



St Matthew Academy

NCFE QUALIFICATIONS

Policies

Our motto is 'Let your light shine'. It is taken from St Matthew's Gospel and captures our belief in the uniqueness of each individual. Our aim is to ensure that the talents and strengths of each pupil are encouraged, developed and celebrated

Successful, confident learners

High expectations, outstanding achievements

Inclusive, caring, Catholic community

Nurturing talent, cultivating ambition

Excellence for all

Date of Approval	Autumn 2020
Review Date	Autumn 2021

Key staff involved in these policies

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Ms M Baldwin
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader with oversight of exams administration)	Ms S Wickliffe
Exams officer	Ms F Walker
SENCo	Mr H Vyas
Assessor	Ms M Green
Internal Quality Assessor	Mr L Simmons
Quality Assurance Coordinator	Ms E Thurston

The policies contained in this document are specific to NCFE qualifications.

Policies included are:

- Appeals and complaints process
- Fair Access of Assessment
- Centre Quality Assurance Procedure
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

This document should be read in conjunction with the St Matthew Academy:

- Access Arrangements (Exams) Policy
- Complaints & Appeals (Exam) Procedures
- Data Protection (Exams) Policy
- Emergency Evacuation (Exams) Policy
- Equalities (Exams) Policy
- Exam Contingency Plan
- Exams Archiving Policy
- Exams Policy
- Internal Appeals (Exams) Policy
- Non-examination Assessments Policy
- Special Considerations (Exams) Policy
- Word Processor (Exams) Policy

Contents

Key staff involved in these policies	2
Centre statement	4
Document control of centre aims, policies and strategy	4
Roles and responsibilities.....	4
Qualifications for centre staff	6
Appeals and complaints process.....	6
Appeals.....	6
Complaints	6
Fair access of assessment	7
Access to assessment and equality of opportunity	7
Pupils with special needs / additional learning needs	7
Fairness in assessment and quality assurance.....	8
Centre Quality Assurance procedure.....	8
Assessment staff	8
Standardisation sessions and exercises	9
External verifier visits and certification	9
Evaluation and review policy	9
Centre communication	10
Occupational expertise requirements: Internal Quality Assessors/Quality Assurance Coordinator	10
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Policy.....	11
Defining Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).....	11
Defining Recognition of Prior Learning.....	11
Implementation of RPL and CAT for pupils.....	11

Centre statement

In delivery of the V-CERT qualification, the aim of St Matthew Academy is:

- To establish 'excellence for all' in accordance with the requirements of the S/NVQ Code of Practice (QCA 2006). This has been superseded by awarding organisation guidance but we remain committed to the core principles. We also work within The Regulatory Arrangements for Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual)
- Ensure that the highest quality of teaching and assessment is provided for our pupils and to ensure that standards of teaching and assessment practice are of the highest quality achievable.

Our objectives will be achieved by:

- Ensuring equality of opportunity to all staff to continuously develop and aspire to achieve their job function
- Ensuring the Centre has a sufficient number of qualified assessors and internal quality assessors to support the activity of the Centre
- Ensuring attendance at regular assessor and quality assurance team meetings to discuss best practice in assessment and ensure standardisation and consistency in the interpretation and delivery of standards and assessment decisions
- Providing adequate resources in terms of equipment, accommodation and Centre approved documentation
- Ensuring all members of the assessment team have opportunities to identify and develop their training needs through a variety of methods.

Document control of centre aims, policies and strategy

St Matthew Academy will:

- Update relevant procedures to meet the Awarding Organisation requirements for their relative area of learning
- Issue copies of all relevant procedures and assessment forms to assessors / internal quality assessors
- On an annual basis, review with the internal quality assurance team, all current procedures and documentation to ensure that they are effective and in line with current Awarding Organisation and Centre requirements. Any resulting decisions regarding changes will be recorded and passed on
- Where any procedure, form or record is updated or amended, ensure that all assessors are familiar with these changes that a copy of all relevant updated or amended procedures, forms or records are issued to each assessor
- Ensure that sampling and other methods of internal quality assurance provide evidence that all assessment staff are complying with procedures and policies
- Ensure that all documentation / electronic information in relation to assessment and internal quality assurance is stored securely and made available only to appropriate personnel
- Ensure that any material changes which affect the assessment or internal quality assurance of the qualification are notified to the Awarding organisation, for example, staff changes (The Awarding organisation must be informed prior to a staff member commencing in the role, for validation of occupational competence. Copies of CV's and relevant certificates must be forwarded to the Awarding organisation external verifier)
- Maintain records of Certification of Pupils which shall be retained securely for a minimum period of 6 years
- Record and maintain copies of induction records of all Assessors
- Record and evaluate all Continuous professional development events that are delivered by the Academy.

Roles and responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Business Plan
- Marketing Strategy
- Contract Management / Recruitment
- Ensure there are sufficient qualified and occupationally competent assessors
- Ensure that documentation meets Awarding Body requirements
- Liaison with awarding organisation - accounts and administration

- Sales / Client / Account Management
- Internal and external reporting
- Ensure that training needs of centre staff are identified and that provision is made to meet those needs.

Examination Officer

- Set up of pupil user accounts
- Maintain centre records about assessors' details and pupils' progress
- Inform the awarding organisation of changes to Centre staff

Quality Assurance Coordinator

- Help desk support (technical / usability level)
- Assessor / Internal Quality Assessor task assignment

Internal Quality Assessor (IQA) /Quality Assurance Coordinator

The IQA/ quality assurance coordinator will be the main point of contact for the company and will have overall responsibility for the qualification delivery team and internal quality assurance.

- They will be a highly experienced member of staff, with substantial experience of Centre administration, and a teaching qualification with QTS
- The internal quality assessor/ quality assurance coordinator will have sufficient standing within the Academy to gain access to and request financial and human resources, thereby maintaining the quality assurance of the qualification
- Manages staff within their occupational area
- Conducts standardisation meetings and reviews with staff
- Liaises with Head of Centre for the initial recruitment of potential new Assessors
- Complete the Complaints and Appeals process as indicated by the examination officer/quality assurance coordinator
- Continuously improves provision in line with National standards
- Ensures that all completions are administered correctly
- Ensure effective operation of the appeals process
- Ensure that the Equal Opportunities and Access policy is applied to all aspects of centre coordination.
- Ensuring that assessors are competent in the theory and practice of competence-based vocational qualifications
- Ensuring continuous professional development records are maintained by the team
- Providing feedback to the External Verifier on the effectiveness of assessment
- Ensuring that action points agreed with the Awarding Body External Verifier are implemented.
- Evaluate and develop all centre systems, materials and documentation in conjunction with examination officer/quality assurance coordinator
- Ensuring that all appropriate assessment and quality assurance documentation, records and personnel are available for the External Verifier visit
- Maintain good communication links with centre staff
- Keep information confidential and secure
- Providing support and advice to assessors and other staff involved with the pupil's development
- Ensuring assessors are applying the qualification requirements by observing practice, sampling assessment and internally verifying assessment decisions
- Providing prompt feedback to assessors
- Taking part in standardisation exercises to ensure consistency of own practice and judgements with other internal quality assessors
- Contributing to the evaluation of assessment and quality assurance procedures, incorporating feedback from pupil voice and learner reviews
- Monitoring and reviewing pupil achievements in relation to access to fair assessment
- Arranging the checking and countersigning process
- Completing and signing the Certification Record Forms prior to submission to the Awarding Body.

- Development of initial technology / content
- Review of technical processes / procedures to support centre requirements.
- Data Management / Back up process
- Maintaining access control to staff assessment documentation and pupil work
- Development of new features based on centre feedback

Assessors

- Follow assessment procedures.
- Provide consistent and accurate assessment decisions, planning and feedback to pupils.
- Be aware of and follow the requirements of the appeals procedure.
- Maintain their occupational competence and update knowledge / skills to ensure robust delivery of qualifications.
- Liaise with the IQA to ensure high standards are maintained.
- Respond to feedback from the IQA, external verifier and from pupil voice/learner reviews.

Pupils

- Agree a completion programme with their assessor
- Carry out all actions agreed with their assessor / tutor / IAQ within agreed timescales
- Keep their own copies of internally assessed synoptic projects
- Take overall responsibility for the successful completion of the award.

Qualifications for centre staff

- Assessors – Qualified Teacher with QTS and a substantial interest in or other qualification for the subject they are delivering or a competent NQT with a substantial interest in or other qualification for the subject they are delivering
- Internal Quality Assessor - Qualified Teacher with QTS with an interest in or other qualification for the subject they are assessing.

Appeals and complaints process

Appeals

The following procedure applies to all pupils who feel that they have a legitimate reason to appeal against any decision made by staff delivering/assessing the qualification

Action the pupil must take:

- Discuss with the internal quality assessor the nature of the issue being raised
- If the matter cannot be resolved at this level pupil should follow the centre's Internal Appeals (Exams) Policy¹
- A successful appeal does not mean that the pupil is competent; a re-assessment may be needed to prove this
- Records of appeal will be kept in the appeals log

Complaints

St Matthew Academy expect all pupils to have a positive experience, but recognise that, at times, this may not be the result. St Matthew Academy expects all reasonable steps to be taken to ensure that pupils are dealt with, with courtesy, respect and professionalism at all times. If the pupil is not satisfied, this should be discussed at the earliest opportunity to prevent the situation escalating. If, after an informal discussion with their assessor / tutor or their internal quality assessor, the pupil wishes to make a formal complaint, this must be done, in accordance

¹ The internal appeals (exams) policy can be found on the academy website

with the centres Complaints and Appeals (Exams) Policy²

If the pupil remains unsatisfied with the decision at this stage and this procedure has been exhausted, then the pupil can contact the awarding organisation. The awarding organisation should only be contacted when this procedure is fully exhausted.

Fair access of assessment

This section contains a statement of St Matthew Academy's policy for:

- Access to equality of opportunity in the assessment process
- Pupils with special needs / additional learning needs
- Fairness in assessment and quality assurance.

Access to assessment and equality of opportunity

St Matthew Academy will ensure that pupils have access to assessment for qualifications regardless of their sex, sexuality, age, religion, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin or disability.

The assessment process must be free from any barriers which unnecessarily restrict access. In particular the Examination Officer/Quality Assurance Coordinator must ensure that:

- Any pupils with additional/special support needs are given the opportunity to discuss ways of:
 - providing solutions to problems they feel are related to access and other issues and have the potential to impede their demonstration of competence. Wherever possible the necessary resources are made available to facilitate the assessment of these pupils
 - configuring the online system to suit their individual access requirements.
- Assessment decisions are free from discrimination on any grounds other than competence.

Pupils with special needs / additional learning needs

Internal quality assessor must ensure that access to assessment is available to all pupils, and the assessment system must allow them to demonstrate their competence / knowledge in the most appropriate way.

To enable access to assessment, there needs to be a reasonable amount of flexibility in considering alternative methods of assessment satisfaction.

There may be pupils with particular special needs, such as those with a visual, hearing or mobility impairment, or learning difficulty, which need to use alternative means of providing evidence. In these cases, there is a need to adopt different approaches to assessing particular elements of competence at all times, however, the proposed assessment methods must be genuine alternatives ensuring that the evidence collected is of equal quality and rigor to that required of other pupils. The requirements of the standards cannot be compromised.

Any aids can be used in assessment that could reasonably be employed in a job, such as a word processor for pupils with writing or learning difficulties.

If there are any concerns about the use of alternative assessment methods the Examination Officer/Quality Assurance Coordinator must be consulted and, if need be, the matter will be referred to the External Verifier.

Full details of the provisions for SEND pupils can be found in the centres Access Arrangements (Exams) Policy, Equalities (Exams) Policy and Work Processor (Exams) Policy³

² The Complaints and Appeals (Exams) Policy can be found of the academy website

³ These policies can be found on the academy website

Fairness in assessment and quality assurance

Part of the internal quality assessor's role is to guide and support assessors to ensure judgements relating to assessments are fair, consistent and free from any bias. Fairness is making sure that:

- The system has not asked the pupil to do things which are not required by the qualification
- Pupils are carrying out tasks of equal difficulty in relation to the same unit
- The methods of assessment used for each pupil offer equal rigor, while providing valid and reliable assessment
- Each pupil has covered all the requirements of the qualification
- Assessment opportunities do not discriminate against individuals or groups of pupils.

Centre Quality Assurance procedure

All internal quality assurance activities at St Matthew Academy will follow this procedure. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all assessment and internal quality assurance activities are undertaken in a way which meets the requirements of the Awarding Organisation and National Occupational Standards. Internal quality assessors must not verify their own work and the system will not allow this to occur.

The Quality Assurance Coordinator is responsible for ensuring all internal quality assessors are trained, competent and qualified, maintaining, monitoring and reviewing arrangements for processing internal quality assurance information and providing confirmation to Awarding organisations that internal quality assurance practices are to national occupational standards.

- St Matthew Academy recognises the role and responsibility for the internal quality assessor and allows sufficient time and resources for the activities to be undertaken effectively
- A nominated person usually the examinations officer/quality assurance coordinator has been nominated by St Matthew Academy to be responsible for operating, monitoring, reviewing and adapting Centre systems and internal quality assurance
- This person, works consistently with NCFE and national occupational standards and supports other internal quality assessors to meet qualification standards
- Each internal quality assessor must maintain a sampling plan detailing dates when sampling will take place
- Each qualification should be verified at least twice during the programme, including summative quality assurance and the sampling plan updated appropriately
- Decisions of newly qualified assessors will be 100% verified until the internal quality assessor is confident that work meets the national standards. 50% will be sampled following agreement with external verifier
- Where concerns on assessment decisions are identified by the internal quality assessor, additional quality assurance and support will take place until the quality assurer is confident the assessment decisions made by the assessor meet national standards
- Ensuring that the Centre's Quality Assurance procedures are consistently implemented.
- Managing and sampling internally assessed synoptic projects. For a new qualification or new Assessors, NCFE recommend around a 50% sample
- The IQA should not have taught the group of pupils that they are internal quality assessing
- The IQA must complete an internal QA Form for each piece of work sampled
- It is good practice for the IQA to 'observe' some lessons and to keep a record for the IQA file
- Keep all forms and record sheets to show to the External QA when they visit.

Assessment staff

The Internal Quality Assessor will:

- Ensure all assessors have sufficient relevant and current occupational competence and understand the national standards. All newly qualified assessors must have all decisions agreed and countersigned by an appropriately qualified and experienced assessor and have the level of support and mentoring required to enable them to make assessment decisions in a way which meet national standards

- Ensure that any training and development needs identified through the counter-signatory process will be recorded and reported to the Centre Manager
- Ensure all assessors have access to, and understand, copies of centre and Awarding body organisation paperwork, policies and procedures, along with full and up- to- date Awarding Body information
- Ensure all assessment and quality assurance staff attend and participate in standardisation exercises as a means of making consistent quality decisions.

Standardisation sessions and exercises

The Internal Quality Assessors will:

- Plan and record dates of standardisation and other meetings and activities to cover at least the next six months of assessment and internal quality assurance cycles
- Co- ordinate and ensure participation of regular standardisation exercises by each assessor
- Record and monitor feedback and action planning with assessor when training and development needs are identified.

External verifier visits and certification

The following procedure will detail what must happen before during and after an External Verifier visit.

The Internal Quality Assessor/Quality Assurance Coordinator must:

- Prepare for the external quality assurance visit in line with the Examinations Officer/Quality Assurance Coordinator
- Check that the planning schedule has been completed to date and all relevant items are available for the external verifier.
- Ensure that a certification record is completed for each pupil being put forward for certification
- Retain copies of these after issuing the originals to the external verifier
- Feedback to Awarding organisation information from the assessment team
- Make arrangements for external verifier visits and ensure that room and computer are available to access pupil work, records and internal quality assurance records are available for each visit
- Retain a copy of the feedback for the Centre file
- Receive and retain a verifier report form for each external verifier visit and ensure that any action arising out of the visit is disseminated to the team and taken by the dates indicated
- On receipt of certificates, ensure that these are passed to pupils and a record maintained.

Evaluation and review policy

Policies and procedures will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure the centre maintains the highest standard of quality assurance and meets the regulatory requirements of outside agencies.

- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating of policies will take place during an annual cycle, culminating in the final stage which is the centre policies and procedures evaluation - which will feed into the centre quality assurance circle
- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating, all aspects of delivery and management of Qualifications will take place on an ongoing basis i.e. pupil voice will be sought after induction, by the Internal quality assessor when interviewing the pupil and a summative review will take place
- St Matthew Academy will review trends in responses to the assessment questions. If any questions are identified as “problematic” for pupils, we will review against learning content and ensure there is no ambiguity, clarifying questions/content where appropriate
- The internal quality assessor will review learning modules against unit learning outcomes
- All members of staff will be encouraged to take part in this practice and documentation and systems will be available to ensure this takes place. Records of the process at each stage will be retained and filed.

Centre communication

All communication of relevance will be made in writing to all team members. Wherever possible, this will be made via electronic communication and receipts and records will be kept. Relevant communication topics will include:

- Alterations to policies / procedures
- Alterations to staff - roles / responsibilities and new staff
- Alterations to the systems
- New pupils / contracts
- Meeting notes
- Quality Assurance documentation

Continuous Professional Development of assessors

In order to be appointed and retained as an Assessor in a particular subject, individuals must demonstrate that they:

- Have current expertise in the subject relevant to the level of the Qualification they are seeking to assess
- Have a relevant teaching qualification
- Maintain a CPD record and keep themselves up to date with developments in their chosen subject.

Occupational expertise requirements: Internal Quality Assessors/Quality Assurance Coordinator

In order to be appointed and retained as an IQA, they must demonstrate that they:

- Are a highly competent and experienced member of staff
- Have some expertise in the subject relevant to the level of the Qualification they are seeking to assess
- Have a teaching qualification with QTS

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Policy

This policy combines the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Policy. CAT is the process of utilising learner units or qualifications that have previously been recognised and certified. RPL, in contrast, relates to learners providing evidence of prior learning that has not been formally acknowledged.

Defining Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

CAT should be considered as a separate process to RPL as CAT applies to learning that has been previously certified for a different regulated qualification or from a different Awarding Organisation on the same framework (RQF or QCF). This is to prevent a learner from having to unnecessarily repeat previous learning.

Where a learner has already achieved a unit with credit, we will recognise that prior learning and will allow the credit to be transferred onto a new qualification, provided that the units have the same Ofqual reference number.

Defining Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was formerly known as APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and is defined as 'a method of recognising previous learning or attainment to meet current requirement' or 'a method of assessment leading to the award of credit that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, behaviours, skills and understanding they already possess and so may not need to develop these through a course of learning'.

Implementation of RPL and CAT for pupils

When considering pupils for V-Cert qualifications, St Matthew Academy will:

- Take into consideration pupils previous academic achievements
- Administer all matters of RPL and CAT in accordance with NCFE's policy 'Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Policy'
- Seek guidance from the awarding body where required