



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Awarding Body Quality Standards

National Qualifications Centre

United Arab Emirates

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About the National Qualifications Centre

In reference to the Prime Minister's Office resolution number (21) for the year 2021 regarding the Ministry of Education (MoE) organisation chart. The National Qualifications Centre (NQC) key functions can be summarised as:

- designing, developing and implementing a comprehensive and unified qualifications framework for the Emirates, the *QF Emirates*, is used to place, design, develop and recognise qualifications in the UAE;
- facilitating the transfer, articulation and continuity of learning of individuals between different education pathways and promoting further education principles;
- establishing and maintaining standards and regulations for qualifications and national occupations
- promoting the principles of lifelong learning with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and articulation as its key base;
- establishing and accrediting Awarding Bodies (AWB) and Accredited Training Providers (ATPs);
- quality assure accredited AWB/approved authorities;
- developing policies and standards related to TVET in the UAE in accordance with international best practices.

The NQC is committed to developing the skills of learners to prepare them for employment and/or the next level of their learning. It aims to deliver outcomes that assist the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to keep pace with scientific and technological progress and meet the country's economic and social development needs.

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Introduction

Purpose

An Awarding Body (AWB) is an entity, accredited by the MoE National Qualifications Centre (NQC) and authorised under its remit to administer and quality assure, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Qualifications, Credit Based Micro Credentials (CBMC) and Professional Certificates through Accredited Training Providers (ATP). Therefore, AWBs evaluate ATPs based on NQC Quality Standards and recommend ATPs that fulfil all NQCs requirements to become an ATP, to deliver qualifications, CBMC and Professional Certificates. *(Please refer to NQC ATP Quality Standards for details and Accreditation Process for ATPs)*

A core function of the NQC is to establish and accredit AWB with a main purpose to quality assure the quality of outcomes of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. AWB will be established on a geographical or sectoral basis. This role involves setting and maintaining standards for the administration, registration, and delivery of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), CBMC and Professional Certificates.

This document provides the Quality Assurance Standards required to meet compliance with existing laws, by-laws, policies, regulations, and accreditation requirements to become an NQC accredited AWB. The guidance in this document is designed to help AWBs understand how to comply and implement the quality standards.

The use of this document is intended for potential new AWBs, NQCs existing AWBs as well as NQC core and associate staff.

Registering Organisations as an AWB

Registration and accreditation

All AWBs need to comply with NQC Quality Assurance Standards and any associated MoE standards and requirements relevant to its operations. The NQC will accredit an AWB when it is satisfied that it meets the prescribed minimum standards for accreditation.

The objectives of the NQC AWB Quality Standards are:

- to provide the requirements which the AWB must comply with in order to be considered an accredited NQC accredited AWB.
- to ensure that AWBs meet the compliance and standards required by NQC.
- to ensure that AWBs, ATPs and affiliates operate ethically and consider the needs and well-being of both learners and the industry.
- to investigate all complaints made against the AWB, ATP or its third-party agencies which NQC deems critical to conduct an inspection.

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Roles and responsibilities of AWBs

An AWB is a governing body for a sector OR an organization that governs training providers under its remit.

The main functions of the AWB are to:

- obtain and maintain AWB status from NQC to operate within the UAE
- follow the guidelines and principles of good practice for AWBs and comply with all quality standards

Note: The AWB cannot delegate its responsibilities to other persons or entities.

AWBs are responsible for:

- overseeing the delivery, assessment, and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) of qualification processes and delivery.
- following the NQC standards for qualifications and issuance of certification for fair and equitable services to learners.
- reliably and consistently operating the administration and delivery of qualifications by ATPs to support the integrity of certificates awarded and issued by all authorised within the qualification process.
- maintaining NQC standards for the administration and delivery of qualifications.

Only Qualifications, Professional Certificates and Credit Bearing Micro Credentials (CBMC) registered in the NQC database can be offered as official Qualifications/Courses by an AWB.

Accreditation process

Organisations seeking initial accreditation must meet all legal requirements. NQC will then verify that the organisation is legitimate and has appropriate governance in place.

NQC will have the responsibility for full accreditation of all AWBs and for providing publicly available information on the accreditation status through the NQC website.

After approval, the AWB is accredited for a period of up to 3 years and renewed for a further period of up to 3 years if all standards have been complied with. The AWB and its accredited qualifications, CBMC and Professional Certifications and period of registration are recorded with MoE-NQC.

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AWB Quality Standards

The Quality Assurance Standards are grouped under eight (8) key areas.

1. Governance
2. General compliance
3. Third parties
4. Compliance for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)
5. Learners' registration and assessments
6. External Quality Assurance (EQA)
7. Appeals and complaints
8. Certificates and Transcripts

Section 1. Governance

Rules about governance of awarding bodies, including the management of conflict of interest, risks, incidents, maladministration and malpractice.

1.1. Maintaining AWB accreditation

- (a) The AWB must not, by any means or act of omission which has or is likely to have an adverse effect, render itself unsuitable to continue to be accredited for the award of a relevant qualification. An example of an act of omission may include:
 - In relation to inactive AWBs: The AWB must ensure that, it has communicated to NQC 6 months before in writing and follow all procedures to mitigate any adverse effects on learners.
 - Take all reasonable and equitable steps to ensure that, once it has complied with the above, it awards a qualification in a way that complies with quality standards.
- (b) Requirements of staff - The AWB must ensure that staff are persons of standing in the community and each of its staff is at all times a person suitable to be engaged in that role and is recognised for the award of the relevant qualifications. Staff members may be unsuitable for the role by virtue of compliance with federal and local regulations.

1.2. Safeguards relating to change of governance

- (a) Where there is a change of control in relation to the AWB, it must:
 - take all reasonable and equitable steps to ensure the change of control does not have any adverse effect,
 - make sure that every relevant person takes all reasonable and equitable steps to ensure that the change of control does not have an adverse effect, and
 - put in place a plan designed to ensure that the interests of learners will be protected.The AWB must notify the NQC within 3 months of any changes occurring to the governance.

1.3. Conflict of interest

The AWB must identify and monitor conflicts of interest which relate to it and any scenario in which it is reasonably foreseeable that any such conflict of interest will arise in the future. The AWB must also establish and maintain an up-to-date record of all conflicts of interest which relate to it and make this available to the NQC on request.

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- (a) Managing conflicts of interest - AWBs must take all reasonable and equitable steps to ensure that no conflict of interest which relates to it has an adverse effect. Where such conflicts of interest have an adverse effect, the AWB must take all reasonable steps to mitigate the adverse effect as far as possible to correct it.
- (b) Interests in assessments: The AWB must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a learner (including ATP assessment standards scrutiny) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment. Where, having all such reasonable steps, an assessment by such a person cannot be avoided, the AWB must make arrangements for the relevant part of the assessment to be subjective to scrutiny by another person.
- (c) Written conflict of interest policy: The AWB must establish and maintain, and at all times comply with an up-to-date written conflict of interest policy, which must include procedures on how the AWB intends to comply with the requirements of the standards. When requested to do so in writing, the AWB must submit to NQC its conflict of interest policy and must subsequently ensure that the policy complies with any requirements which the NQC has communicated to it in writing. Any conflict of interest should be notified to the NQC no later than 10 working days from being confirmed.

1.4. Availability of adequate resources and arrangements

Ensuring the ability to award qualifications,

- (a) The AWB must ensure it has the capacity to undertake the role of AWB and must have a separate division in its organisational chart to support AWB functions mentioned within the AWB Quality Standards, such as HR, IT, External Verification, Registration, and Certification, etc.
- (b) For the purpose of (1.5a), the AWB must establish and maintain the following at all times:
 - Full-time staff-members working for or on behalf of the AWB who has an AWB work permit or visa.
 - Arrangements that will ensure that it retains at all times a workforce of appropriate size and competence.
 - Arrangements for the retention of data which will ensure that adequate information is available to it at all times.
 - Arrangements that will ensure sufficient technical equipment and support is available to it at all times.
 - Appropriate resource management in place.
 - Appropriate systems of planning and internal control in place.
 - Demonstrate control of all administrative processes in line with NQC data collection requirements i.e., making data available as per the provided data catalogue and the documented data exchange mechanism or NQC e-service.
 - The AWB integrates its database with the NQC database for the exchange of learner certificate data and registration where applicable.
- (c) The AWB regulates and reviews its ongoing resources requirements and makes appropriate changes to take into account the findings of each review, and adequately plan any new developments which it proposes to introduce and allocate sufficient resources to ensure that such developments are effectively introduced.

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- (d) The AWB must conduct professional development workshops and activities to maintain the currency of skills of its staff involved in qualification/CBMC/Professional Certificates administration and delivery.

1.5. Identification and management of risks

- (a) The AWB must take all reasonable steps to identify the risk of the occurrence of any incident which could have an adverse effect, prevent incidents or mitigate their effects, where it cannot be prevented, reduce the risk of the incident occurring as far as possible, and prevent any adverse effects the incident could have. The AWB must have a risk management policy and demonstrate:

- results of identification of risk within their own quality assurance processes.
- actions to reduce risk must be identified and evidenced, the actions detailed in the policy must be of sufficient detail and quality to allow the AWB to mitigate, as far as possible, the adverse effect of any incident which has been identified by the AWB as having a risk of occurring.

Any adverse effects of risk or fraudulent practice affecting learners must be notified to NQC immediately. The AWB must present its proposal of solution/s to resolve the risk for NQCs approval.

1.6. Malpractice and maladministration

- (a) The AWB must take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice or maladministration in the ATP delivery, and award of qualifications.
- (b) Investigating and managing the effects of malpractice and maladministration: Any such occurrence is observed or brought to the attention of the AWB where there are reasonable grounds for that allegation or suspicion.
- (c) Where it is found that malpractice or maladministration has occurred, the AWB must promptly take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effects and, where any such adverse effect occurs, mitigate it as far as possible and take corrective action. The AWB must also inform the NQC, the respective ATP, and any other AWB that it may affect.
- (d) Procedures relating to malpractice and maladministration: The AWB must establish, maintain and at all times comply with, up to date written procedures for the investigation of suspected or alleged malpractice or maladministration, and ensure that such investigations are carried out rigorously, effectively, and by a person of appropriate competence who has no personal interest in their outcome.
- (e) The AWB must follow a request from an ATP, provide guidance to the ATP as to how best to prevent, investigate, and deal with malpractice and maladministration.

Section 2. General Compliance

Rules about the relationship between the AWB and the NQC, in relation to responsible officers, reporting of information and the use of NQC's logo.

2.1. The role of the AWB Official representative

- (a) The AWB must nominate the AWB Official representative as the responsible person in writing to the NQC, who serves as the authoritative point of contact in relation to all activities undertaken by the AWB which are of interest to NQC in accordance with NQC AWB Quality Standards, including in particular:

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- to make accurate statements for and on behalf of the AWB,
 - on any matters relating to compliance with the NQC AWB Quality Standards,
 - all official reports and operational matters to the NQC.
- (b) The AWB must ensure that the responsible person stated above is effective in the role and is given appropriate authority to carry out the role.
- (c) The AWB must inform NQC of any changes made to the AWB Official representative a minimum of 1 month before the change is made.

2.2. Annual statement of compliance

- (a) The AWB must ensure it complies with audit reports issued by the NQC by submitting an official corrective plan (if required) as stipulated by the NQC. The corrective plan and statements of compliance must be accurate, formally approved by all responsible parties and submitted to the NQC on time on an annual basis.

2.3. Notification to the NQC of certain events

- (a) The AWB must promptly notify the NQC when it has cause to believe that any event has occurred or is likely to occur which could have an adverse effect. For the purpose of this condition, such events may in particular include and are not limited to the following:
- Those where the responsibility of the documentation is that of the AWB and there is a substantial error in the AWB's materials.
 - There has been a loss, or theft of, or a breach of confidentiality in, any materials, and the AWB cannot supply any specific materials in accordance with its obligations to the ATP.
 - There has been a failure in the delivery of an assessment which threatens assessors' ability to differentiate, accurately and consistently between the levels of attainment demonstrated by learners.
 - The AWB will be unable to meet a published date for the issue of results of the award of a qualification.
 - The AWB has issued incorrect results or certificates.
 - The AWB believes that there has been an incident of malpractice or maladministration, which could either invalidate the award of a qualification which it makes available or could affect another AWB.
- (b) Notification to the NQC on specified events in all cases. (For the purpose of this condition, such events may in particular include and are not limited to the following)
The AWB must promptly notify the NQC if it is, or if it has cause to believe that it is likely to be, subject to:
- a major change in its governance structure or legal status,
 - a change of control,
 - a merge between it and another body, or
 - In the event of any service update not defined, it will require an action, correspondence.
- (c) When the AWB notifies the NQC of an incident in accordance with this condition, or as soon as possible afterwards, the AWB must also notify the NQC of any steps that it has taken or intends to take to prevent the event having an adverse effect or to correct or mitigate that adverse effect if it occurs.

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- (d) The AWB must not delay making a notification to the NQC in accordance with this condition because relevant information is unavailable but must notify based on all the information it has and provide further information to the NQC once it becomes available.

2.4. Notice to provide information to the NQC

- (a) Where the NQC serves a written notice on the AWB requiring provision of any information that it seeks for the purpose of performing its function, the AWB must:
- comply with the terms of the notice, and
 - ensure that all information provided to the NQC in response to such a notice is accurate and complete.
- (b) Any such notice may include terms which:
- specify the time within which the information is to be provided,
 - specify a form in which the information is to be provided,
 - require that the information is accompanied by such supporting documents or data as may be decided by the NQC, and
 - require the AWB to provide information which is already in its possession, or which must be created or obtained by it.

2.5. Representations regarding qualifications

- (a) ATPs fees and services - the AWB must define their services and fees in alignment with local and federal government procedures and regulations.
- (b) Advertising and promoting of qualifications - the AWB must not (and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person connected with it does not) advertise or promote its qualifications in a manner that is likely to be misleading to users of qualifications. The AWB must also ensure the NQC and MoE logos are not used.

2.6. Cooperation with the NQC

- (a) The AWB must provide the NQC with all such assistance as it may request for the purpose of undertaking, in accordance with its functions, an investigation into, or other monitoring in relation to, the activities of that AWB.

2.7. Compliance with regulatory documents

- (a) Where regulatory documents require the AWB to take or refrain from taking any action, the AWB must comply with that requirement.
- (b) Where a regulatory document sets out guidelines or principles of good practice in relation to any behaviour on the part of the AWB, the AWB must have regard to those guidelines or principles before it engages in that behaviour.

2.8. Compliance with undertaking given to the NQC

- (a) The AWB must comply with requirements of any undertaking which, it has given to NQC, in writing.

2.9. AWB corporate branding

- (a) The AWB must demonstrate corporate branding and marketing of qualifications and services offered and should prominently display its AWB status and the NQC qualifications, Professional Certificates and CBMC. AWBs are not permitted to use NQC or MoE logos.

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Section 3. Third Parties

Rules about arrangements with third parties, including ATPs and publishers.

3.1. Arrangements with third parties

(a) Where the AWB arranges for a third party to undertake the EQA activities on its behalf, the AWB must ensure the arrangements which is established with the third party enable the AWB to award qualifications in a way that complies with its AWB Quality Standards requirements and, where appropriate, enforce such arrangements so as to ensure that it is able to award qualifications in a way that complies with the NQC AWB Quality Standards.

(a) The AWB holds all responsibility for any third-party arrangements.

3.2. AWB responsibility towards ATPs under their remit.

(a) This must include provisions which:

- require the AWB to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the ATP is able to comply with its ATP Quality Standards.
- require the ATP to take all reasonable steps to comply with requests for information or documentation made by the AWB or as soon as practicable.
- require the AWB to assist with ATP in carrying out any reasonable monitoring activities and to assist the NQC in any investigations made for the purpose of performing its functions.
- set out all requirements for which the ATP must comply in order to continue to deliver the qualification.
- establish a sanctions policy to be applied in the event that the ATP fails to comply with these requirements.
- require the ATP to retain a workforce of appropriate size and competence to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by the AWB.
- require the ATP to have available sufficient managerial resources to enable it effectively and efficiently to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by the AWB.
- require the ATP to undertake the delivery of the qualification approved by the AWB in accordance with all government and federal laws.
- require the ATP to operate a complaints handling procedure or appeals process for the benefit of learners.
- set out any arrangements in relation to the ATPs IQA for assessments, that the AWB will undertake or that will be undertaken on its behalf, and require the ATP to retain any data (including evidence generated by learners or marked by the ATP) the AWB considers necessary to allow it to undertake EQA effectively.
- specify a process to be followed in any withdrawal of the ATP (whether voluntary or not) from its role in delivering a qualification following NQC requirements, and
- require the ATP to take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of learners in the case of such a withdrawal.

(b) In the event the ATP withdraws from its role in delivering a qualification, the AWB must take all reasonable steps to protect the interest of the learners.

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(c) The AWB must, in respect to parts of delivery of qualifications which the ATP undertakes.

- provide effective guidance to the ATP, and
- make available to the ATP any information which, for the purposes of that delivery, the ATP may reasonably require to be provided by the AWB.

Section 4. Compliance for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

General rules about qualification delivery approval, accessibility, review approach, enquiries, complaints, withdrawing qualifications and information for training and assessment personnel. AWB are responsible for ensuring that ATPs adhere to the following, in line with NQCs guidelines and standards.

4.1. Qualification delivery approval

- (a) ATP application is made via the NQC and forwarded to the respective AWB for EQA. The AWB is responsible for making a recommendation to NQC in respect to the ATP to administer and deliver the qualification process.
- (b) The AWB must approve any satellite centres of the ATP and all satellite centres must follow the NQC Quality Standards of the respective AWB.

4.2. Qualifications offered by AWBs

- (a) An AWB must ensure the ATP complies with the following:
- Demonstrates capacity to offer qualifications within a specific subject area.
 - Offer suites of vertical and horizontal qualifications within specific subject areas.
 - Publish unit and qualification titles and standards as they are registered on the NQCs NQF.
 - Once approved, no modifications to qualification or units within qualifications can be actioned.
 - Publishes and offers qualifications, Professional Certificates and CBMC, separate to any packaging arrangements.
 - Does not prevent a learner from completing a qualification due to packaging arrangements.

4.3. Accessibility of qualifications

- (a) The AWB must ensure that it complies with the requirements of equalities law in relation to each of the qualifications which it makes available.
- (b) The AWB must monitor qualifications which it makes available for any feature which could disadvantage a group of learners who share a particular characteristic, such as learners with different learning needs including special educational needs.
- (c) Where the AWB has identified such a feature, it must:
- remove any disadvantage which is unjustifiable, and
 - maintain a record of any disadvantage which is believed to be justifiable and sets out the reasons why in its opinion the disadvantage is justifiable.

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4.4. Reviewing approaches

- (a) The AWB must keep under review, and must enhance where necessary, its approach to, award of qualifications, to assure itself that its approach at all times remains appropriate.
- (b) Evidence used to inform approach. The AWB must:
 - have due regard to all information, comments and complaints received from users of qualifications in relation to the delivery and award of qualifications, and
 - identify and give due regard to any credible evidence which suggests that a change in its approach to the award of qualifications is required in order to ensure that the approach remains appropriate.

4.5. Responding to enquiries and complaints procedures

- (a) In responding to enquiries from users of qualifications, the AWB must answer accurately, fully and within a reasonable time any inquiries received by it from users of qualifications.
- (b) Nothing in respect to this standard obliges the AWB to disclose information which would breach a duty of confidentiality or any other legal duty.
- (c) The AWB must establish, maintain, publish and at all times comply with written complaints procedure. The complaints procedure must include procedures and timescales for:
 - responding to complaints, and
 - dealing with the subject matter of complaints.

4.6. Compliance to qualifications standards

- (a) The AWB must ensure that the award of any qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, complies with that qualification's standards, and has regard to any guidelines and principles of good practice relating to that qualification which are set out in the standards.

4.7. Management of the withdrawal of qualifications

- (a) The AWB may cease learner registration by the ATP in respect to a qualification that it has identified as non-compliant as part of the EQA process in line with the NQC requirements.
- (b) Where the AWB intends to withdraw, or otherwise believes it is likely that it will withdraw, or is obliged to withdraw a qualification, it must take all reasonable and equitable steps to protect the interest of learners enrolled in the qualification.
- (c) Where the AWB intends to withdraw, or is obliged to withdraw a qualification, it must:
 - promptly prepare, maintain, and comply with a written withdrawal plan, which must specify how the interests of learners in relation to that qualification will be protected, and
 - provide clear and accurate information about the withdrawal of learners and ATPs who are likely to be affected by the withdrawal.
- (d) The AWB must ensure that any withdrawal plan which it prepares complies with any requirements which the NQC has previously communicated.

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4.8. Making available information to help training and assessment requirements

- (a) In respect to each qualification which the AWB makes available, the AWB must ensure that there is information available for preparing learners and prospective learners for assessment for that qualification that is reasonably required to be provided by the AWB.

Section 5. Learners' Registration and Assessments

AWB are responsible for ensuring that ATPs adhere to the following, in line with NQCs guidelines and standards.

5.1. Registration of learners

- (a) The AWB must take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
- each learner taking a qualification which the AWB makes available is registered in a way that permits the learner to be clearly and uniquely identified, and
 - where the identity of a learner has not been previously confirmed to the AWB, or the ATP at the point at which the assessment will take place, arrangements are in place to confirm the learner's identity.

5.2. Arrangements for reasonable adjustments

- (a) The AWB must, in accordance with local and federal legislations, have in place clear arrangements, guidance, policies and procedures for making reasonable adjustments in relation to the qualifications which it makes available.
- (b) The AWB must publish details of its arrangements for making reasonable adjustments, which must include details as to:
- how a learner qualifies for a reasonable adjustment, and
 - what reasonable adjustment must be made.

5.3. Arrangements for special considerations

- (a) The AWB must have in place clear arrangements, guidance, policy, and procedures for special considerations to be given to learners in relation to the qualification which it makes available.
- (b) The AWB must publish details of its arrangements for giving special consideration, which must include details as to:
- how a learner qualifies for special consideration, and
 - what special consideration will be given.

5.4. Completion of assessment under required conditions

- (a) The AWB must take all reasonable steps to ensure that, in relation to qualifications which it makes available:
- evidence generated by a learner in an assessment is generated by that learner (or include evidence generated by that learner as a contribution to group work), and
 - where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, learners complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).

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5.5. Assessments are accessible

(a) The AWB must ensure that qualifications are accessible to all learners. The AWB must have in place clear arrangements to ensure that learners are at the level required to undertake the qualification in terms of language and core subjects such as maths and science where these apply to the qualification.

(b) A learner taking a qualification may be assessed in any other language where it is one of the primary objectives of the qualification:

- for the learner to gain knowledge of, skills in, and understanding of that language, or
- to support a role in the workplace, providing that proficiency in English is not required for the role supported by the qualification.

(c) Where the AWB makes available a qualification in more than one language, the AWB must take all reasonable steps to ensure that assessment in different languages ensures a consistent level of demand for all learners.

5.6. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

(a) The AWB must establish, maintain, publish, and comply with a policy for RPL that is aligned to the NQC RPL policy. The AWB must ensure that its RPL policy and procedures enable it to award qualifications in a way that complies with the AWB Quality Standards.

5.7. Articulation

(a) The AWB must establish, maintain, publish, and comply with the NQC Articulation Policy and Implementation Guidelines. The AWB must ensure that ATPs comply with the NQC Articulation policy, and it supports ATPs with the articulation process enabling ATPs to award qualifications in a way that complies with the AWB Quality Standards.

5.8. Assessing learners

(a) The AWB must have stated standards of assessment and IQA practice and processes which include special arrangements. For each qualification it makes available, an AWB must have in place effective arrangements to ensure that, as far as possible, the criteria against which learners' performance will be differentiated are:

- understood by assessors and accurately applied,
- applied accurately and consistently by assessors, regardless of, identity of the assessor, assessors in different sites, learner, or ATP and
- assessment decisions have been subjected to standardisation to ensure consistency in assessment decisions.

5.9. Evidence for assessment

(a) The AWB must ensure the assessment outcome in respect to a learner's achievement of a qualification which the AWB has made available reflects the level of attainment demonstrated by that of the learner in the assessment. In addition, the AWB must ensure that:

- the marking of the assessment and,
- the award of a qualification which it makes available takes into account all admissible evidence generated by that learner as part of that assessment.

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Section 6. External Quality Assurance (EQA)

AWBs must demonstrate EQA of the qualification administration and delivery process and must provide effective guidance to ATPs in relation to EQA requirements, including the minimum expectations that the ATP must meet.

6.1. EQA/External Verification (EV) documentation

(a) The AWB must develop and maintain an up-to-date Quality Handbook for External Quality Assurers as a reference document to support EQAs in their role. This document should include how to plan, carry out and document all EQA activities in line with the NQC and AWB requirements. An AWB must also establish and maintain an EQA strategy which:

- provides a comprehensive picture of the steps and approach it will take to secure compliance in respect of assessment for relevant qualifications.
- the strategy document may cover more than one of its qualifications, however where it does so it must address any relevant differences that exist between the qualifications covered.
- such differences should include the types of assessment for the relevant qualifications and the types of ATPs delivering them, i.e. an AWB may take a different approach to a qualification in which assessments are intended to be delivered on demand to meet the needs of users to one which follows a more structured delivery model.
- the EQA strategy must present a logical and coherent narrative that includes clear and concise evidence in relation to the matters set out in these requirements.
- the AWB EQA strategy may apply to one or more of its qualifications and may be contained in a number of documents of policies and procedures which, taken together meet the requirements.
- EQA policies and procedures must include reasonable justification for its approach, including when and how it would vary its approach to address risks and issues that may arise i.e. overall approach, monitoring, taking action and making adjustments, and ongoing review.

6.2. EQA visits and evidence

(a) The AWB must in respect to each ATP maintain (for both remote and face-to-face visits):

- evidence of at least one EV/EQA visit per year undertaken face-to-face
- evidence for all EV visits, (such as, at the start, during, after the delivery of all qualifications offered
- where appropriate, evidence of observation of one or more assessments and internal verification being undertaken
- evidence of provision of advice, guidance and recommendations to ATPs that is reported and documented
- ensure ATP operations meet the NQC ATP Quality Standards of operation.

(b) The AWB must ensure IQA standards are being met, as well as ensuring that ATPs meet ongoing requirements around:

- Registration
- Delivery and assessment

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- IQA
- Certification Claim
- Policies and procedures
- Management and administration
- Physical and staff resources

6.3. EQA/EV Sampling

(a) The AWB must have policies and procedures and risk matrix to support sampling activity and detail the guidelines for face-to-face and remote sampling. The AWB must ensure it scrutinises an appropriate sample size of assessment portfolios by considering:

- any specific risks that relate to that ATP, assessment, or qualification,
- number of satellite sites
- the number of learners registered for the qualification at the ATP,
- the range of attainment demonstrated by the learners,
- A range of assessment methods used
- the number of assessors (especially new or inexperienced assessors) at the ATP involved in assessment, and
- the number of persons involved in Internal Quality Assurance (IQA),
- sampling of all claims for certification.

Where the AWB considers it necessary in light of any risks that it has identified, the AWB must select for scrutiny additional sampling which goes beyond those suggested by the ATP itself.

6.4. Role and characteristics of the EQA

(a) The EQA is an independent evaluator who reviews and validates assessments and assessment tools performed within and across an ATP. The EQA is also responsible for verifying the eligibility of prospective ATPs and/or those registered seeking renewal or a change of scope. All EQA must be carried out by persons who have:

- Appropriate vocational competence,
- be an occupational and subject matter expert in their industry sector,
- NQC endorsed assessor, IQA, EQA/EV qualified, or possess a recognised equivalent/international award,
- been provided with appropriate training, and
- no personal interest in the outcome of the scrutiny.

6.5. EQA risk-based approach

(a) The AWB must take a risk-based approach to EQA of the ATP and must put in place arrangements which go beyond minimum requirements where it considers it appropriate to do so, both as part of its obligation to keep its approach under review and in response to any particular risk identified or incident which has occurred.

(b) Risk-based reports must be completed in relation to each ATP and risk must be evaluated based on:

- Learners - capacity in terms of ratio of learners to assessors to IQAs, and trainers are of the appropriate size.
- Evidence - sample activity of evidence of all assessment methods.

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- Assessors and IQAs - experience workload, new/unqualified staff.
- Assessment sites.
- Records (assessors' reports and feedback, IV/IQA records, progress reviews, learner records).
- Qualification/s delivery.
- ATP experience and track record.

Section 7. Appeals and Complaints

7.1. Appeals process

- (a) The AWB must establish, maintain, and comply with the appeals process in relation to all matters pertaining to the ATP and learners, which must provide for the appeal of:
- the results of assessments.
 - decisions regarding reasonable adjustments and special consideration, and
 - decisions relating to any action to be taken against a learner or an ATP following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration.
 - IQA/IV decisions.
 - EQA/EV decisions.
- (b) For the purpose of 7.1(a), the AWB appeals process must provide for:
- the effective appeals of results on the basis that the AWB did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly or fairly,
 - all appeals decisions to be taken by individuals who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed,
 - appeal decisions to be only taken by persons who have appropriate competence,
 - the final decision in respect to the outcome of an appeal to involve at least one decision maker who is independent in regard to the issue,
 - timelines for the outcomes of appeals in accordance with the NQC timeline requirements for appeals.
 - Submission of appeal in writing not more than seven (7) working days from occurrence of the adverse decision.
 - Investigation of the appeal completed in not more than fourteen (14) working days from occurrence of the adverse decision from receipt of the written appeal.
 - Appeal hearing arranged and heard in not more than twenty-one (21) working days from receipt of the written appeal.
 - Outcome of hearing and decision of an appeal informed in not more than twenty-eight (28) working days from receipt of the written appeal.
- (c) The AWB must publish information on its appeal process to enable the results of an assessment to be appealed.

7.2. Compliance with the NQC appeals and complaints process

- (a) The AWB must comply with the requirements of any appeals and complaints process established by the NQC in the form in which it may be published by the AWB and revised from time to time.
- (b) The AWB must give due regard to the outcome of any such appeals or complaints process in relation to a qualification which it makes available.

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- (c) Where appeals procedures lead to the discovery or failure of practice, the AWB must ensure that the ATP review and revise processes and procedures to mitigate the effects of failure, rectify failure, and negate learner disadvantage.

Section 8. Certificates and Transcripts

8.1. Design and content of certificates and transcripts

- (a) The AWB must ensure that the design of each certificate in relation to a qualification which it makes available complies with the certificate requirements which are published by the NQC and revised from time to time.
- (b) The AWB must ensure that:
- all certificates and transcripts which are issued clearly and uniquely identify both the learner and the certificate/transcript itself,
 - all certificates and transcripts which it issues clearly displays the title of the qualification as it appears on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and do not include any other titles for the qualification and displays the corresponding level in the QF *Emirates*.
- (c) Where the AWB issues any replacement certificate/transcript, it must ensure that the certificate/transcript is clearly identifiable as being a replacement.
- (d) Where an AWB issues a certificate in relation to a qualification and:
- The assessment of the qualification was in a language other than English, and
 - The objective of the qualification was not for the learner to gain skills in, or knowledge or understanding of that language,
- the AWB must ensure that the language of the assessment is clearly identifiable on the certificate/transcript.

8.2. Issuing certificates, transcripts, and replacement certificates

- (a) The AWB must sign off claims for certification in relation to a qualification which it makes available and:
- Claims for certificates and transcripts can only be made by the ATP after registration for full qualifications and should be done within a reasonable timeframe to avoid any adverse effects to learners.
 - Ensures that the issue of certificates and transcripts is timely.
 - Issues only certificates/transcripts which are clear and readily capable of being understood by users of qualifications.
 - Issues only certificates/transcripts which are accurate and complete, and which reflect accurate and complete results.
 - Ensures that all requirements for the assessment, IQA/IV, EQA/EV, registration and certificate claims have been administered in accordance with the NQC rules.
 - Maintains a record of all certificates and transcript and replacement certificates and transcripts which it issues.
 - Must not include a qualification which is not a regulated qualification/NVQ on a certificate or transcript which contains regulated qualifications/NVQ.
- (b) The AWB must take all reasonable steps, including having procedures in place, to ensure that it:
- has processes and procedures to prevent fraudulent claims for certification.

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- issues a certificate/transcript and replacement certificate/transcript only to learner who has a valid entitlement to that certificate or replacement certificate/transcript (where ATPs hold direct award capabilities, this is the responsibility of the ATP).
- revokes any certificate if the result on the certificate/transcript is false because of malpractice, maladministration, or because the results have been corrected (where ATPs hold direct award capabilities, this is the responsibility of the ATP).
- follows timescale requirements as detailed in the policies and procedures for issuing/replacement of certificates and transcripts.

8.3. Certificate and transcript requirements

(a) The AWB must ensure that the design and production of each certificate and transcript in relation to a regulated qualification, Professional Certificates or CBMC which it makes available complies with the NQC rules (refer to NQC Guidelines for Certificates and Transcripts), and includes the following requirements clearly and distinctly expressed on the front of the certificate:

- the full name of the AWB as recognised by the NQC.
- the full name of the learner as registered.
- for qualification certificates and transcripts, the qualification number and for credit certificates. unit reference numbers/as assigned on the register.
- the level of attainment of the learner.
- the level of qualification or units and credit.
- the (day/month/year) the AWB confirms the learner’s attainment by issuing the certificate and the transcript.
- transcripts detailing units and credits that the learner has been awarded.
- only approved logos in line with NQCs Guidelines should be used on a certificates and transcripts. For the inclusion of any other logos on certificates or transcripts the AWB must apply to the NQC for approval.
- analysis of learner achievement in the number, name, type and level of qualification issued.
- maintain confidentiality of all information and documentation.
- maintain records for claims for certification for a period of (50) years
- use of the NQC e-service in association with all registrations and certification requirements where applicable.

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