

An employer's guide to plumbing qualifications

City & Guilds

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Qualified staff are important in any industry, and plumbing is no exception. This is an industry where a professional reputation is vital, but it is hard to gain and easy to lose. You can help to ensure your reputation by enabling your staff to take nationally recognised qualifications.

City & Guilds is the UK's leading provider of vocational qualifications. We have joined forces with the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors and the Joint Industry Board for Plumbing Mechanical Engineering Services (England and Wales) to develop a range of plumbing qualifications that is up-to-date and comprehensive, providing your staff with all the knowledge and skills they will need to do a good job.

Which qualifications are available in this area?

Our range includes:

Level 2 Certificate in Basic Plumbing Studies

This is suitable for those with some knowledge or prior experience, who are looking for formal training prior to taking an NVQ. They will learn about key plumbing principles and the theory of areas such as hot and cold water systems, electrical supply and safety. Assessment is via multiple choice exams and practical tests.

Level 2 NVQ in Plumbing

Candidates will need to demonstrate their competence in six mandatory areas:

- Maintain safe working environment when undertaking plumbing activities
- Maintain effective plumbing working relationships
- Contribute to the improvement of the plumbing work environment
- Install non-complex plumbing systems and components
- Decommission non-complex plumbing systems
- Maintain non-complex plumbing systems and components

Level 3 Certificate in Plumbing Studies

This is suitable for experienced staff looking to move on to the next level or prepare for a level 3 NVQ. They will learn about systems planning; complex cold water, domestic hot water and sanitation systems; central heating systems; domestic gas supply systems; and improving business products and services. Assessment is by multiple choice question papers and practical tasks.

Level 3 NVQ in Plumbing

Candidates will need to demonstrate their competences in the first two units of the level 2 NVQ plus:

- Contribute to the improvement of plumbing business products and services
- Plan complex domestic plumbing work activities
- Install complex domestic plumbing systems and components
- Commission and decommission complex domestic plumbing systems

- Service and maintain complex domestic plumbing systems and components

At this level there are various optional routes which can then be taken to reflect particular requirements of candidates' job roles. For more details on the optional pathways, please contact your nearest centre

Plumbing qualifications and Modern Apprenticeships

Modern Apprenticeships are a key part of the government's strategy for improving the skills of the workforce. They combine theory (Technical Certificates) with practice (NVQs) and Key Skills awards (communication, problem solving etc) to provide a comprehensive training programme. Additional funding is available from government sources to support Modern Apprenticeships.

Modern Apprenticeships come in two levels, Foundation and Advanced. Our level two awards can form part of a Foundation, and our level three awards can form part of an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship. For more details, please contact your nearest centre or see 'An employer's guide to Modern Apprenticeships', available from our website or Customer Relations team.

How are these qualifications delivered?

NVQs are assessed in the workplace by observation. A qualified assessor will watch your staff while they work, and grade their skills. If they can prove their competence, then they pass. For more details, please see 'An employer's guide to NVQs' available from our website or Customer Relations team.

The other awards will all involve some time in the classroom, but your centre may be able to provide flexible modes of study to keep lost working hours to a minimum.

What support is available?

Your centre (college or training provider) will be provided with a range of support services by us. This will enable them to provide you and your staff with everything you will need.

Are there any other qualifications that may be of interest?

If you need your staff to have more specific skills, you may want to consider the award below.

Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Heating and Ventilating Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Domestic Natural Gas Installation and Maintenance Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Technical Services

What's the next step?

If you are an existing approved centre, you will need to complete a scheme approval form (SAP). If you are not an approved centre and would like to become one, please contact your nearest City & Guilds office who will guide you through the approval process.

Key points

- Nationally recognised awards
- Blend theory and work-based learning
- Learners able to adapt skills for heating and ventilation
- Meet all legal requirements to work with gas and plumbing installations

How can I find out more?

You can find out more about these awards from your nearest approved centre. Please contact our customer relations team or log on to our website to find your nearest one.

City & Guilds

1 Giltspur Street

London

EC1A 9DD

T +44 (0)20 7294 2800

F +44 (0)20 7294 2405

enquiry@city-and-guilds.co.uk

www.city-and-guilds.co.uk

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1 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DD Telephone 020 7294 2468

Facsimile 020 7294 2400 E-mail enquiry@city-and-guilds.co.uk

Website <http://www.city-and-guilds.co.uk>

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