including suspension or withdrawal of centre approval. These responsibilities support compliance with Ofqual General Condition A6 – Governance Arrangements, ensuring accountability at all levels.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Centre Head / Programme Leader

- Holds overall accountability for compliance with Param Qualifications' requirements.

- Acts as the primary contact point with Param Qualifications and EQAs.

- Ensures that policies, procedures, and quality assurance systems are fully implemented.

- Oversees learner recruitment, induction, and progression.

- Allocates staff, learning resources, and support services.

- Ensures required data and reports are submitted on time.

Evidence required: CV, job description, CPD records, signed Centre Agreement.

Assessors

- Deliver fair and consistent assessment in line with qualification specifications.

- Provide learners with clear instructions, assessment briefs, and deadlines.

- Record assessment decisions transparently, with justification where needed.

- Provide timely and constructive feedback to learners.

- Engage in standardisation meetings and respond to IQA feedback.

Evidence required: Qualification certificates, assessor training records, sample assessment decisions, CPD log.

Internal Quality Assurers (IQA)

- Verify assessor decisions to ensure consistency and accuracy.

- Maintain a risk-based sampling plan across assessors, units, and learners.

- Conduct observation of assessment practice and record outcomes.

- Provide feedback and guidance to assessors.

- Maintain records of standardisation meetings and IQA reports.

- Ensure the centre is prepared for EQA visits.

Evidence required: IQA qualification certificate, sampling plan, IQA reports, standardisation minutes.

Staff Competency Standards

To ensure high-quality delivery, each approved centre must have:

- **Assessors** – Must hold, or be working towards, the Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (CAVA) or equivalent. Each programme must have at least one qualified assessor.

- **Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)** – Must hold, or be working towards, the Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, with sufficient subject knowledge.

- **Tutors/Trainers** – Must demonstrate relevant subject expertise and at least two years of academic or industry experience.

- **Centre Head/Programme Leader** – Must demonstrate leadership and management experience with overall responsibility for compliance and quality.

- **Centre Administrator** – Must be competent in managing learner records, regulatory compliance, and reporting requirements.

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Condition A6 (Governance arrangements). These roles must remain independent where objectivity could be compromised (e.g., IQAs should not verify their own assessments).

Minimum Staffing Requirement

Each centre must employ a minimum of:

- One qualified assessor per programme.

- One qualified IQA per centre.

- One designated Centre Head/Programme Leader.

Note: These roles must remain independent where objectivity could be compromised (e.g., IQAs should not verify their own assessment decisions).

Administrative Staff

- Maintain learner registrations, assessment records, and certification requests.

- Manage correspondence with learners and Param Qualifications.

- Ensure compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements.

- Support reporting and timely submission of results.

Evidence required: Job descriptions, training records, sample learner records.

Learners

While learners are not employees of the centre, they hold responsibilities under the conditions of enrolment. Learners must:

- Engage fully with learning and assessment activities.
- Submit authentic work and comply with academic integrity rules.
- Meet deadlines and assessment requirements.
- Respect the centre's code of conduct, equality, and safeguarding policies.

Evidence required: Signed learner induction checklist, authenticity declaration, learner handbook acknowledgement form.

Shared Responsibilities Across Roles

Area	Centres Must Ensure	Evidence Required
Communication	Timely, accurate communication between centre staff and Param Qualifications.	Meeting records, emails, communications log
Training & CPD	Ongoing professional development for assessors, IQAs, and staff.	CPD records, training certificates
Record Keeping	Secure and accurate retention of learner and assessment data.	Data logs, retention schedules
Learner Protection	Safeguarding, equality, and malpractice procedures applied consistently.	Policy documents, incident records
Compliance Monitoring	Audit readiness for both scheduled and unscheduled visits.	Audit reports, compliance checklists

Accountability

Accountability must be clear and traceable at all levels:

- The **Centre Head** is ultimately accountable for compliance and quality.
- The **Programme Leader** manages operational delivery and reporting.
- **Assessors** are accountable for fair and transparent assessment decisions.
- **IQAs** are accountable for ensuring reliability and validity of assessment.
- **All staff** are collectively accountable for safeguarding learners and upholding integrity.

Do's & Don'ts for Accountability
Do:3

- Document responsibilities in job descriptions.
- Ensure staff understand and sign role-specific responsibilities.
- Review staff performance and CPD annually.

Don't:

- Leave responsibilities vague or undocumented.
- Allow unqualified staff to act as assessors or IQAs.
- Ignore accountability gaps when staff change roles.

DELIVERY & ASSESSMENT

Delivery and assessment are at the core of maintaining the credibility of qualifications. Centres must ensure that programmes are delivered according to the published specifications and that assessments are designed and conducted in ways that are valid, reliable, fair, and transparent.

This section outlines how centres should organise learning programmes, support learners, design assessments, and provide robust feedback. It also sets expectations for adjustments, record keeping, and continuous improvement. This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions H1 to H5, covering the design, delivery, conduct, and integrity of assessments.

Delivery of Programmes

Centres are responsible for planning and delivering programmes that enable learners to meet the required learning outcomes. Delivery may be classroom-based, blended, or online, but in all cases, the quality of delivery must be consistent, accessible, and inclusive.

Centres must demonstrate:

- A published Scheme of Work mapping sessions to learning outcomes.
- Detailed Lesson Plans outlining objectives, teaching methods, and resources.
- Access to appropriate learning facilities (classrooms, IT, libraries, LMS platforms).
- Resources tailored to learner needs, including adjustments for those with additional support requirements.

Evidence required: timetables, lesson plans, resource lists, access logs for online learning.

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions H1 to H5, covering the design, delivery, conduct, and integrity of assessments. Centres may only deliver regulated qualifications listed on the RQF. Any unregulated training requires prior approval and must still follow the same QA rules. Centres must always deliver programmes strictly in line with the official Qualification Specifications, which set out aims, structure, units, learning outcomes, and assessment methods. These specifications are provided separately and form an integral part of this handbook.

Learner Induction & Support

Learners must receive a full induction to ensure they understand their programme, responsibilities,

and available support. Induction must also cover policies relating to fairness, integrity, and safeguarding.

Minimum induction coverage:

- Qualification structure, delivery schedule, assessment methods.

- Learner rights and responsibilities.

- Malpractice, appeals, complaints, safeguarding, equality, and data protection policies.

- Guidance on academic integrity and the acceptable use of AI.

- Support channels for welfare, academic, and technical issues.

Checklist for evidence: signed induction checklist, learner handbook, authenticity declarations, safeguarding contact list.

Assessment Principles

Narrative

Assessment must measure learners' achievement against learning outcomes, using methods that are consistent and appropriate. Assessments should allow learners to demonstrate knowledge and skills without bias or disadvantage.

Principles of assessment:

Validity – Assessments measure what they are intended to.

Reliability – Assessments produce consistent results across assessors.

Fairness – Assessments are accessible and free from bias.

Transparency – Learners are given clear briefs, criteria, and timelines.

Examples of assessment methods:

- Written assignments and case studies.
- Presentations and projects.
- Professional discussions.
- Workplace evidence and practical demonstrations.

Evidence required: assessment briefs, grading rubrics, marked learner work, assessor feedback records.

Authenticity Controls

To protect integrity, all learner submissions must be authentic. Centres must implement strict authenticity checks.

Do	Don't
Use signed authenticity declarations	Accept unsigned work
Run plagiarism/AI checks & log results	Ignore similarity spikes
Contextualise tasks (workplace data/case)	Reuse generic open prompts
Record assessor notes on borderline decisions	Leave decisions unexplained

Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations

Narrative

Learners must not be disadvantaged due to personal circumstances or disabilities. Centres must apply reasonable adjustments and special considerations in line with Param Qualifications' policy.

Spect	Reasonable Adjustment (before assessment)	Special Consideration (after assessment)
Trigger	Known need (disability, SpLD)	Sudden illness, bereavement
Examples	Extra time, adapted format	Deadline extension
Evidence	Medical/diagnostic report	Medical/official note
Records	RA request → approval → plan	SC request → decision record

Assessment Records & Feedback

Narrative

Accurate and secure record keeping is mandatory. Centres must retain assessment evidence for quality assurance and regulatory purposes.

Requirements:

- Assessment records must clearly show decisions and feedback.

- Learners must receive written feedback within **15 working days**.

- Records must be retained for at least **one year after certification** (or longer, if required by law).

RACI for records:

Record	R (Responsible)	A (Accountable)	C (Consulted)	I (Informed)
Assessment briefs	Assessor	Programme Lead	IQA	Learners
Marking & feedback	Assessor	Programme Lead	IQA	Learners
IQA sampling	IQA	Centre Head	Assessors	EQA
Results list	Admin	Centre Head	IQA	Param Qualifications

Evidence required: assessment feedback sheets, results lists, IQA reports.

Standardisation & IQA Checks

Narrative

Standardisation ensures consistency in assessor judgements. IQA checks ensure assessments remain valid and reliable.

Standardisation must include:

- Assessors marking common samples.

- Recording agreed benchmarks and exemplars.

- Documenting decisions in meeting minutes.

IQA sampling must include:

- 100% for new assessors until reliability is established.

- 20–30% for experienced assessors.

- A mix of interim and final sampling, with methods such as observation and learner interviews.

- Evidence required: standardisation minutes, annotated sample work, IQA sampling plans, IQA reports.

Continuous Improvement

- Centres must demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement by:
- Collecting learner and tutor feedback.
- Monitoring learner achievement and progression rates.
- Reviewing IQA and EQA reports.

Implementing corrective actions promptly.

Example KPIs:

KPI	Target	Evidence
On-time feedback	≥95%	Feedback logs
Learner satisfaction	≥85%	Survey results
Actions closed on time	≥90%	Action tracker

Risks & Controls

Risk	Control
Missed delivery	Weekly timetable review & catch-up
Inconsistent marking	Pre-assessment standardisation
High plagiarism	Contextualised tasks + viva checks
Missed RA/SC	Screening at induction + second checker

Evidence required: risk register, action logs, monitoring reports.

Cross-References

This section links with:

- Malpractice & Maladministration Policy
- Complaints & Appeals Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding & Learner Protection Policy
- Data Protection & Records Retention Policy
- IQA Strategy & EQA Visit Guidance

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions H1 (Assessment arrangements), H2 (Setting of assessments), H3 (Delivery of assessments), H5 (Marking of assessments), and G6 (Arrangements with third parties).

QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA & EQA)

Centres play a critical role in safeguarding the standards of Param Qualifications. Quality assurance is not only about checking assessments but also about creating a culture of fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement. Two layers of assurance are required:

- **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)** within the centre.

- **External Quality Assurance (EQA)** carried out by Param Qualifications.

Together, these processes give learners confidence that their achievements are recognised fairly and consistently.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

Narrative:

The IQA ensures that assessment is reliable and consistent. Every centre must appoint at least one trained IQA who oversees assessor practice, checks evidence, and supports continuous development.

Core responsibilities include:

- Planning sampling of assessment decisions across assessors, units, and learners.

- Observing assessment practice to confirm quality.

- Organising standardisation sessions so assessors apply criteria consistently.

- Providing written reports with clear actions.

- This section aligns with Ofqual General Condition A6 – Governance Arrangements and Condition H2 – Arrangements for Assessment, ensuring robust internal verification and oversight.

Mini-Table – IQA Sampling Strategy

Assessor Status	Sampling Requirement	Notes
New assessor	100% of work for first two units	Reduced once confidence is demonstrated

Experienced assessor	20–30% of work on risk basis	Must cover different levels and units
High-risk unit	Larger sample required	Especially for complex or practical units

Checklist for IQA evidence:

- ☐ Sampling plan and rationale

- ☐ Records of sampled work with feedback

- ☐ Standardisation minutes

- ☐ Action plans and closures

External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Narrative:
EQA provides an independent review of the centre's assessment and IQA practice. Each approved centre will be allocated an EQA by Param Qualifications, who will visit or review remotely.

EQA will typically:

- Examine learner evidence and assessor feedback.

- Review IQA reports and sampling strategies.

- Check compliance with centre policies (appeals, malpractice, safeguarding).

- Meet with staff and, where appropriate, learners.

- Issue an **EQA report** highlighting good practice and areas for improvement.

Types of visits:

- Approval visit (before centre approval).

- Monitoring visit (regular compliance checks).

- Follow-up visit (to confirm corrective actions).

Centres will receive a minimum of one EQA monitoring visit and one qualification review visit per year, with additional advisory visits scheduled where new qualifications, high learner volumes, or risks are identified.

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions A6 (Governance), H2 (Assessment arrangements), G6 (Arrangements with third parties), and A8 (Malpractice and maladministration).

Standardisation

Narrative:

Standardisation is essential to ensure all assessors apply the same interpretation of criteria. This protects learners and enhances the credibility of qualifications.

Process (short steps):

1. Select sample work.

2. Assessors mark independently.

3. Discuss differences and agree standards.

4. Record outcomes, keep exemplars, and circulate notes.

Evidence required: meeting minutes, annotated work, agreed marking guides.

If the matter remains unresolved after exhausting Param Qualifications' internal processes, learners may escalate their complaint directly to Ofqual.

Monitoring, Sanctions & Appeals

Monitoring is continuous. If weaknesses are identified, Param Qualifications may apply sanctions. These can range from advisory notes to suspension or withdrawal of centre approval.

- **Advisory Note** – minor issues, action required.

- **Action Plan** – formal improvements with deadlines.

- **Suspension** – halt to learner registration/certification until resolved.

- **Withdrawal** – in cases of serious non-compliance.

Centres have the right to **appeal** against EQA decisions using the official Appeals Policy.

This section demonstrates compliance with Condition G6 – Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations, and Condition A8 – Communication with Ofqual and Centres.

Shared Responsibilities

Area	Centre Role	Param Qualifications Role
Assessment	Assessors & IQAs deliver and verify	EQA reviews consistency
Records	Centre maintains accurate evidence	PQ audits samples
Improvement	Centre Head ensures actions are closed	QA Manager oversees trends

Learner Protection	All staff apply safeguarding & equality	PQ provides escalation route

Do's & Don'ts (Quick Reference)

Do:

- Keep IQA plans updated and evidence secure.

- Give timely feedback to assessors.

- Respond to EQA actions promptly.

- Use standardisation to align assessor practice.

Don't:

- Delay record preparation until the EQA arrives.

- Allow inconsistent marking to continue unchecked.

- Store learner evidence without proper security.

Cross-References

This section should be read alongside:

- Internal Quality Assurance Policy

- Malpractice & Maladministration Policy

- Complaints & Appeals Policy

- EQA Visit Guidance. This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions C1 (Centre capability), H2 (Assessment arrangements), A6 (Governance), and A8 (Malpractice and maladministration).

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures ensure that centres operate fairly, consistently, and in line with regulatory expectations. Every centre must adopt and implement policies that protect learners, support staff, and maintain the integrity of qualifications.

This section provides a summary of the **core policies required** for all centres working with Param Qualifications. This section ensures centres adopt policies aligned to Ofqual Conditions I1–I3 (Appeals, Complaints, Certification) and G6 (Reasonable Adjustments).

Malpractice & Maladministration

Narrative:
Centres must prevent, identify, and investigate any malpractice or maladministration. This protects the integrity of assessments and ensures fairness for learners.

Examples of malpractice: plagiarism, cheating, falsifying evidence, assessor bias.
Examples of maladministration: late learner registrations, inaccurate records, poor retention of evidence.

Centres must:

- Have a written Malpractice & Maladministration Policy.

- Train staff and learners on expectations.

- Report suspected cases immediately.

Complaints & Appeals

Narrative:
Learners and centres have the right to raise concerns and appeal assessment decisions. A transparent system is required to build trust.

Checklist – Effective Appeals Process:

- ☐ Clear procedure shared with learners at induction.

- ☐ Timeframes for submitting and responding to appeals.

- ☐ Independent reviewer where possible.

- ☐ Records of all complaints and outcomes retained.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Narrative:
All learners must have equal opportunity to access qualifications. Centres must ensure that delivery, assessment, and support are free from discrimination.

Good practice examples:

- Adjusting resources for learners with disabilities.

- Using inclusive language in teaching materials.

- Monitoring recruitment data for fairness.

Safeguarding & Learner Protection

Narrative:
Centres have a duty of care to protect learners, particularly those under 18 or vulnerable adults. Safeguarding must be prioritised in all activities.

Table – Safeguarding Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Centre Head	Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
DSL	Monitor safeguarding cases, liaise with agencies
All Staff	Report concerns, follow procedures
Learners	Know who to contact if concerned

Minimum requirements:

- Safeguarding policy in place.

- Designated Safeguarding Lead identified.

- Staff training records maintained.

Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations

Narrative:
To ensure fairness, learners who face barriers should receive appropriate adjustments, without compromising assessment standards.

- **Reasonable adjustments**: made *before* assessment (e.g., extra time, adapted materials).

- **Special considerations**: applied *after* assessment due to unexpected events (e.g., illness, bereavement).

Records required: evidence requests, approvals, action logs.

Data Protection & Record Retention

Centres must comply with data protection laws and maintain accurate records.

Do:

- Store learner data securely (password-protected systems).

- Retain assessment records for at least one year after certification.

- Provide learners with access to their own data upon request.

Don't:

- Share learner data without consent.

- Dispose of records without following secure disposal procedures.

Health & Safety

Centres must provide a safe learning environment. This includes:

- Risk assessments of teaching spaces.

- Fire safety and first-aid arrangements.

- Compliance with local health & safety laws.

Quick Reference – Core Policies

Policy	Purpose	Must Be…
Malpractice & Maladministration	Protect assessment integrity	Written, shared, reviewed
Complaints & Appeals	Allow fair resolution	Clear, time-bound, transparent
Equality & Diversity	Ensure fairness	Inclusive, monitored
Safeguarding	Protect learners	DSL appointed, staff trained
RA & SC	Ensure fair access	Evidence-based, auditable
Data Protection	Protect personal info	GDPR compliant
Health & Safety	Provide safe environment	Regular checks & logs

Continuous Review

Policies must not be static. Each centre is expected to:

- Review all policies **annually**.

- Update in response to legislation or regulatory changes.

- Record reviews with version numbers and approval dates.

Centre Support Framework

Param Qualifications will do to *help* centres:

- Advisory visits

- Training webinars

- Policy updates
- Dedicated support manager
- Access to example documents.

Param Qualifications will also conduct annual standardisation events and issue regular policy updates to ensure centres remain fully aligned with regulatory requirements.

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions I1–I3 (Malpractice & Maladministration), G6 (Arrangements with third parties), and A4 (Conflicts of Interest).

MONITORING & REVIEW

Monitoring and review are essential to ensure that centres deliver qualifications to the required standards. Continuous oversight protects learners, promotes fairness, and ensures compliance with Param Qualifications' requirements.

This section outlines how centres should monitor their own activities and how Param Qualifications will review centres through audits and annual checks.

Centre Responsibilities

Narrative:
Centres must establish their own monitoring systems to regularly review delivery, assessment, and quality assurance. These systems should be documented, evidence-based, and involve staff at all levels.

Centre must:

- Conduct annual self-assessment of delivery and assessment practice.
- Collect learner and staff feedback to identify improvements.
- Monitor the effectiveness of policies (e.g., appeals, malpractice, safeguarding).
- Keep an **Action Log** to track issues and resolutions.

Quick Checklist – Centre Monitoring

- ☐ Annual self-assessment report completed
- ☐ Learner feedback survey conducted each cohort
- ☐ Staff CPD and performance review logged
- ☐ IQA reports reviewed and actions closed
- ☐ Policies updated and re-approved

Param Qualifications' Oversight

Narrative:

Param Qualifications will also carry out its own monitoring to ensure centres remain compliant. This includes:

- Annual review of centre performance and learner outcomes.

- EQA visits and sampling.

- Monitoring of complaints, appeals, and malpractice cases.

- Reviewing staff qualifications and training records.

Table – Monitoring Methods

Activity	Conducted By	Frequency
Centre self-assessment	Centre Head	Annually
IQA reporting	IQA	Ongoing (per unit/term)
EQA monitoring	Param Qualifications	At least annually
Learner feedback	Centre	Each cohort
Policy reviews	Centre Head + Param Qualifications QA team	Annually

Continuous Improvement Cycle

Centres should adopt a simple **Plan–Do–Check–Review (PDCR)** cycle for improvement:

1. **Plan** – Identify priorities and set improvement objectives.
2. **Do** – Implement teaching, assessment, and QA activities.
3. **Check** – Review outcomes (feedback, IQA/EQA reports).
4. **Review** – Update processes, policies, and training as required.

Monitoring & Review Flow: Plan → Do → Check → Review → Action Plan → Continuous Improvement.

Reporting & Action Plans

Centres are expected to maintain a **Centre Action Plan**. This should record:

- Issues identified (e.g., late feedback, missing records).

- Actions required, with named responsibility.

- Timescales for completion.

- Evidence of closure.

Sample Action Log Format

Issue Identified	Action Required	Responsible	Deadline	Status
Late return of feedback	Reduce deadline to 10 days, monitor compliance	Programme Lead	30/11/2025	Open
Incomplete sampling	New IQA schedule agreed	Centre Head	15/12/2025	In progress

Sanctions & Escalation

If monitoring identifies significant weaknesses, sanctions may be applied (by Param Qualifications) until issues are resolved:

- Advisory notes.

- Corrective action plan.

- Suspension of learner registration.

- Withdrawal of centre approval.

Escalation routes must always prioritise learner protection.

Do's & Don'ts

Do:

- Treat monitoring as a supportive process, not a burden.

- Share findings with all staff so improvements are centre-wide.

- Record everything – evidence is key.

Don't:

- Wait until EQA visits to correct problems.

- Ignore learner feedback.

- File reports without action.

Cross-References

This section should be read alongside:

- EQA Reports
- IQA Strategy
- Complaints & Appeals Policy
- Risk Register & Learner Protection Policy

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions B3 (Notification of events), D6 (Management of adverse effects), and A6 (Governance).

Learner Protection

In line with Ofqual General Condition D6 – Withdrawal of Qualifications, Param Qualifications ensures that in the event of centre closure, qualification withdrawal, or awarding body withdrawal, learners will be protected through teach-out, transfer, or certification arrangements.

Continuous Improvement

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Condition B3 – Notification of events. Where monitoring identifies material risks or adverse effects, Param Qualifications will report these to Ofqual without delay.

This section supports compliance with Ofqual General Conditions B3 (Notification of events), D6 (Management of Adverse Effect), and A6 (Governance).

APPENDICES

The appendices provide supporting documents, templates, and references to help centres implement the requirements of this handbook. These are examples only and can be adapted by centres to fit their context, provided they maintain compliance with Param Qualifications' standards. These appendices support compliance with the requirements in Sections 2–7 and Ofqual General Conditions.

Template – Learner Authenticity Declaration

Purpose: To confirm that all work submitted is the learner's own.

Sample Wording:

"I confirm that the work I have submitted is my own and does not include any plagiarised or unauthorised material. I understand that any breach of this declaration may be treated as malpractice."

Learner Name	Qualification	Unit	Signature	Date
[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Sign]	[DD/MM/YYYY]

Template – IQA Sampling Plan

Purpose: To document planned sampling of assessment decisions.

Assessor	Unit(s)	Learners	Type (Interim/Final)	Sample %	IQA Name	Date
[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]

Template – Centre Action Log

Issue Identified	Action Required	Responsible	Deadline	Status
Example: Delayed feedback	Set new 10-day turnaround	Programme Lead	30/11/2025	Open
Example: Incomplete sampling	Adjust IQA plan	Centre Head	15/12/2025	In progress

Template – Complaints & Appeals Record

Date	Complainant/Appellant	Nature of Complaint/Appeal	Outcome	Follow-up
[DD/MM/YYYY]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]

Evidence of Implementation

Sample Completed Evidence (Illustrative Only)

To demonstrate that the systems described in this handbook are fully operational, centres are required to maintain completed records. Examples include:

Learner Authenticity Declaration (Completed Example):

Learner Name	Qualification	Unit	Signature	Date
John	Level 7 Diploma in OHSM	Unit 1	John	27/09/2025

IQA Sampling Plan (Completed Example):

Assessor	Unit(s)	Learners	Type (Interim/Final)	Sample %	IQA Name	Date
Jane	Unit 1,3	John	Interim	100	Martin	30/09/2025

CPD Log (Completed Example):

Staff Name	Date	CPD Activity	Hours	Outcome	Signature
Jane	01/05/2025	Assessor Standardisation Workshop	3hrs	Improved consistency in assessment judgements	Jane

Assessment Feedback (Completed Example):

The learner demonstrated strong understanding of risk assessment methodology. Minor improvements needed in referencing standards. Feedback given on 15/09/2025.
(Signed: Assessor, IQA sample check attached)

Assessment Brief & Grading Rubric (Completed Example):

- **Task:** Write a 2,000-word assignment on the application of ISO 45001 in workplace safety management.

- **Grading Criteria:**

    o Knowledge of standard: 40%

    o Application to workplace: 30%

    o Referencing & structure: 20%

- o   Presentation & clarity: 10%
- **Feedback (Completed):** Learner showed strong application skills, minor referencing errors noted. Grade: Pass.
(Signed: Assessor, IQA verified)

Learner Induction Checklist (Completed Example):

Learner Name	Programme	Date of Induction	Key Policies Acknowledged	Signature
John Doe	L7 OHSM	01/09/2025	Appeals, Malpractice, Safeguarding	John Doe

Centre Action Log (Completed Example):

Issue Identified	Action Required	Responsible	Deadline	Status
Late return of feedback	Reduce turnaround to 10 days and monitor compliance	Programme Lead	30/11/2025	Closed

These examples are illustrative only. Centres must maintain live, dated, and signed evidence records, which will be reviewed by Param Qualifications during monitoring and external quality assurance visits.

Contact & Escalation Routes

Centres should display contact points clearly so learners and staff know where to go for help.

At Centre Level:

- Programme Leader – first point of contact for course queries.
- Internal Quality Assurer – assessment issues.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead – safeguarding concerns.

At Awarding Body Level (Param Qualifications):

- EQA – quality assurance and monitoring.
- QA Manager – unresolved issues or escalations.
- Appeals Panel – formal appeals.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Assessor** – A person who judges learner evidence against outcomes.

- **IQA** – Internal Quality Assurer; checks assessment inside the centre.

- **EQA** – External Quality Assurer; checks centres on behalf of Param Qualifications.

- **Malpractice** – Learner or staff dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, falsifying records).

- **Maladministration** – Administrative failure (e.g., late registrations, poor record keeping).

- **RA/SC** – Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations; steps to ensure fair access.

Reference Documents

Centres should always keep the latest versions of the following:

- Centre Agreement

- Qualification Specifications

- Assessment & IQA Policies

- Malpractice & Appeals Policy

- Safeguarding & Equality Policies

- Data Protection & Retention Policy

- Risk Register

Quick Reference Matrix

Section	Related Policy/Template	Stored At
Delivery & Assessment	Learner Induction Checklist, Assessment Brief Template	Centre QA folder
IQA & EQA	IQA Sampling Plan, EQA Reports	QA Evidence folder
Monitoring & Review	Action Log, Self-Assessment Report	Centre Head files
Policies & Procedures	Malpractice, Appeals, Safeguarding	Policy Master File

Centre Approval Evidence Checklist

Centres applying for approval must provide the following evidence:

- ☐ CVs and qualifications of all assessors, IQAs, tutors, and centre staff.
- ☐ Organisational structure chart with governance and reporting lines.
- ☐ Job descriptions for all key roles (Centre Head, Assessors, IQAs, Administrator).
- ☐ Sample assessment materials with marking and feedback evidence.
- ☐ Learner recruitment and support strategy (including induction materials).
- ☐ Copies of all required policies (appeals, complaints, safeguarding, equality, malpractice, RPL, data protection, health & safety).
- ☐ Evidence of secure storage arrangements for learner work, results, and records.
- ☐ Financial stability evidence (audited accounts or equivalent).
- ☐ Signed Centre Agreement (to be completed upon approval).

All documents must be current, dated, and signed by the appropriate responsible officer. Evidence must be submitted electronically via the Param Qualifications Centre Approval portal (or email until the portal is active).

Ofqual Conditions Mapping Table

Ofqual Condition	Where Covered in Handbook/Policies
A1 – Suitability of Qualifications	Qualification Specifications (Level 7 Diplomas), Delivery & Assessment (validity, reliability, comparability)
A4 – Conflicts of Interest	Centre Approval; Conflict of Interest Policy
A6 – Governance Arrangements	Roles & Responsibilities; Staffing & Resourcing Policy
B3 – Notification of Events	Monitoring & Review; Complaints Policy

C1 – Centre Capability	Centre Approval; Centre Support Policy
D6 – Learner Protection	Learner Protection; Learner Protection & Insurance Policy
G6 – Arrangements with Third Parties	Delivery & Assessment; Centre Agreement; Malpractice Policy
H1–H5 – Assessment Conditions	Delivery & Assessment; Assessment Policy; IQA Policy
I1–I3 – Appeals, Certification, Complaints	Policies & Procedures; Appeals Policy; Certification Policy

Policy & Qualification Reference Table

The following table lists all core policies and qualification specifications that form part of Param Qualifications' quality assurance and compliance framework. These documents should be read in conjunction with the Centre Handbook.

A. Core Policies

Policy Title	Purpose	Location / Reference
Conflict of Interest Policy	Identifies, records, and mitigates conflicts of interest in line with Ofqual Condition A4.	Policy Library
Malpractice & Maladministration Policy	Prevents, detects, and manages malpractice/maladministration.	Policy Library
Complaints & Appeals Policy	Provides fair and transparent resolution of learner/centre complaints and appeals.	Policy Library

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	Ensures equal access and non-discrimination for all learners and staff.	Policy Library
Safeguarding & Learner Protection Policy	Protects learners, especially vulnerable adults and young people.	Policy Library
Data Protection & Records Retention Policy	Protects personal data and ensures secure record management.	Policy Library
Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy	Ensures fairness for learners with disabilities or unexpected circumstances.	Policy Library
Health & Safety Policy	Provides safe working and learning environments.	Policy Library
Centre Agreement	Legally binding agreement between centres and Param Qualifications.	Issued separately upon centre approval

B. Qualification Specifications

Qualification Title	Level	Reference Document
Param Qualifications Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety Management	Level 7 (RQF)	Qualification Specification Document (separate)
Param Qualifications Diploma in Process Safety Management	Level 7 (RQF)	Qualification Specification Document (separate)
Param Qualifications Diploma in Environmental & Sustainable Management	Level 7 (RQF)	Qualification Specification Document (separate)

Additional qualifications will be added as Param Qualifications expands its recognition portfolio (e.g., Level 5 and Level 6 programmes).

All policies and qualification specifications listed above are maintained separately, version-controlled, and issued to centres alongside this handbook. They form an integral part of Param Qualifications' governance and compliance framework and will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued alignment with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition.