



PART OF **nocn** GROUP

Registration and Certification Policy and Procedure

Version 2.1

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1. Scope

1.01 This policy and procedure outlines the responsibilities of both NOCN and its approved centres in relation to the registration and certification of learners on NOCN products. This document applies to all areas where NOCN, or Delivery Partner, have granted approval for a Centre to deliver:

- a) Regulated qualifications under the various conditions and regulations set by the UK regulatory authorities in England, Northern Ireland and Wales¹.
- b) Non-regulated provision, including Endorsed Programmes.

1.02 If a Centre is managed by a NOCN subsidiary or Delivery Partner, then the organisation will follow this policy and procedure on behalf of NOCN. Centres and learners who are affected by this should replace references to NOCN with the relevant subsidiary or Delivery Partner throughout this document.

1.03 The intended audience for this document is:

- a) NOCN Directors and Board of Trustees.
- b) NOCN core, sub-contracted and associate staff, including External Quality Assurers (EQAs).
- c) All staff of NOCN Delivery Partners associated with NOCN provision.
- d) All staff in NOCN recognised and partner centres.
- e) Learners.
- f) Qualification Regulators.
- g) Industry Regulators.

2. Purpose

2.01 The purpose of this document is to:

- a) Ensure that consistent standards and timescales are maintained regarding the registration and certification of learners on NOCN products by both centres and NOCN.
- b) To support Centre compliance with relevant legislation and regulation, including the NOCN Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions.
- c) Protect the interests of all learners registered on NOCN products.
- d) Satisfy the Conditions of Recognition by the various Qualification Regulators.

3. Registration of Learners

3.01 In order to register learners on any product with NOCN, including regulated qualifications, an organisation must first receive confirmation of Centre approval in writing from NOCN. For further information on the Centre approval process, please refer to the NOCN Centre Approval Policy and Procedure.

3.02 Once a Centre has been approved by NOCN, they are able to submit learner registrations through NOCN's online registration system. An approved Centre may be restricted from registering learners if:

- a) The Centre has not signed and returned a validated NOCN Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions.
- b) The Centre fails to pay invoices in line with NOCN's payment terms.

¹ Ofqual in England; Qualification Wales; CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland or successor bodies.

- c) The Centre has been placed on a Sanction, in line with the NOCN Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure.

I. Privacy Notice and Learner Data

- 3.03 Centres are required to comply with the Data Protection Act (2018) and have a written policy/privacy notice in place to make learners aware of how their data will be used, shared and stored. The joint commitment and responsibilities of NOCN and its approved centres regarding data protection are set out in the NOCN Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions.
- 3.04 During a learner's enrolment at a Centre and prior to any training or assessment activities taking place, the Centre must ensure that their Data Protection Policy/Privacy Notice is provided to and understood by the learner. Learners must be willing to share their full name, date of birth, address, contact number and email address to be registered with NOCN. Learners must be aware of how they can exercise choice in respect of the use of their personal data, however, they must be aware that if they choose not to share their data with NOCN they cannot be registered and therefore cannot complete any training or assessment with the Centre.
- 3.05 The Centre's Data Protection Policy/Privacy Notice must allow personal data to be transferred to NOCN for the following purposes:
- a) To initially register the learner on the relevant NOCN qualification/product and then any subsequent administration required to amend the registration.
 - b) To provide centres with any due certificates upon learner achievement, including the issuing of replacement certificates.
 - c) To perform quality assurance activities, including the conducting of investigations into suspected malpractice or maladministration. This may mean that NOCN will be required to contact the learner directly.
 - d) To disclose or respond to information requests from Qualification or Industry Regulators, sector skill bodies or any other professional body, where NOCN is legally required to provide the information. This includes providing data to industry card schemes, where applicable to the learner's registered qualification/course.
 - e) To administer requests for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.
 - f) To respond to requests for appeals.
 - g) To carry out statistical analysis and monitor equal opportunities (anonymised).
- 3.06 Centres must ensure that all learners sign a data sharing agreement to confirm their acceptance that their data can be shared with NOCN for the above purposes. For this reason, centres are encouraged to include this information within their registration documentation. The data sharing agreement must be available for external quality assurance purposes and must be provided to NOCN upon request.
- 3.07 Centres must respond to any request by NOCN for the sharing of learner data within **5 working days**. Failure to provide data as requested will lead to the application of a Sanction, in line with the NOCN Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

II. The Learning Record Service (LRS)

- 3.08 Where a learner has opted in for their data to be sent to their Personal Learning Record (PLR) on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Learning Record Service (LRS), the Centre must ensure that a copy of the LRS Privacy Notice is provided to learners.

- 3.09 To allow NOCN to upload achievement data to the PLR, the learner must be registered with NOCN using their Unique Learner Number (ULN). Where a ULN is provided for a learner on NOCN's registration document, NOCN will automatically add the ULN to the learner's record and upload any subsequent achievements to their PLR. Where an incorrect or invalid ULN is provided, it is the Centre's responsibility to inform NOCN to allow this to be corrected. A list of incorrect or invalid ULNs can be viewed within NOCN's online portal, Quartzweb. Where a ULN is corrected, NOCN will re-attempt the submission of the learner's achievement to their PLR.
- 3.10 Please note that the LRS is managed and operated by the ESFA and therefore any queries regarding the service should be sent to the ESFA directly.

III. Learner Identification

- 3.11 Centres must adhere to the specific assessment and regulatory requirements for the qualifications/products the learner is being registered against in terms of verifying and validating learner identification. For all NOCN products, centres must ensure that they carry out sufficient checks on learner identification during the learner's induction. Some products have specific ID requirements which must be adhered to, please refer to the individual product specification for further information, available on the NOCN website.
- 3.12 The Centre's verification of learner identity must confirm that the learner is who they say they are and that they meet the minimum age requirements to undertake the training/assessment of the product, as detailed within the product's specification on the NOCN website. Full records of the identification checks must be kept and provided to NOCN upon request.
- 3.13 The failure by a Centre to conduct the required identification checks will be considered as malpractice by NOCN and will be investigated in line with the NOCN Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

IV. Accuracy of Learner Names and Amendments

- 3.14 Centres are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of learner registration data at the time of submission to NOCN. Under the law in the United Kingdom, an individual may change their name at any time, provided there is no intent to deceive or defraud another person. There is no legal procedure to follow, and people may change their forename, surname, add names or re-arrange existing names. Notwithstanding this, Awarding Organisations have a duty to prevent fraud and reserve the right to set their own requirements.
- 3.15 NOCN requires registrations to be made in the legal name of the learner. Learners must not be registered using nicknames or preferred names. Aside from an incorrect spelling of a learner's name, name changes will only be permitted **before** certification has taken place.
- 3.16 Where certification has not taken place and a name change is required, the Centre must contact the Customer Services Team as soon as the name change is identified. The Centre must confirm to the Customer Services Team, in writing, that they have completed the required checks of the learner's identification showing their updated name. In some circumstances, NOCN may be required under its regulatory obligations to request documentary evidence of the name change, such as a photocopy of a name change deed poll.
- 3.17 Where a spelling error is identified regarding a learner's name, the Centre must contact the NOCN Customer Services Team as soon as the error is identified to allow it to be corrected.

The Centre must confirm the correct spelling of the learner's name and confirm that the spelling has been checked against the learner's valid identification. In some circumstances, NOCN may be required under its regulatory obligations to obtain a copy of the learner's valid identification to correct the spelling of the name.

- 3.18 Once qualification certification has taken place, NOCN will not usually permit a learner name change. For further information, refer to section 4.

V. Registration Types

- 3.19 Dependent on the product being registered on, centres will have various options for the type of registration they wish to make for a cohort of learners. Centres are responsible for ensuring that learners are registered in the appropriate manner, dependent on the registration type, to ensure accurate registration and to ensure they are accurately invoiced.
- 3.20 For learners studying regulated qualifications, the Centre must ensure that the correct qualification is selected at the point of registration. This also includes the option to register a learner on a tailored Centre course which includes a list of units from a qualification (such as for the NOCN Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development suite of qualifications). In instances where a qualification includes optional units, the Centre must still select the qualification at registration. They will then have the option to select the units within that qualification that are expected to be delivered.
- 3.21 If a Centre wishes to deliver specific units that would not lead to the award of a particular qualification, the relevant course of learning should be selected, and the qualification selection should be left blank. The Centre is then able to select the specific units in which the learners being registered are expected to complete. For units in non-construction qualifications, centres are required to input the Intended Credit Value (a total of the credits of the units intended to be delivered) at the point of registration.
- 3.22 For non-regulated courses, centres should register the learner by selecting the appropriate course of learning. In these cases, no qualification will be available for selection.

VI. Registration Timeframes

- 3.23 It is a requirement of NOCN Centre approval that centres have robust systems and processes in place to ensure timely registration of learners. Timely registration is to protect the interests of learners, as without registration, learners cannot access their right to NOCN procedures such as for complaints or appeals.
- 3.24 Learners must be registered as soon as possible following their induction into the course, with registration taking place no later than **60 working days** from the date of the learner's induction. Shorter timescales apply in the following scenarios:
- a) For courses less than 12 weeks expected duration, registration must take place from **25 working days** of the learner's induction onto the course.
 - b) For externally set assessments, learners must be registered at least **5 working days** before the date they are planned to sit their assessment. The same timescale applies for any subsequent resit registrations².

² For NOCN's suite of licence-linked Security qualifications, the examination order form must be submitted **5 working days** prior to the first day of planned training and learners must be registered by the second day of the course.

- c) For courses which include externally set assessments and which are planned to be delivered over 2 or less working days, learners must be registered at least **2 working days** before the date they are planned to sit their assessment. The same timescale applies for any subsequent resit registrations.

- 3.25 **In all cases, no assessment activities can be carried out by the Centre until the learner is registered with NOCN.** This is to ensure that the learner's interests are protected. The only exception to this is the initial assessment carried out by the Centre during the learner's induction to ensure correct level of entry.
- 3.26 Centres are also responsible for ensuring that learners are registered before the Operational End Date of a qualification or unit. NOCN will ensure that all approved centres are updated on any changes to our qualifications and products through the Bulletins section of the NOCN website. This includes the development of new qualifications and units, as well as extensions, withdrawals, amendments and any qualifications or products that are due to expire, along with the dates that the changes come into force. Centres must ensure they are fully aware of all dates and changes to our qualifications and products to ensure that learners are registered before registration expires.
- 3.27 Where a Centre does not meet the above timeframes for registration, or where training or assessment activities are carried out without prior registration, NOCN will investigate the reason(s) why. Where required, NOCN will apply the relevant Sanctions to the Centre, in line with the NOCN Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure.
- 3.28 NOCN reserves the right to charge centres a late registration fee, as detailed within the NOCN Fees and Charges, where its registration timeframes are not adhered to.
- 3.29 Each learner registration with NOCN will remain active for a period of **3 years from the course start date**. After the period of 3 years, NOCN will no longer accept any subsequent claims for achievement against the registration. Where claims are required to be made, a new registration will need to be made by the Centre, at which point the current registration and certification fee of the product will apply and will be charged to the Centre.

VII. Registration Fees

- 3.30 A charge is made for each learner at the point of registration, which includes the cost for both registration and certification. The charge will be based on the qualification selected at registration, or the applicable unit, ICV or course fees. Invoices will be emailed to the Finance Contact NOCN holds for a Centre.
- 3.31 If, upon achievement, a learner achieves additional qualifications, units or credits, above the fees already invoiced to the Centre, NOCN will issue an invoice to cover the difference between the original charge and the charges associated with the additional achievement.
- 3.32 In all cases, once an invoice has been raised, the NOCN registration fee is non-refundable. For further information, please refer to the NOCN Invoicing Policy. For a list of current fees, please refer to the NOCN website.

4. Certification

I. Submission of Results

- 4.01 In all cases, results must be submitted to NOCN for verification or moderation within **20 working days** of the end date of the course and within 3 years of the date of registration. Where a learner has sat an external assessment, all assessment materials must be returned to NOCN within **3 working days** of the assessment date.
- 4.02 Centres must ensure that they are aware of the Certification End Date of the qualifications/units within their provision. NOCN will not issue certificates where the Centre submits results after the Certification End Date has passed. Where this is the case, NOCN may apply Sanctions to the Centre.
- 4.03 As a requirement of Centre approval, NOCN requires centres to ensure that the required internal quality assurance checks are carried out on the accuracy and validity of result claims before they are submitted to NOCN.
- 4.04 Where an incorrect claim is identified, the Centre must complete the NOCN Incorrect Claim Form, detailing how the incorrect claim occurred and what steps have been implemented to prevent re-occurrence. The Centre is responsible for ensuring any invalid certificates are returned to NOCN to allow the processing of the incorrect claim. Centres will be charged the NOCN administration fee for mistakes or changes (as detailed within the NOCN Fees and Charges) for each learner where incorrect achievements have been claimed for. The Quality Assurance Team will investigate the incorrect claim and may apply Sanctions to the Centre, depending on the number of occurrences and the circumstances surrounding the claim.

II. Quality Assurance and Release of Results

- 4.05 NOCN will release results following the completion of the required quality assurance activities. Where a Centre delivers qualifications which are internally assessed, a NOCN EQA will scrutinise the standard of the Centre's assessment and internal quality assurance practices and decisions. This will be required to take place before certification where the Centre does not hold DCS. It is important to note that submission of results by a Centre does not automatically trigger the required external quality assurance activities and centres should liaise with their External Quality Assurer, or NOCN directly, to progress results to certification. For further information on how NOCN quality assurers Centre result submissions, please refer to the NOCN Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure.
- 4.06 Where a Centre has been granted DCS for a qualification/course, claims will be processed within **5 working days** of the Centre's result submission. For further information regarding DCS, please refer to the NOCN Direct Claims Status Policy and Procedure.
- 4.07 For externally set and marked assessments, NOCN will ensure that assessments are marked, and results issued to centres within **20 working days** of the assessment date. This timescale may be required to be extended where further quality assurance checks are required before the issuing of results.
- 4.08 It is important to note that NOCN may be required to withhold the release of results in cases where it has not been able to confidently determine the validity of an assessment decision. NOCN may be required to temporarily withhold the release of results in instances of

investigations into malpractice and maladministration, at the receipt of intelligence, to safeguard the interests of an assessment or learners, or in compliance with a request from a Regulator.

- 4.09 In all cases where results are required to be temporarily withheld, NOCN will issue results as soon as possible after it is determined that results are safe to be released. NOCN will communicate expected timescales for the release of results to centres and learners wherever possible. NOCN will not withhold results on a permanent basis.

III. Awarding Policy

- 4.10 NOCN's current awarding policy is to award the largest size qualification in relation to the achievement for the learner, even if this is larger than what was registered by the Centre. This is to make sure the learner is awarded in relation to what they have achieved. Please note that this does not apply to qualifications which title begins with 'NOCN_Cskills Awards', where learners will only be awarded a qualification where they are registered against it.

IV. Issuing of Certificates

- 4.11 NOCN will issue any due certificates to learners within **2 working days** of an accurate result claim being processed. All certificates will be sent securely (courier and recorded delivery), addressed to the Centre's Centre Contact or Certification Contact (where applicable).
- 4.12 NOCN will only issue certificates to a Centre's Main Site address (as completed on the NOCN Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions). NOCN will not issue certificates to the address of an additional site or a Centre staff member's home address.
- 4.13 Where a learner has achieved a qualification, the Centre will receive a two-page NOCN qualification certificate that will contain full qualification details, as well as the details of all of the units that have contributed to the award of the qualification.
- 4.14 Where a learner has not achieved a qualification, the Centre will receive a unit certificate to document what the learner has achieved. Please note that in some cases, automatic unit certification is not provided, however this can be provided from the NOCN Customer Services Team upon request. An administration charge for this will apply, in line with the NOCN Fees and Charges.
- 4.15 Once received, all certificates must be checked for accuracy before being securely distributed to learners in a timely manner. Centres must ensure that they have their own internal procedures for the checking and logging of certificates. Centres should keep a record of certificates received and sent, including keeping the details of the relevant dates and tracking numbers. This must be provided to NOCN upon request.
- 4.16 Once NOCN issues a certificate, it is the responsibility of the Centre to ensure that the certificate is obtained by the learner and under no circumstances must centres hold or retain certificates from learners. This is a breach of the NOCN approval criteria and may lead to the application of Sanctions.
- 4.17 Where a parcel containing certificates is returned to NOCN due to the Centre address being closed or an inaccurate address being provided by the Centre, NOCN will hold onto the certificates for **20 working days** from the date of issue. NOCN may apply a Sanction to stop further certification. In these instances, centres should contact the Customer Services Team to

allow certificates to be re-sent to the Centre, at which point an invoice for the cost of postage will be raised and will be payable by the Centre. After 20 working days, the certificates will be securely destroyed and the Centre will be required to request for replacement certificates to be issued, where the relevant charges will apply.

4.18 NOCN began the issuing of e-certificates in the 2021-22 academic year, please contact NOCN for further support around access.

V. Certificate Design

4.19 NOCN are required to meet Regulatory requirements regarding the design of its certificates and therefore we are unable to amend the design and layout. Centres are also prohibited from overprinting, trimming or amending an issued certificate in any way.

4.20 From 1st April 2018, qualification certificates must only display the logos of the Qualification Regulators who regulate the specific qualification in which the certification relates to. This is a requirement of the Qualification Regulators.

VI. Amendment to Learner Names Following Certification

4.21 Once award of achievement has taken place, NOCN will only allow the amendment to a learner name where a spelling error has been identified or in cases of witness protection or gender re-assignment. In all other instances, including marriage, divorce or name change by deed poll, NOCN will not allow the amendment of a learner's name.

4.22 Where a spelling error is identified and a certificate has been issued, the Centre must apply for a replacement certificate from NOCN, using the NOCN Request for a Replacement Certificate form (available on the NOCN website). The Centre must send any issued certificates back to NOCN to allow the name change to take place and they will be charged for the replacement, in line with the NOCN Fees and Charges.

4.23 In the cases of gender re-assignment or witness protection, NOCN will issue a replacement certificate free of charge.

VII. Incorrect Claiming of Certificates

4.24 Where an error in claiming is identified and a certificate has been issued, the Centre must return the certificate to NOCN alongside a completed NOCN Incorrect Claim Form (available on the NOCN website). NOCN must receive any incorrectly issued certificates to allow the incorrect achievements to be removed. Centres will be charged an administration fee for the incorrect claim, in line with the NOCN Fees and Charges.

4.25 Centres should note that incorrect claims for certification are taken seriously, and this may result in an investigation into the Centre by NOCN and/or the application of a Sanction.

VIII. Damaged or Lost Certificates

4.26 If a certificate arrives damaged at a Centre, the Centre must inform NOCN immediately. NOCN will require the Centre to return all damaged certificates to NOCN before replacements are issued. There will be no charge to the Centre for the issuing of the replacement certificates.

- 4.27 If a certificate is damaged at the Centre, or after they have been distributed to learners, the Centre or learner should return to NOCN alongside a completed Request for Replacement Certificate form. Replacements will be re-issued to centres/learners after payment for the request has been received. The latest fee can be found within the NOCN Fees and Charges.
- 4.28 Where a certificate has been lost by a Centre or learner, a replacement can be requested from NOCN by completing the Request for Replacement Certificate form. In these cases, a replacement certificate will be issued using the same certificate number but will be clearly marked as a replacement on the certificate, as well as showing the date the replacement was issued.
- 4.29 Please note that NOCN is unable to issue a replacement certificate for any certificates issued by Cskills Awards before 2007 and for any certificates issued by a regional OCN. Instead, NOCN is able to produce a letter confirming the relevant achievements to the Centre or learner, a fee will apply for this service, in line with the NOCN Fees and Charges.

5. Appeals

- 5.01 Where a Centre fails to register or certificate a learner in line with the Operational and Certification End Dates of a qualification, they may wish to appeal to NOCN to allow registration or certification. For further information, refer to the NOCN Appeals Policy and Procedure, available on the NOCN website.

6. Document Control

- 6.01 This policy is maintained by the Quality Assurance Team and will be reviewed and updated where necessary to reflect updated legislation, customer feedback, improvements of operation and changes to the regulatory environment. If you have any queries regarding the contents or the use of this policy, please contact the Quality Assurance Team directly on assurance@nocn.org.uk.
- 6.02 All NOCN policies and procedures are signed off by the NOCN Responsible Officer. The latest versions of which can be found on our website here: <https://www.nocn.org.uk/support/nocn-group-policies/>.