

Qualification Development and Review Policy

Purpose

This document details CIPFA's approach to the development of new, or the review of existing, qualifications. It covers the key areas of the qualification lifecycle that members of the CIPFA team will engage in at various points in the process.

The aim is to ensure that CIPFA design and deliver high-quality qualifications, assessment and End-point assessment.

It is inevitable that the performance, demand and validity of qualifications change over time and it is for this reason that CIPFA is committed to ensuring that our offering remains fit for purpose, reliable, valid and future-proofed.

Scope

This document is for use by CIPFA Awarding Organisation (AO) and End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) staff, providing reference and best practice examples to ensure adherence to regulatory conditions as well as to reference who does what in the lifecycle.

About qualification development and review

This process requires well-defined planning, accountability for the different stages by different sections of the business and clear communication and collaboration. From the internal scoping, stakeholder consultation, Subject Matter Expert (SME) development, internal and external sign-off and audit trails through to the communication, launch and assessment strategy.

Part of all qualification development and review is to seek feedback from stakeholders, whether candidates, employers, centres or our examiners. This feedback provides valuable intelligence to inform our approach. Methods used to capture views from others may be via online surveys, virtual meetings and consultation events plus letters of support.

Context

Reasons that we may review our qualification might include, for example:

- Changes to regulatory frameworks
- Future-proofing a qualification
- Responding to sector changes
- Alternative assessment methodologies are identified
- Need to enhance the approach to the development, delivery and award of a qualification
- Responding to information, comments and complaints received from stakeholders

Any qualifications withdrawn will follow a phased timeline with clear operational and certification end dates to allow candidates the time to complete and provide centres time to plan.

Even when these changes are not required it is good practice to operate a systematic review cycle of five years or more frequently as necessary giving due regard to any credible evidence that suggests a change in the approach to the development, delivery and award of qualifications is required.

Occasionally a review may indicate the need to withdraw a qualification in its entirety should it no longer perform sufficiently robustly and requires the need for more comprehensive alternations to the delivery and assessment than are viable.

Qualification development and review cycle

Steps	New	Review
Review qualification performance and take up		✓
Pre-project proposal, thinking and initiation (qual and assessment)	✓	
Research into potential markets	✓	
Consultation and engagement with stakeholders and appropriate Council	✓	✓
Estimation of costs, risks and benefits to the business case	✓	✓
Sector support for the qualification	✓	✓
Recruitment and resource planning – internal and SME contracting	✓	✓
SME training	✓	✓
Commence development/review (incl assessment methodology)	✓	✓
Development of teacher resources	✓	✓
Ongoing communication strategy and timelines	✓	
Centre socialisation	✓	
Launch of new or revised qualification	✓	✓
Ongoing monitoring of performance and statistical analysis	✓	✓

Policy version and owner

Policy owner	Head of Qualifications and Membership
Version	V1.0
Approval	SMB 04 March 2021
Policy review date	January 2022

Regulatory references

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
Condition D3: Reviewing approach
Condition E1: Qualifications having an objective and support
Condition E4: Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose and can be delivered