



Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval Policy

Who is this policy for?

This policy is for centres who wish to apply for AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group centre recognition, approval of a qualification and/or unit/component offered by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group within or outside the UK.

Owner	Responsible Officer
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Version number	Date	Description
1	October 2024	Document created
2	July 2025	Amendments to Centre and Qualification Approval approval deadlines, ensuring registrations are made on approval, and inclusion of AIM's onboarding process.
3	October 2025	- Section 2.2.2 Hyperlink to Sanctions Policy and Removal of Qualification and Centre Recognition Policy updated - Section 2.2.3 Hyperlink to Sanctions Policy and Removal of Qualification and Centre Recognition Policy updated - Section 2.2.4 Hyperlink to Sanctions Policy and Removal of Qualification and Centre Recognition Policy updated - Section 2.3 Hyperlink to Policies and Procedures page on website updated - Section 2.3.2 Hyperlink to Sanctions Policy and Removal of Qualification and Centre Recognition Policy updated - Section 2.5 Hyperlink to Fees and Charges on website updated

		- Section 3.1.2 Hyperlink to Sanctions Policy, and International Approval and Language of Assessment Policy updated - Section 3.1.2 Hyperlink to Risk Levels List updated - Section 3.2 Hyperlink to Fees and Charges on website updated
4	January 2026	- Section 2.2.1 removed Compliance Director and replaced with Deputy Director (Awarding and Regulations) - Section 2.3.1 Addition of Access Team to onboarding sessions - Section 4 Addition of Licensing criteria 52
5	April 2026	- SQA Principles deleted - Ofqual Principles added - SQA contact details deleted - Updated the responsibility of the policy to the Deputy Director (Awarding and Regulations) - Section 4 Regulatory References updated to remove reference to licencing criteria from subtitle - Section 4 Regulatory References updated to replace licencing criteria with Access to HE Conditions - Version Number in footer updated - Title of “End Point Assessment Organisation” amended to “Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation” in line with Ofqual guidance.

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Section 1 – Scope

1.1 Scope

This Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval policy and procedure applies to AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group provision delivered either within or outside the UK.

This policy is intended for:

- centres and its staff wishing to deliver AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group approved provision
- existing AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group recognised centres and their staff delivering or having previously delivered AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group approved qualifications or units/components
- learners undertaking AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications or units/components at an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group recognised centre
- AIM staff to ensure that it maintains a consistent and transparent approach to centre and/or qualification approval

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define centre, centre recognition and qualification approval
- detail the responsibilities AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, organisations/centres, their staff and learners have with regards to centre recognition and qualification approval
- set out the requirements for centre recognition and qualification approval
- state when fees and charges will apply to organisations and centres
- detail follow-up actions
- provide the regulatory references which apply
- give details of supplementary linked supporting documents
- provide useful contacts of both AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and its regulators

1.2 About us

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is a leading **Awarding Organisation** and one of the UK's largest **Access Validating Agencies** (AVA). We work in partnership with colleges, independent training providers, universities, employers and voluntary organisations to develop accredited and regulated vocational qualifications. Our qualifications cover a range of academic levels from Entry Level to Level 6 across a wide range of subject areas. As an AVA we are licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to develop and award nationally recognised Access to Higher Education Diplomas. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is also an independent, government recognised, **Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation** responsible for an apprentice's assessment to ensure they can do the job for which they've trained.

Section 2 - Policy detail and Centre Recognition

2.1 Definition

A centre is an organisation that delivers AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications or units to learners either within or outside the UK on behalf of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

Centre recognition is when the organisation is approved by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group to deliver AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications or units to learners either within or outside the UK.

Qualification approval is when the recognised centre is given authorisation from AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group to advertise, offer and deliver a specific AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualification or unit/component to learners either within or outside the UK.

2.2 Responsibilities

The following represent the key responsibilities of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, centres, centre staff and learners.

2.2.1 AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group responsibilities

Overseen by the Deputy Director (Awarding and Regulations), AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will ensure:

- the process of awarding centre recognition and/or qualification approval is applied fairly and consistently
- all approved centres are updated on any changes to qualifications, including new and replacement qualifications, extensions, withdrawals, amendments, qualification expiries and the date of change
- decisions will always be taken by persons who have appropriate levels of competence and authority the relevant regulator is promptly notified where required

2.2.2 Centre responsibilities

All organisations and centres wishing to gain and subsequently receive centre recognition and/or qualification approval from AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications must ensure that:

- all staff involved in the centre recognition or qualification approval request are fully aware of this policy and the [AIM Sanctions Policy](#).

- all staff involved in the subsequent management, assessment and quality assurance of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications are fully aware of this policy and the [AIM Sanctions Policy](#)
- a contingency plan is in place which details how the centre will respond should centre recognition or qualification approval be withdrawn by either AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group or at the request of the centre ([Removal of Qualification and Centre recognition policy](#))
- all learners undertaking an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualification, or unit/component are made aware of this policy

2.2.3 Centre staff responsibilities

All centre staff involved in the centre recognition and/or qualification approval application and the subsequent management, assessment and quality assurance of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications must be fully aware of:

- [AIM's Removal of Qualification and Centre recognition policy](#)
- [AIM's Sanctions policy](#)

2.2.4 Learner responsibilities

Any learner undertaking an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualification must be aware of:

- [AIM Removal of Qualification and Centre recognition policy](#)
- [AIM's Sanctions policy](#)

2.3 The centre recognition process

Organisations wishing to deliver AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications and units/components must gain centre recognition and relevant qualification approval before advertising, offering and commencing delivery.

- Organisations will only be approved where they can clearly demonstrate that they are able to consistently meet the requirements of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group's:
- Centre Agreement
- [Policies and Procedures](#)

2.3.1 The centre recognition application

Submit applications for centre recognition through the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Quartz Web portal, by completing and submitting the appropriate application form.

Applications are welcomed from all centres, whether based in the UK or overseas regardless of their size or type. However, each centre must list their business address, residential addresses are not permitted.

All applications will be risk rated according to their ability to meet regulatory recognition and any specific qualification requirements set out within the qualification guides (regulated and AIM Endorsed provision only). This process includes a financial credit check.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group reserves the right to refuse recognition or impose additional requirements on centres which are unable to meet the minimum requirements of recognition.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will apply additional approval and monitoring requirements to centres that wish to be approved to deliver Access to HE Diplomas and are not subject to external inspection. To support this, organisations will be required to declare whether they are subject to external inspection at the point of approval and annually as part of ongoing monitoring activities. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group reserves the right to seek evidence from the centres and the external inspection agency, of successful external inspection having taken place. Centres are required to inform AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group immediately if their inspection status changes.

A centre which has not been granted centre recognition within 6 months of applying, will have its application archived. Should recognition be required in the future, a new application will be required.

A centre which has not been granted centre recognition as consequence of not meeting the entire recognition criteria, will have its application archived. Should recognition be required in the future, a new application will be required after a period of at least 12 months has passed.

There is **no appeal** against the outcome of centre recognition. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will, however, explain a decision to refuse recognition.

Once the application has been accepted, each prospective centre will be allocated an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group approval officer.

The centre may be subject to a centre recognition meeting. If required, the meeting will be arranged at a mutually convenient time between the centre and their allocated approval officer. The outcome of the centre recognition meeting will be communicated to the centre in line with the Customer Service Statement. This may include an action plan which must be completed before recognition is confirmed.

All centres are required to sign a Centre Agreement which details the commitments of the centre and AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and the centres responsibilities in relation to administration, finance, delivery, assessment and quality assurance. This agreement must be signed by the Head of Centre. The Centre Agreement is an annual process, with AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and the centres reaffirming their responsibilities and compliance. Failure to sign the Centre Agreement annually may result in removal of centre approval.

On approval, centres will be required to attend mandatory “onboarding” support and training with the Quality team, Access team (if applicable), Customer Experience team and External Quality Assurance (EQA) team. Centres who will be delivering qualifications with external assessment will also be **required to attend mandatory training** for external assessment. The centre will be contacted directly by the respective teams to arrange a convenient time and date. Centres are expected to complete their onboarding process within four weeks of receiving approval.

2.3.2 Awarded centre recognition

Once recognised, centres are subject to ongoing risk assessment and monitoring by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

If risk assessment dictates that additional visit/audit/support activity is required at any time, additional charges may be raised in accordance with the current fees and charges brochure. Supplements will be charged to cover international travel and additional travel time.

International centres and UK based centres that require an international monitoring visit will be expected to pay the travel costs and subsistence for each visit plus any additional consultancy days required.

Continuing compliance with the centre agreement is monitored through ongoing monitoring activities and external quality assurance activities carried out by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Quality Leads and External Quality Assurers.

Centre recognition may cover more than one site, for example, a delivery subsite/campus, the responsibility for confirming the suitability of each venue rests with the centre contact. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group may wish to visit any site or location used for delivery or assessment for the purposes of monitoring centre compliance.

A centre will continue to be recognised as long as it continues to:

- meet its obligations under the centre agreement
- operates in line with relevant AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group policies and procedures
- pay the annual centre approval fee
- register learners

Centres that fail to meet the terms of their centre agreement or do not abide by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group policies and procedures will be managed in line with the [AIM Sanctions Policy](#) and [AIM Removal of Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval Policy](#).

2.4 Merged, acquired or acquiring centres.

Where there are merged, acquired or acquiring centres, the following appropriate recognition documents must be completed:

Merger

Primary Organisation	Secondary Organisations	Recognition Documentation
Recognised Centre	Recognised Centre	Merger Notification Form
Recognised Centre	Centre Not Recognised	Merger Notification Form
Acquisition		
Recognised Centre	Recognised Centre	Acquisition Notification Form
Recognised Centre	Centre Not Recognised	Acquisition Notification Form
Centre Not Recognised	Recognised Centre	Centre Recognition Application Form

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will work closely with all merged and acquired centres to ensure that the interests of learners are protected at all times throughout the process and the risk to the reputation of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and/or qualification(s) are appropriately managed. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will ensure proportionate risk management of both reputational and compliance risk throughout the process.

Centre recognition application forms will be viewed in line with this policy and supporting documents.

Merger Notification and Acquisition notifications forms will be risk assessed to determine the level of support required.

2.5 Fees and charges

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group publishes its charges annually. These run from 1 August to 31 July each year. A copy of the fees and charges leaflet is available from [Fees and Invoicing - AIM \(aim-group.org.uk\)](https://aim-group.org.uk).

Centre recognition is charged in two stages, initial payment in advance and final payment on approval, in line with AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group's current fees and charges and invoicing policy. Initial payment of the recognition fee does not guarantee recognition and is non-refundable.

An annual fee is invoiced on the anniversary of centre recognition each year, however, Annual approval fees will not be refunded where centres withdraw or have their recognition withdrawn within the year.

Due to enrolment fees being paid directly to the centre by learners, AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group are not liable for refunding registration fees. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will however recommend that the centre provides learner refunds where this is deemed appropriate.

International centres will be expected to supplement the cost of an international approval visit, and all transactions will be in UK Pounds (Sterling).

Section 3 - Qualification approval

3.1 Qualification approval process

Organisations wishing to deliver AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group qualifications and units/components must gain relevant qualification approval before advertising, recruiting, offering and commencing delivery.

Centres must be recognised by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group before applying for approval to deliver qualifications, courses or individual units/components. However, wherever possible, qualification approval will be completed at the same time as centre recognition.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group provision may be delivered and assessed internationally with the express permission in advance of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

Centres may not begin to deliver qualifications, units/components or courses until qualification approval is confirmed by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

Centres may not begin to advertise qualifications, units/components or courses in advance of qualification approval, without the written consent of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

Approval for specific qualifications will only be given where the centre can clearly demonstrate that they are able to consistently meet the requirements laid down in the qualification guide for the number of learners they intend to register.

Qualification approval is given based on face to face or blended delivery provision. Centres wishing to change their approach of delivery must request additional approval. Centres wishing to gain additional approval must contact quality@aimgroup.org.uk

3.1.1 The qualification application

A fully completed Qualification Application form (QAF) must be completed and submitted via the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Management Information System (QuartzWeb) for each qualification a centre wishes to deliver.

All qualification approval applications received by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will be risk rated based on:

- the ability of the centre to meet any qualification specific requirements documented in the qualification guide
- the ability of the centre to deliver, assess and internally quality assure the qualification
- the qualification risk (i.e. level, purpose)

Following the risk assessment, AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group may:

- approve the centre for immediate delivery
- request more information
- require a qualification approval visit to take place

If an approval visit is required, this will be undertaken by an AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Approval officer or External Quality Assurer who will arrange a mutually convenient time with the centre.

There may be an additional cost for the visit, however, centres will be notified of any additional costs which must be paid in full prior to arranging a visit.

Following any visit, a report will be sent to the centre in accordance with the timescales documented in the Customer Service Statement. Where necessary, this may include an action plan that must be completed before approval to deliver the qualification is granted.

3.1.2 Awarded qualification approval

Qualification delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance will be monitored by the External Quality Assurance Team as part of routine monitoring activities.

Please note that Centres are required to inform AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group of changes to assessment personnel for high and very high priority qualifications. This will include assessors, Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) and Centre Manager. Centres are to submit new staff details and evidence to the Quality team (quality@aimgroup.org.uk) for approval and to allow full assessment of the risks. This may result in an additional monitoring activity to support the centre.

The list of qualification risk levels can be found here: [External Quality Assurance \(EQA\)](#)

Centres are required to fully co-operate with requirements of monitoring activities and to complete any identified actions in a timely manner.

Centres are required to contribute learner assessment data to AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Standardisation events.

All assessments must be in English except for specific language qualifications. Where a centre would like to assess in a language other than English, they must contact AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group to discuss the full requirements. However, AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group offers qualifications to students throughout the UK and, in certain cases, provides the opportunity for Welsh language assessment. Please refer to the following policy for further information: [International Approval and Language of Assessment Policy](#).

All relevant materials must be translated at the centres own cost by a translator approved by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

Centres must ensure assessments are consistent in all language versions.

Any changes to the qualification following approval must be implemented within the required timescales.

Once approval is granted, centres may continue to offer approved qualifications until:

- the qualification is withdrawn or expired
- the centre has made no registrations for three academic years
- the centres approval to deliver the qualification and/or centre recognition is withdrawn or suspended by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group
- the centre surrenders their qualification approval or centre recognition

Centres that fail to adhere to the requirements outlined in the qualification guide will be managed in line with the [AIM Sanctions Policy](#).

Where there are merged, acquired or acquiring centres, qualification approval held by each recognised centre at the point of merger/acquisition, will be applied to all sites unless separate qualification approval is required.

A centre that has not been granted qualification approval within 3 months of applying, will have the application archived. Should qualification approval be required in the future, a new application will be required.

Centres undergoing the centre recognition process will have 6 months to complete the process. This process also includes obtaining qualification approval. Once approved, Centres must ensure that learners are registered for the qualification within 6 months of gaining centre approval, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed.

There is no appeal against the outcome of the qualification approval process. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will however fully explain a decision to refuse approval.

3.2 Fees and charges

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group publishes its charges annually. These run from 1 August to 31 July each year. A copy of the fees and charges leaflet is available from [Fees and Invoicing - AIM \(aim-group.org.uk\)](https://aim-group.org.uk).

3.3 Communication of decisions

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will communicate relevant information to the nominated centre contact. This individual is responsible for ensuring all relevant staff within the organisation are aware of their responsibilities under terms of the centre agreement.

The outcome of applications for centre recognition and/or qualification approval will be communicated to the applicant in accordance with the timescales outlined within the Customer Service Statement.

All recognised centres will be informed in writing of the qualifications and units they are approved to deliver, and any changes to the qualification following approval will be communicated to all approved centres.

3.4 Appeals

There is no right to appeal against AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group's decision not to award centre recognition or grant qualification approval to a centre.

Section 4 – Regulatory References

Conditions and principles

This policy is intended to meet our regulatory requirements. In particular:

Section	Condition/Principle/Access to HE Condition
Identification and Management of Risks	Condition A6
Management of Incidents	Condition A7
Notification of Certain Events	Condition B3
Representations Regarding Qualifications	Condition B5
Arrangements with third parties	Condition C1
Arrangements with Centres	Condition C2
Language of the Assessment	Condition G2
Information on Fees of Qualifications	Condition F1
An awarding organisation must act with honesty and integrity.	Principle 1
An awarding organisation must treat Learners fairly by acting and taking decisions with due impartiality and based on appropriate evidence.	Principle 2
An awarding organisation must ensure that each qualification that it makes available, or proposes to make available is, and continues to be, fit for the purposes for which it is intended.	Principle 3
An awarding organisation must act in a way that maintains and, where possible, promotes public confidence in qualifications.	Principle 4
An awarding organisation must act in an open, transparent and co-operative manner with Ofqual and, as appropriate, with Users of qualifications.	Principle 5
An awarding organisation must conduct its activities with a proactive approach to compliance with its Conditions of Recognition.	Principle 6
Procedures and Practice of Validation and Approval of Access to HE Diploma Providers and Courses	Access to HE Condition D2
Informs QAA of incidents that are of such significance that they may threaten the reputation of the Access to HE qualification	Access to HE Condition B1

Transparent, Systematic and Consistent Procedure for the Approval of Providers	Access to HE Condition C1.1
Requirements for Provider Approval	Access to HE Condition C1.1
Provider Commitment to Cooperate with QAA Requirements	Access to HE Condition C1.2
In addition to the normal quality assurance requirements, the AVA has a documented procedure for approving and monitoring the delivery and quality of teaching of Access to HE Diplomas offered by providers that are not subject to external inspection.	Access to HE Condition D2.3
Confirmation of Provider Approval	Access to HE Condition C1.3
Risk Assesses Providers	Access to HE Condition C2

Section 5 - Appendix

Appendix 1 – Useful contacts

The following provides contact details for AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and its regulators.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Contact details

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact us.

Telephone: [0333 034 8833](tel:0333 034 8833)

Email: enquiries@aimgroup.org.uk

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

Telephone: [01452 557 000](tel:01452 557 000)

Email: enquiries@qaa.ac.uk

CCEA

Telephone: [02890 261 200](tel:02890 261 200)

Email: info@ccea.org.uk

Ofqual

Telephone: [0300 303 3344](tel:0300 303 3344)

Email: public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

Qualifications Wales

Telephone: [0333 077 2701](tel:0333 077 2701)

Email: enquiries@qualificationswales.org.uk

Disclaimer: Please note that any downloaded version of our policies may not be the most current iteration. For the latest updates and accurate information, kindly refer to the version available on our official website.