Professional Recognition Awards (9200)

Frequently asked questions

Contents

1. How long a course is required?

City & Guilds does not prescribe any particular course of learning. Many organisations link achievement of a qualification to an in-house programme of professional development. That development is likely to extend over a substantial period of time, but achievement is decided by covering all of the standard statements.

2. What qualifications are required to become a candidate?

There are no specified entry qualifications. Centres must ensure that prospective candidates have a role and responsibilities that reflect the level of the qualification selected. Also, centres must establish whether candidates need support in order to complete.

3. Should I start at the lowest level and work upwards?

It is important to tackle a qualification that reflects your role and responsibilities. Some candidates start out at a lower level qualification and progress as their responsibilities grow over the years, whereas others start at Membership level because their job is quite strategic.

4. What do I (the candidate) need to do?

You need to collect and assemble evidence which demonstrates how you have met the standards – specific examples taken from various actions or several aspects from one project.

5. How will I be assessed?

Assessment involves comparison of evidence arising from your job against written standards. This will be done by a member of the centre team. Your evidence may be either a work project, or a portfolio. City & Guilds does not require that you will be observed, but you may need to undertake a professional discussion, or provide reflections relating to your role.

6. Why should my company back employees to achieve these qualifications?

The qualifications provide a formal structure for recognising essential professional development. Recognition of personal achievements is a source of motivation for many people. City & Guilds is the leading vocational awarding organisation in the United Kingdom and operates in many other countries. These qualifications have an established record for supporting career progression.

7. Do I have to be employed in order undertake a qualification?

It is essential that you undertake a role of sufficient breadth and responsibility, but this does not need to be in paid employment. Some candidates operate in the voluntary sector.

8. Do I have to work in an organisation?

Most candidates do work in an organisation. However, it is possible for a person who is self employed to achieve a qualification as long as they undertake a role that is in keeping with the standard statements.

9. What is evidence?

Evidence is anything that shows that a candidate works in accordance with the standards statements, for example:

- a reflective account provided by a candidate, which may be written or spoken
- a performance review, or appraisal
- a project report
- an expert witness statement.

Candidates are strongly recommended to select a limited amount of high quality evidence that directly links their work to a standard, or standards. It is not necessary to produce multiple cases.

10. What will my portfolio look like?

It has to be concise.

Portfolios will vary according to the nature of their work, and whether they follow the project, or portfolio route. It is important that the contents be well organised and clearly linked to the standards. Whilst multiple pieces of evidence are not necessary for each standard, effective evidence usually involves a degree of corroboration. For example, a work project will often be supported by an expert witness statement.

Portfolios and assignments may be electronic, or virtual. Sensitive material may be retained within an organisation as long as it is available for assessment and quality assurance.

11. Do I need to provide evidence for each standard statement?

There must be evidence to address each standard. A carefully planned piece of evidence will normally address all of the statements that relate to a standard.

12. What happens if I cannot provide evidence for a standard statement?

Remember that your own written or spoken comments may constitute evidence, as long as they address a statement in sufficient depth.

13. When I have achieved my qualification will I be able to use it for different jobs?

The competencies described in each qualification are generic. Whilst the content of a role will vary from one sector to another, you are likely to find that the competencies are valued in many different organisations.

14. How do I know that my qualification will be worthwhile?

City & Guilds is an internationally known awarding organisation that has led vocational education and training in the United Kingdom for more than 100 years. These qualifications are made under out Royal Charter (1900) in a similar way to the degrees conferred by universities.

The standards have been defined through consultations with major organisations in different economic sectors to ensure that the qualifications are valued widely in many organisations and nations. Based on generic statements derived from the views of employers the qualifications describe competencies that apply in a wide range of occupations.

15. Are there any particular learning resources that are required?

City & Guilds does not specify essential resources. In-house programmes will normally involve materials produced for organisational purposes. City & Guilds has an e-learning platform called Learning Assistant that may be used by centres. Some centres provide their own resources that may be available on-line.

16. Are the qualifications funded?

No, they are not funded.

17. Do we need to provide assignments for our candidates?

Some centres do this to support the development of their candidates, but it is not essential.

18. Is quality assurance the same as verification?

Each candidate's evidence must be assessed as addressing the standard statements. Verification is the next step, checking the assessment. Each centre must operate a quality assurance process to ensure that assessment is reliable, with distinct and separate assessment and verification procedures.

19. Is it possible for my centre to retain our existing quality assurance system when we operate the qualifications?

If the quality assurance system is capable of ensuring that qualifications are achieved appropriately, then it is unlikely that additional procedures will be needed. This will be determined by our representative. City & Guilds provides materials and support to enable centres to develop their quality system where necessary.

20. Will our assessors be required to achieve an assessor qualification (e.g. City & Guilds 6317, Assessment and Quality Assurance)?

All staff who internally quality assure these awards must:

- have recent relevant experience in the specific area they will be quality assuring;
- be technically competent in the area for which they are quality assuring; and
- hold, or be working towards, the relevant Internal Quality Assurer (D/V/ TAQA) units for their role in quality assuring these qualifications, or meet the relevant experience requirements outlined above.

21. What should we do if we encounter problems interpreting standard statements?

City & Guilds provides several sources of information. Your first point of contact will be the External Quality Assurer (formerly EV) allocated to your centre. A second contact is the Portfolio Advisor for these qualifications – details available from your local City & Guilds office. Thirdly, you may contact the Customer Support service at headquarters (0207 294 2468 and ask for Customer Support).

22. If there is no prescribed course, how do we know what to teach to our candidates?

In the main, any learning should be planned according to the development needs of the individual and role / future role. This process depends on effective initial assessment and guidance.

23. How should we assess candidates?

In general, assessors should seek to assess holistically i.e. look at the overall picture provided by each item of evidence, and then compare this with the statements that define each standard. If a candidate has worked effectively and planned their evidence well, it is likely that one or more standards will be met. Assessors should use alternative assessment / evidence (e.g. professional discussion, or viva) to corroborate evidence and explore areas where evidence is not entirely clear. Evidence is sufficient when all standard statements are met. It is valid when the statement verbs are directly addressed. Authenticity is established by professional discussion, or similar means.

24. Do our assessors need to hold specific qualifications?

All staff who assess these qualifications must:

- have recent relevant experience in the specific area they will be assessing;
- be technically competent in the area for which they are delivering training and/or have experience of providing training;
- hold, or be working towards, the relevant Assessor/ (D/A/TAQA) units for their role in delivering; assessing and verifying these qualifications; or meet the relevant experience requirements outlined above.

25. Can we claim a certificate as soon as someone is assessed?

This will depend on the status assigned to your centre. After approval a centre must undergo external quality sampling before certificates may be claimed. If the centre is found to be compliant, then Direct Claims Status (DCS) will normally be allocated. Centres which have DCS may claim certificates whenever evidence has been assessed and quality assured.

26. Are candidates from different organisations required to produce the same evidence?

Whilst the pattern of evidence may be fairly similar from one organisation to another, this is not a requirement. Evidence should reflect the candidate and the role that they perform. Important is attached to the use of assessment methods and evidence that reflect the characteristics and needs of individuals (see City & Guilds Access to assessment and qualifications).

27. What should we do with portfolios when candidates have completed?

Evidence is the property of the individual candidate and may be returned to them. However, it is essential that all evidence is available for external quality assurance. Different approaches to access to evidence are permitted as long as they are reliable. Increasing numbers of centres use electronic methods for evidence submission and assessment. Such approaches provide access and security. Learning Assistant provides a good platform for electronic evidence.

It is not necessary to maintain access to evidence after a batch as been sampled by the EQA, although centre records must be retained (assessment and quality assurance)

28. Do we need to retain candidate evidence after certificates have been claimed?

Evidence is the property of the individual candidate and does not need to be kept by the centre. However, it must be available when external quality assurance sampling takes place. After successful sampling centres should return evidence to candidates, or remove it from their system. However, assessment and quality assurance records must be retained. Increasingly, centres are using electronic evidence submission. This is acceptable and can provide ready access to evidence and records. Learning Assistant is an approved electronic system that is approved by City & Guilds.

29. Which documents should a centre retain?

A full and detailed list of the documents a centre is required to retain, and for how long, can be found in the document **Supporting Customer Excellence Centre Manual**, page 45.