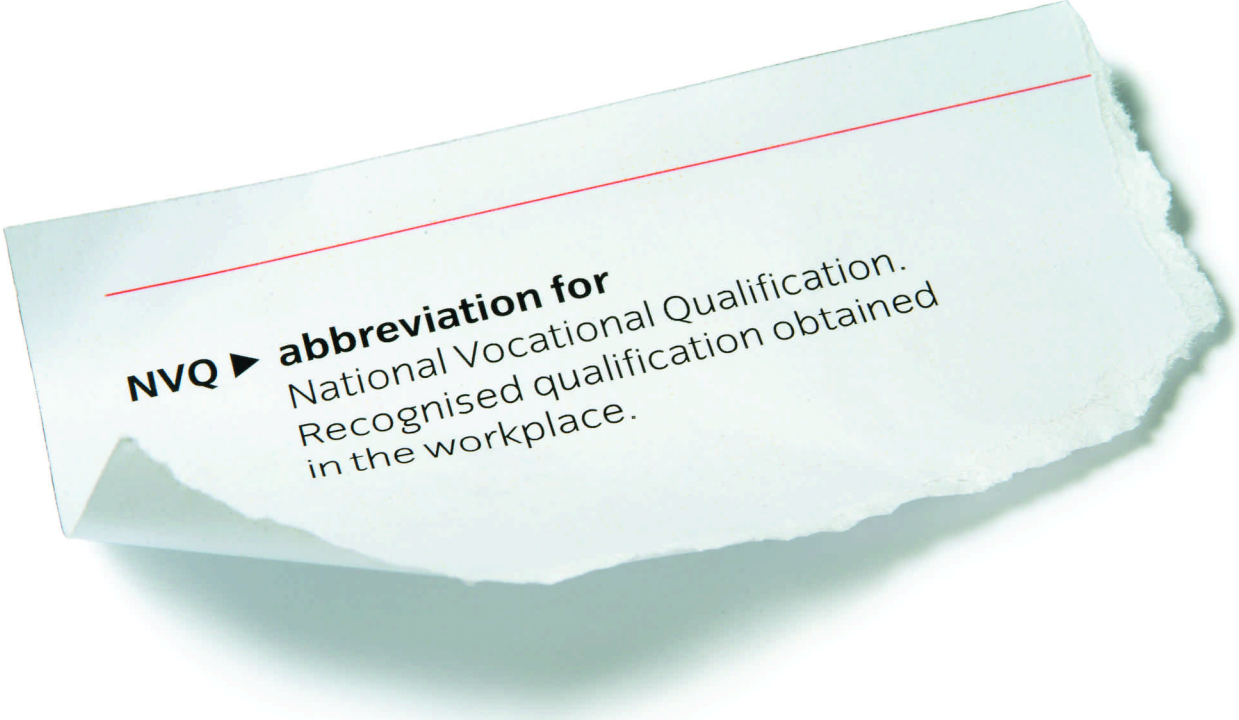


# An employer's guide to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)



**NVQ** ► **abbreviation for**  
National Vocational Qualification.  
Recognised qualification obtained  
in the workplace.

# An employer's guide to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

Good people have always been hard to find, but they will always be hard to do without. As an employer, you need to ensure that your employees have the skills and abilities that they need to get the job done. Depending upon your industry, there may also be a minimum standard that your staff must meet to be employed by you.

## What is an NVQ?

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are awards which your employees can take while they work: their performance in their day to day work is what determines whether they pass or fail. In order to gain an NVQ, a candidate must provide prove and/or demonstrate to their assessor that they have certain competencies.

NVQs are available in practical every occupational area. City & Guilds current range of NVQs includes those from areas as diverse as engineering and construction, health and social care, business and associated professions, and service industries such hairdressing and travel. They are suitable for those of all ages, backgrounds, and can be taken by anyone from entry level staff to senior managers.

## What are the benefits for employers?

NVQs are designed in partnership with industry bodies, sector skills councils, experienced professionals and, of course, employers. This ensures that they reflect the latest trends in your industry and provide your employees with the skills you really want. They have also been shown to significantly improve staff retention, motivation and productivity, and provide a convenient framework for assessing staff competency.

In addition, all NVQs are part of the National Qualifications Framework, which means two things: firstly, funding will be available from government sources to help with training costs and secondly, the awards have all been accredited by the regulatory body, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and the level and content of the award is approved by them.

## How are NVQs structured?

NVQs are made up of mandatory and optional units. Mandatory units must be taken by all candidates and focus upon general areas, which all employees in a particular area will need. Optional units can then be chosen by you or your employee to match their job role and speciality. The ratio of mandatory and optional units varies from award to award.

## Who is involved?

This is where it can get a little confusing. Some of the commonplace jargon of NVQs is explained here.

- **Candidates** are those taking the qualification - your employees.
- **Centres** are approved by us to offer NVQs. You can either become a centre in your own right, or choose to work with an existing one, which may be a local college or training provider.
- **Assessors** are appointed by approved centres, and must themselves be qualified. These are the people who observe the candidates and rate their abilities and competence.

- **Internal verifiers** are appointed by centres to ensure that the assessors carry out their work consistently and properly, and ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly.

- **External verifiers** are appointed by us to carry out periodic inspections of centres. However, their role is much broader than this, as they provide a link through which centres and/or employers can feedback to us.

## Why choose City & Guilds?

We are the UK's leading provider of vocational qualifications, and have been since 1878. We've always been at the forefront of educational innovation and have recently introduced a number of initiatives to make NVQs easier to administer, among these are Smartscreen, GOLLA and Quickstep NVQ. Your nearest regional office can provide you with more information on each.

In addition, we have the widest range of NVQs by some distance, and can offer you a number of other types of qualification into the bargain. Overall we have over 500 awards currently available.

## Is there an NVQ in my area?

Probably. Go to our website [www.city-and-guilds.co.uk](http://www.city-and-guilds.co.uk) and click on 'where to study'. This page will allow you to search for NVQs and other qualifications in your field.

## How can I offer NVQs to my employees?

You can offer NVQs to your employees either in partnership with a City & Guilds approved centre, or you can become an approved centre in your own right.

## How do I find out more?

You can find out more by contacting your nearest City & Guilds office. Log on to our website to find the location of your nearest one, or contact our Customer Relations team at:

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## Key points

- Structured, up-to-date and relevant staff training.
- Improved employee retention, motivation and productivity
- Funding available to help with training costs
- Can help you meet regulatory requirements
- City & Guilds is the UK's leading provider of vocational qualification