

# EIGHT PLEDGES

JCQ AWARDING  
BODIES'  
COMMITMENT  
TO REDUCING  
BUREAUCRACY  
FOR THE FE  
SECTOR  
(2005-2008)



Joint Council  
for Qualifications

# EIGHT PLEDGES – JCQ AWARDING BODIES' COMMITMENT TO REDUCING BUREAUCRACY FOR THE FE SECTOR (2005 – 2008)

In 2005, JCQ awarding bodies made a commitment to work together to streamline and harmonise processes over a three-year rolling programme (2005 – 2008), to make the administration and management of qualifications in the further education sector simpler and easier. Since then, considerable progress has been made and centres are starting to notice a difference which has seen improved efficiencies, less bureaucracy and a more cost effective service all round.

The JCQ consists of AQA, City & Guilds, CCEA Edexcel, OCR, SQA and WJEC/CBAC, the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK, offering GCSE, GCE, GNVQ, AEA, Entry Level, Vocational and vocationally-related qualifications. For more information about the work of the JCQ visit <http://www.jcq.org.uk>.

## 01. BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO SHARE DATA

JCQ awarding bodies are working with Government, the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) programme and other agencies to ensure that it will be possible to track achievements by a single learner across all awarding bodies.

This will allow consortia to choose the most appropriate Diploma component qualifications for their learners from different awarding bodies. The shared systems to do this are being built and will be piloted from September 2008.

## 02. COMMON CENTRE NUMBERS

JCQ members operate a system of shared National Centre Numbers (NCNs). These allow centres to quote a single, unique number in all transactions, regardless of the awarding body.

A major data cleansing exercise was undertaken by the awarding bodies to remove unnecessary duplication of numbers. This has resulted in making available a whole batch of new numbers. Consequently, examination officers processing data from different sites can now benefit from greater flexibility when using NCNs.



### 03. UNIQUE LEARNER NUMBERS

JCQ awarding bodies are working with the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) programme to ensure that the Unique Learner Number (ULN) will be suitable for sharing information on learner achievements. The ULN was successfully trialled in centres in 2007.

JCQ awarding bodies will start to use the ULNs from September 2008 for Diploma candidates. This is a major first step towards much simpler learner management information requirements in colleges and facilitates more flexible credit accumulation.

## 04. COMMON CENTRE APPROVAL CRITERIA (VERIFIED QUALIFICATIONS)

JCQ awarding bodies have implemented a system of common centre approval criteria for externally verified qualifications. This means that a college or provider already approved by one Joint Council awarding body for an NVQ is eligible for fast-track approval from another Joint Council awarding body simply by providing evidence of the earlier approval and satisfactory performance. The common centre approval criteria have resulted in reduced bureaucracy, less paperwork and a much quicker process time for centres.

## 05. COMMON EXTERNAL VERIFIER REPORTING

With common questions on the external verifier report forms across OCR, Edexcel and City & Guilds, it is now easier for centres working with two or more of the JCQ awarding bodies involved, to prepare for their external verifier visits. The questions are based on the Centre Approval Criteria from the 'QCA NVQ Code of Practice 2006' so they can be clearly cross referenced.

Having common questions means centres will become familiar with the criteria and evidence requirements. The report form is available on-line from most awarding bodies which will help to ensure speedy reporting mechanisms and ease of access for centres and awarding bodies.



## 06. COMMON INVIGILATION REQUIREMENTS

A 'proof of concept' document bringing together the requirements of the Good Practice Guide for vocational qualifications and the Instructions for conducting examinations in general qualifications was developed and launched in September 2007.

Centres entering either general or vocational qualifications with any JCQ awarding body now have a single set of requirements, which makes it easier for examination officers as there is commonality amongst awarding bodies.

## 07. COMMON INSPECTION REGIME FOR EXAMINATIONS

AQA currently provides a single, co-ordinated system for monitoring the conduct of general qualification examinations on behalf of all JCQ members and WJEC provides a similar system on behalf of all JCQ members in Wales.

The remit of the JCQ Centre Inspection Service has been extended to cover both general and vocational qualifications. Inspectors have been appointed so that, where appropriate, a single visit covering both general and vocational qualifications can be undertaken.

Centres entering examined general and vocational qualifications and online assessments with more than one of the JCQ awarding bodies should see the number of monitoring visits reduced.

## 08.COMMON ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

A good practice guide on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration procedures for vocational qualifications was developed jointly by the JCQ and the Federation of Awarding Bodies in November 2005.

The JCQ, the regulators for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, as well as other stakeholders have been working together to produce a regulation booklet covering reasonable adjustments and special consideration. The 2008/9 edition of the JCQ Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations will be extended to cover the qualifications awarded by all JCQ awarding bodies.

The Eight Pledges is a joint project sponsored by JCQ, involving AQA, City & Guilds, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC/CBAC.

JCQ, Veritas House,  
125 Finsbury Pavement,  
London EC2A 1NQ  
Tel: 020 7638 4135  
Email: [info@jcq.org.uk](mailto:info@jcq.org.uk)  
Website: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)