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Monitoring of vocational qualifications (2004)

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Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
83 Piccadilly
London
W1J 8QA
www.qca.org.uk

Contents

Introduction	4
Post-accreditation monitoring of awarding bodies	7
Monitoring of Vocationally Related Qualifications using <i>The common code of practice 2000</i>	9
Monitoring of Other General qualifications using <i>The common code of practice 2000</i>	13
Risk-based monitoring of awarding bodies offering both National Vocational Qualifications and Vocationally Related Qualifications using <i>The common code of practice 2000</i>	17
Monitoring using <i>The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004</i>	21
Outcomes of monitoring	26
Appendix 1 Feedback from awarding bodies on post accreditation monitoring	28
Appendix 2 Summary of complaints	29
Appendix 3 Awarding bodies subject to monitoring	30
Appendix 4 Glossary	31
Appendix 5 Bibliography	34

Introduction

Qualifications are jointly regulated by the regulatory authorities: QCA (England), ACCAC (Wales) and CCEA (Northern Ireland). The regulatory authorities' monitoring teams are responsible for ensuring that the performance of awarding bodies delivering vocational qualifications meets the regulatory requirements for quality, rigour, fairness and consistency. This report outlines the nature and scope of the monitoring activities undertaken between January 2004 and January 2005 and identifies the main trends.

The regulatory authorities accredit and keep under review a range of qualifications in order to promote public confidence in them. All qualifications that meet the relevant criteria are accredited by the regulatory authorities and entered into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Awarding bodies are expected to regularly review the design and delivery of their own qualifications. More information on the regulatory authorities' accreditation processes and procedures can be found in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004* (<http://www.qca.org.uk/6944.html>).

The regulatory authorities also work with their funding agencies and relevant inspection agencies involved in assessing the quality of work-based learning. The various roles carried out by the different partners are illustrated in Figure 1.

The regulatory authorities monitor a sample of qualifications. Once a qualification has been accredited the monitoring teams undertake post-accreditation monitoring to ensure that the awarding body's systems and procedures are meeting the regulatory requirements in principle and to measure how effective they are in practice. If areas of the awarding body's delivery do not meet the required standard then accreditation conditions are imposed requiring corrective action. The monitoring teams are responsible for ensuring awarding bodies' compliance with these action plans.

In the monitoring programmes the regulatory authorities request access to awarding body data, staff and candidate information. These awarding bodies and their centres offered the post accreditation monitoring teams all possible assistance. After a post accreditation monitoring exercise awarding bodies are asked to provide comment on the work and how it was undertaken. This feedback helps the regulatory authorities review and improve their own monitoring arrangements.

There are three types of qualification included in the monitoring work reported here: National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) and Other General qualifications (OGs).

- NVQs are work-related, competence-based qualifications. They reflect the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively, and show that a candidate is competent in a particular area of work. NVQs were first introduced in the 1980s and since then they have been regularly monitored.
- VRQs serve a range of purposes in different occupational sectors and at different levels and vary in terms of size and assessment arrangements. These qualifications primarily prepare people for work by developing the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace.
- OGs are practical qualifications containing a graded examination as part of their assessment, such as those in dance, music and drama.

During 2004 over one million vocational qualifications were awarded.

(A levels and GCSEs, also monitored by the regulatory authorities, are reported on separately. The report on the performance of awarding bodies for general qualifications in 2004 can be read at <http://www.qca.org.uk/12895.html>.)

Figure 1

Post-accreditation monitoring of awarding bodies

At the end of 2004 there were 115 awarding bodies recognised by the regulatory authorities to offer vocational qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Awarding bodies are responsible for the quality of the qualifications they award and must comply with the requirements of the regulatory criteria.

In order to place more emphasis on awarding bodies' quality assurance arrangements and to create a greater transparency in regulation the regulatory authorities revised the existing criteria, *Arrangements for the statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2000*. From 1 September 2004, the revised criteria *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004* became operational. The period covered by this report therefore contains summaries of monitoring work using both the previous and the revised regulatory criteria.

The regulatory authorities have produced guidance for awarding bodies on the post-accreditation monitoring of vocational qualifications. Monitoring activities may include desk research to check the information published by awarding bodies, and fieldwork involving interviews, visits, telephone calls, questionnaires and surveys. Visits to awarding bodies and their centres are used to test out an awarding body's systems and procedures as they are used in practice.

Where an awarding body is judged as failing to meet the statutory criteria, the monitoring team notes any shortfall in performance as an accreditation condition. The number and nature of accreditation conditions are important indicators to the regulatory authorities in measuring an awarding body's success in meeting the criteria. They also provide feedback to the awarding body by identifying specific areas of their operations which require improvement.

All accreditation conditions result in awarding bodies developing action plans that are agreed with the regulatory authorities. These action plans provide a detailed list of activities designed to correct the noted shortfalls in performance. The awarding body must complete the list of activities within an agreed deadline. The regulatory authorities monitor awarding bodies to ensure that they comply with the action plans within the agreed timescales. Accreditation conditions are assigned deadlines corresponding to the level of risk they pose to the integrity of the qualifications and the interests of learners.

Information gained from formal complaints made by members of the public informs the work of the monitoring teams and is used to assist in planning future activity. Individual complaints are dealt with sensitively and confidentially. Occasionally immediate action is required to address issues.

The outcomes of monitoring and subsequent actions taken by awarding bodies are used by the regulatory authorities to inform decisions on re-accreditation of qualifications, or if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation. (See Appendix 7 in *The regulatory authorities' accreditation handbook*, <http://www.qca.org.uk/3558.html>.)

This report summarises the findings of 28 distinct monitoring activities on vocational qualifications in 17 occupational sectors. Judgments made by monitoring teams on the extent to which the regulatory criteria are being met have been aggregated to provide an overview on the quality of vocational awards. Rather than commenting on the performance of individual awarding bodies this report highlights overall trends in the delivery of vocational qualifications.

This report looks at the four main programmes of work undertaken by the monitoring teams in 2004. The first programme focused on 19 VRQ awarding bodies which had not been previously monitored.

The second looked at three OG awarding bodies, also being monitored for the first time. The third programme of work looked at two awarding bodies offering both NVQs and VRQs as part of a piece of work focused on follow-up activities.

Whereas the first three programmes of work used criteria from *The common code of practice 2000*, the relevant section of *Arrangements for the statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, the fourth programme, carried out on three awarding bodies offering VRQs and one awarding body offering NVQs, used *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004*.

Within this report good practice has been identified as percentage totals for compliance with the criteria. Areas requiring improvement have been identified as percentage totals for non-compliance.

Appendix 1 of this report summarises feedback received from awarding bodies on post accreditation monitoring. A brief summary of monitoring activities that address complaints is included in Appendix 2.

Monitoring of VRQs January 2004 – December 2004

All of the awarding bodies offering vocationally related qualifications in this programme of work are new to the NQF and have not been monitored before by the regulatory authorities. Some programmes of work were carried out jointly with ACCAC and on behalf of CCEA. Vocational awards are an expanding part of the educational sector; to date a total of 890,981 VRQ certificates has been awarded.

The focus of the programme was to review for the first time the systems and procedures in 19 awarding bodies in these key areas:

- Corporate governance;
- Resources and expertise
- Quality assurance of internal assessment
- Independent assessment
- Internal assessment
- Determining and reporting of results
- Registration and certification
- Customer service
- Equality and fair assessment
- Enquiries and appeals.

Summary of findings

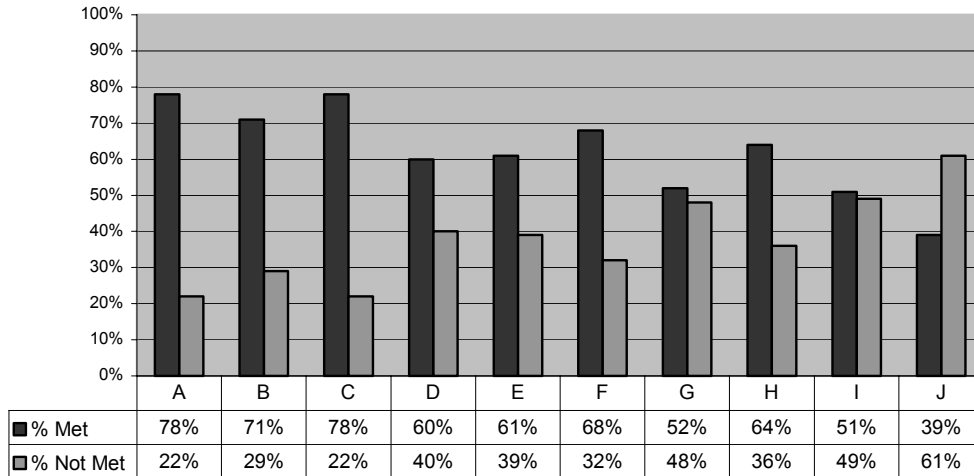
The 19 awarding bodies showed varied success in complying fully with the regulatory criteria. Corporate governance, assessment, resources and expertise, determining results and customer service were areas of strength in most awarding bodies monitored. The overall percentage total of compliance with the monitoring criteria in this programme of work is 64%.

Shortfalls in meeting the criteria are noted as accreditation conditions (see Glossary). A total of 340 accreditation conditions were identified as a result of this monitoring. This represents an average of 18 identified accreditation conditions per awarding body. Feedback from the monitoring programme has indicated areas that have yet to be fully implemented by awarding bodies. The published information on enquiries and appeals, and on the arrangements for monitoring and reporting annually on enquiries and appeals are the two areas where most of the awarding bodies monitored needed to strengthen their systems to meet fully the regulatory authorities' requirements.

Overall findings from the VRQ monitoring programme indicate that this area of work requires action to meet the criteria. With the follow-up activities the regulatory authorities are confident this does not pose a significant threat to the validity of the qualifications.

Figure 2 Post accreditation monitoring of VRQs

Total percentage of criteria met and not met within each of the ten sections of *The common code of practice 2000* for monitoring of VRQ qualifications.



Overall compliance with criteria 64%
Overall non-compliance with criteria 36%

Key	
A	Corporate governance
B	Resources and expertise
C	Quality assurance of internal assessment
D	Independent assessment
E	Internal assessment
F	Determining results
G	Registration and certification
H	Customer service
I	Equality of opportunity
J	Enquiries and appeals

Areas requiring improvement

Each section of *The common code of practice 2000* is made up of a number of individual criteria. A number of these criteria were not complied with by 50 per cent or more of awarding bodies. These criteria are listed below under the section headings.

Resources and expertise

- Procedures for appointing, training, deploying and monitoring specialists

Quality assurance of internal assessment

- Requiring centres to provide training for assessors
- Specifying the size and nature of a moderation sample

Registration and certification

- Having safeguards against mistaken claims for certificate

Customer service

- Publishing a customer service statement that meets the regulatory guidelines

Equality of opportunity

- Procedures for monitoring evaluating and reporting annually on special arrangements
- Providing information on how to apply for special consideration

Enquiries and appeals

- Publishing information on services available
- Involving an independent member in appeals decision
- Procedures for monitoring evaluating and reporting annually on enquiries and appeals

Examples of good practice

An analysis of the monitoring results shows clear examples of good practice. The parts of awarding body systems that were judged to be fully compliant with the statutory criteria are:

Corporate governance

- Maintaining a clear distinction between awarding body functions and other activities

Resources and expertise

- Ensuring that a minimum number of assessors is used consistent with high quality work

Quality assurance of independent assessment

- Maintaining the demands of independent assessment year on year

Quality assurance of internal assessment

- Approving alternative assessment arrangements
- Providing accurate and consistent assessment

Determining and reporting results

- Awarding personnel are expert in their area
- Providing relevant support for staff

Monitoring of Other General (OGs) qualifications October 2004 – November 2004

Criteria from *The common code of practice 2000* were used in the monitoring. These qualifications contain practical and theory assessments within a graded examination, for example in music or dance. The focus of the monitoring was to review for the first time the systems and procedures in three awarding bodies in these key areas:

- Corporate governance
- Resources and expertise
- Quality assurance of assessment
- Independent assessment
- Determining and reporting of results
- Registration and certification
- Customer service
- Equality and fair assessment
- Enquiries and appeals.

Summary of findings

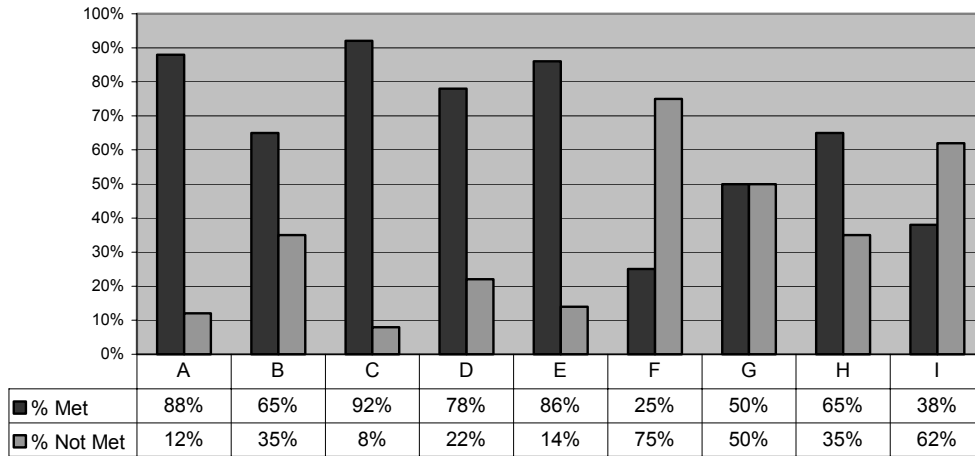
The three awarding bodies demonstrated success in complying with the majority of the regulatory criteria. Corporate governance, independent assessment, resources and expertise, and determining results were areas of strength in most awarding bodies monitored. The overall percentage total of compliance with the monitoring criteria in this programme of work is 71%.

A total of 51 accreditation conditions were identified as a result of this monitoring. This represents an average of 17 identified accreditation conditions per awarding body. Feedback from the monitoring programme has indicated areas of *The common code of practice* that have yet to be fully implemented by awarding bodies. Registration systems for centres and candidates, the published information on enquiries and appeals, and ensuring that written acknowledgements of appeals are sent are areas where systems need to be strengthened in order to meet fully the regulatory authorities' requirements.

Overall findings from this monitoring programme indicate that these awarding bodies adequately meet most of the criteria. With the follow-up activities the regulatory authorities are confident this does not pose a significant threat to the validity of the awards.

Figure 3 Post accreditation monitoring of OGs

Total Percentage of criteria met and not met within each of the nine sections of *The common code of practice 2000* for monitoring of Other General Qualifications



Overall compliance with criteria 71%
Overall non-compliance with criteria 29%

Key	
A	Corporate Governance
B	Resources and expertise
C	Quality assurance of assessment
D	Independent assessment
E	Determining and reporting of results
F	Registration and certification
G	Customer service
H	Equality of opportunity
I	Enquiries and appeals

Areas requiring improvement

Each section of *The common code of practice 2000* is made up of a number of individual criteria. A number of these criteria were not complied with by 50 per cent or more of awarding bodies. These criteria are listed below under the section headings.

Resources and expertise

- Clearer specifications of the knowledge, understanding, skills and competence required for assessors

Registration and certification

- Centre approval procedures
- Candidates receive a certificate promptly and in an approved format
- Safeguards against mistaken claims for certificates

Customer service

- Publishing a customer service statement which meets regulatory guidelines

Equality of opportunity

- Procedures to monitor evaluate and report annually on the use of special arrangements

Enquiries and appeals

- Publishing information on enquiries and appeals
- Involving an independent member in appeal decisions
- Sending a written acknowledgment of receipt of an appeal

Examples of good practice

An analysis of the monitoring results shows clear examples of good practice. The parts of awarding body systems that were judged to be fully compliant with the monitoring criteria are:

Corporate governance

- Clear management and governance arrangements
- Plan of qualification provision
- Maintaining a clear distinction between awarding body activities and other roles

Resources and expertise

- Procedures for appointing, training, deploying and monitoring specialists
- Having the minimum number of moderators consistent with high quality work

Quality assurance of assessment

- Having a high level of expertise in the intended area found in provision
- Having a single named point of accountability for the quality of assessment
- Retention of assessment material and records
- Appropriate assessment methods

Independent assessment

- Guidance and support for centres
- Accurate and consistent assessment

Determining and reporting of results

- Ensuring standards are maintained year to year
- Keeping comprehensive assessment records
- Ensuring staff are expert in their area
- Information for centres on how an overall award is derived from a candidate's performance

Equality of opportunity

- Arrangements for candidates with particular requirements
- Provision for candidates needing special consideration

Risk-based monitoring of awarding bodies offering both NVQs and VRQs January – March 2004

This programme of work involving two awarding bodies provides an example of how the regulatory authorities adapt their monitoring methods according to current knowledge of awarding bodies' systems. Both awarding bodies had been previously monitored. It was decided to carry out further monitoring focusing on high-level systems underpinning the awarding bodies' arrangements for delivering qualifications. The decision was taken as both the organisations had particular circumstances requiring scrutiny.

One organisation had undergone a large re-structuring following a merger. The high-level systems audit was designed to test out the new arrangements for delivering qualifications and to check on the progress of existing accreditation conditions in the new organisation.

One organisation has joint awarding body arrangements where responsibilities for various activities are shared. The high-level systems audit was designed to test out the lines of communication across and within the joint arrangements and to examine how the awarding body's risk management operates in practice.

The focus of the programme was to review the following key areas:

- Corporate governance
- Resources and expertise
- Registration and certification
- Customer service
- Equality of opportunity
- Enquiries and appeals

Summary of findings

The two awarding bodies monitored demonstrated success in complying fully with the regulatory criteria for customer service. Both awarding bodies also met the majority of the criteria for enquiries and appeals. The overall percentage total of compliance with the monitoring criteria in this programme of work is 79%.

A total of eight accreditation conditions were identified as a result of monitoring these two awarding bodies. This represents an average of four identified accreditation conditions per awarding body. Each awarding body has been notified of the specific shortfalls in performance. As the distribution of accreditation conditions was spread, it has therefore not been possible, on this occasion, to identify overall trends on the noted shortfalls.

Overall findings from this monitoring programme indicate that most of the criteria are adequately met. With the follow-up activities, the regulatory authorities can be confident that no threat is posed to the validity of awards.

Areas requiring improvement

Each section of *The common code of practice 2000* is made up of a number of individual criteria. A number of these criteria were not complied with by 50 per cent or more of awarding bodies. These criteria are listed below under the section headings.

Resources and expertise

- Having transparent arrangements for organisation and management

Registration and certification

- Keeping accurate data on candidates' registrations
- Safeguards against mistaken claims for certificates

Equality of opportunity

- Ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to achievement

Enquires and appeals

- Arrangements to monitor evaluate and report annually on appeals

Examples of good practice

An analysis of the monitoring results shows clear examples of good practice. The parts of awarding body systems that were judged to be fully compliant with the monitoring criteria are:

Resources and expertise

- Thorough procedures for appointing, training deploying and monitoring specialists

Registration and certification

- Timescales for issuing certificates in the approved format

Customer service

- Published customer service statement
- Advice to centres on retention of candidates' work
- Having clear, streamlined administrative systems for centres

Equality of opportunity

- Arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements
- Information to centres on authorising special arrangements
- Arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on special arrangements
- Arrangements for special consideration

Enquires and appeals

- Published information on enquiries and appeals
- The involvement of an independent member in appeal decisions
- Fees set at a level that does not deter those making an appeal
- Promptly acknowledging appeals in writing
- Protecting candidates and the integrity of the qualification following an appeal decision

Monitoring using the revised criteria *The statutory regulation of external qualifications 2004* during November 2004 - January 2005

From 1 September 2004 the revised criteria from *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004* became operational. This is the first programme of work using the new criteria.

Three VRQ awarding bodies and one NVQ awarding body in this programme of work were being monitored for the first time in these key areas:

- Corporate governance
- Monitoring and self assessment
- Resources and expertise
- Application of assessment methods
- Determining and reporting of results
- Registration and certification
- Equality and fair assessment
- Customer service
- Enquiries and appeals.

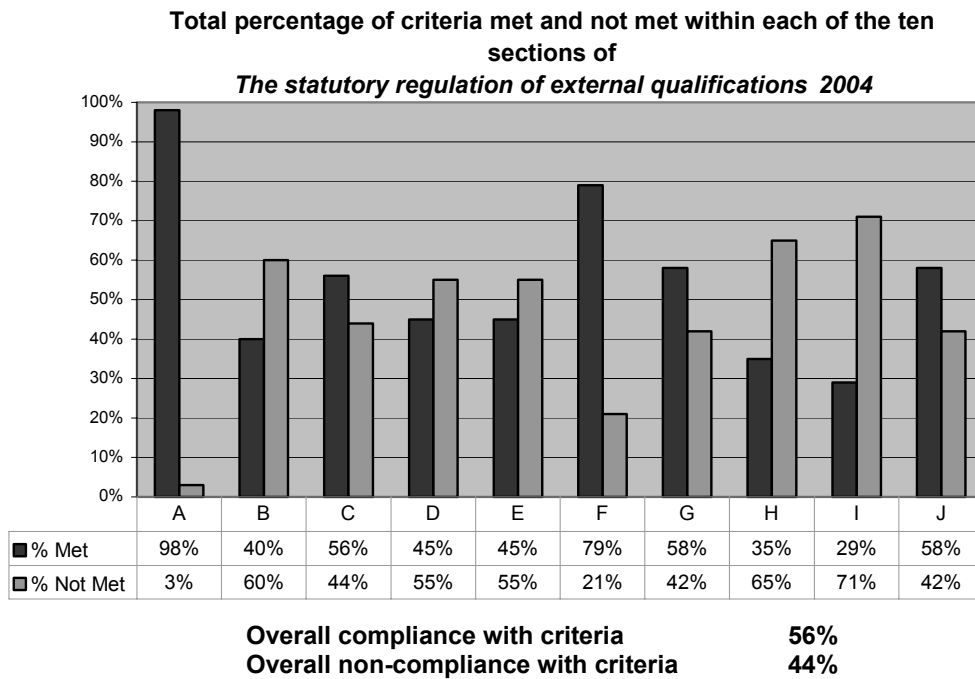
Summary of findings

The four awarding bodies demonstrated success in complying with the majority of the regulatory criteria for corporate governance. Determining results was also an area of strength in the majority of awarding bodies monitored. The overall percentage total of compliance with the monitoring criteria in this programme of work is 56%.

A total of 119 accreditation conditions were identified as a result of this monitoring. This represents an average of almost 30 identified accreditation conditions per awarding body. The monitoring has identified a number of areas where the awarding bodies need to strengthen their systems in order to meet the regulatory authorities' requirements. Publishing information on customer service, advice to centres on making reasonable adjustments, and procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the use of reasonable adjustments are areas of particular concern.

Overall findings from this monitoring programme indicate that actions are required to meet the criteria. However, with the follow-up activities the regulatory authorities are confident this does not pose a significant threat to the validity of the awards.

Figure 5 Post accreditation monitoring of VRQs



Key	
A	Corporate Governance
B	Monitoring and self-assessment
C	Resources and expertise
D	Quality assurance of internal assessment
E	Independent assessment
F	Determining and reporting of results
G	Registration and certification
H	Customer service
I	Equality of opportunity
J	Enquiries and appeals

Areas requiring improvement

Each section of *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004* is made up of a number of individual criteria. A number of these criteria were not complied with by 50 per cent or more of awarding bodies. These criteria are listed below under the section headings.

Monitoring and self-assessment

- Customer service statements
- Providing opportunities for centres and/or candidates to contribute to reviews

Resources and expertise

- Staff training in assessment, awarding and supporting equality of opportunity

Quality assurance and control of internal assessment

- Ensuring that assessment requirements are interpreted consistently
- Specifying the records and materials that centres should retain
- Providing guidance to centres on internal moderation
- Providing guidance to external moderators on sampling

Quality assurance and control of independent assessment

- Procedures to monitor the work of examiners

Determining and reporting on results

- Ensuring standards are comparable year to year

Registration and certification

- The certificate design
- Safeguards against mistaken claims for certificates
- Labelling replacement certificates as such

Equality of opportunity

- Published advice to centres on making reasonable adjustment
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating reasonable adjustments

Customer service

- The fees that apply to specific services

Enquiries and appeals

- The involvement of an independent member in appeal decisions

- Information on how independent reviews operate
- Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting annually on enquiries and appeals

Examples of good practice

An analysis of the monitoring results shows clear examples of good practice. Areas of provision that were judged to have had 100 percent compliance with the monitoring criteria are:

Corporate governance

- Having a single named point of accountability for maintaining quality and standards in assessment
- Having a clear distinction between awarding body functions and other activities

Quality assurance and control of internal assessment

- Procedures for monitoring examiners
- Ensuring that evidence produced by candidates is relevant, authentic and sufficient

Quality assurance and control of independent assessment

- Ensuring that sufficient evidence is retained to monitor provision over time

Determining and reporting of results

- Decisions are open to monitoring
- Assessments are accurate and consistent
- The information given to centres on how an overall award is derived from a candidate's performance

Registration and certification

- Centre approval procedures

Equality of opportunity

- Not creating unnecessary barriers to achievement

Enquires and appeals

- Procedures for checking candidates' results

Outcomes of monitoring

The regulatory authorities produce an individual report on their findings for each awarding body. Copies are provided for all the regulatory authorities, including SQA, and inspection agencies.

All shortfalls in awarding body performance are noted as accreditation conditions. Awarding bodies develop action plans to meet these shortfalls which are agreed with the regulatory authorities. The awarding bodies are monitored to ensure that they comply with the action plans within the agreed timescales.

All of the action plans resulting from the 2002-2003 monitoring programme were completed within the agreed timescales.

During 2004 a number of special projects have also been undertaken. These projects have been designed to address specific shortfalls noted in awarding bodies' provision as a result of the previous years' monitoring (2002-2003) in the following areas;

- Awarding body self assessment
- Assessment and quality assurance
- Plan of provision and review of targets
- Enquiries and appeals
- Customer service

Awarding body self-assessment (including assessment and quality assurance, plans of provision, and enquiries and appeals)

Following monitoring of vocational qualifications during 2002-2003 it was found that the majority of awarding bodies monitored needed to improve their self-assessment arrangements. The regulatory authorities have recently revised the statutory regulations for accrediting and monitoring qualifications. These new statutory regulations put greater emphasis on awarding bodies' own quality assurance arrangements and are intended to establish a risk-based approach to regulation, giving greater incentives to awarding bodies to systematically manage their own risks. As part of the revised arrangements, the regulatory authorities are reviewing the self-assessment guidance to strengthen its role. The aim is to target interventions in a more effective and focussed manner, in proportion to the identified risks. The revised self-assessment process will provide the senior management of awarding bodies with the opportunity to influence the level of external regulation by demonstrating that they are:

- reviewing their own compliance with regulatory requirements;
- identifying risks to the integrity of their qualifications and service delivery;
- putting in place controls to handle any threats to their business continuity;
- identifying improvements needed to deal with these threats.

With the introduction of the revised criteria in September 2004 all 115 recognised awarding bodies are required to carry out a self-assessment against the new criteria, then update and re-submit their arrangements to the regulatory authorities for approval. In this review the awarding bodies are being asked to focus on key areas of provision including their governance arrangements, the levels of experience and expertise of staff, and on the overall quality assurance in place for various types of qualifications. There is a timetable for submissions and each of the 115 awarding bodies is being monitored to ensure compliance.

Customer Service

A feasibility study has been carried out following the findings from the 2002-2003 monitoring where 26 percent of non-compliance was found to concern customer service statements provided by awarding bodies. As a result it has been decided to carry out a full study focusing on the level of satisfaction approved centres have with the level of service from awarding bodies. This study will be published during 2005-2006. All awarding bodies have been required to update their customer service statements in line with the revised criteria and submit them to the regulatory authorities for approval within an agreed timetable.

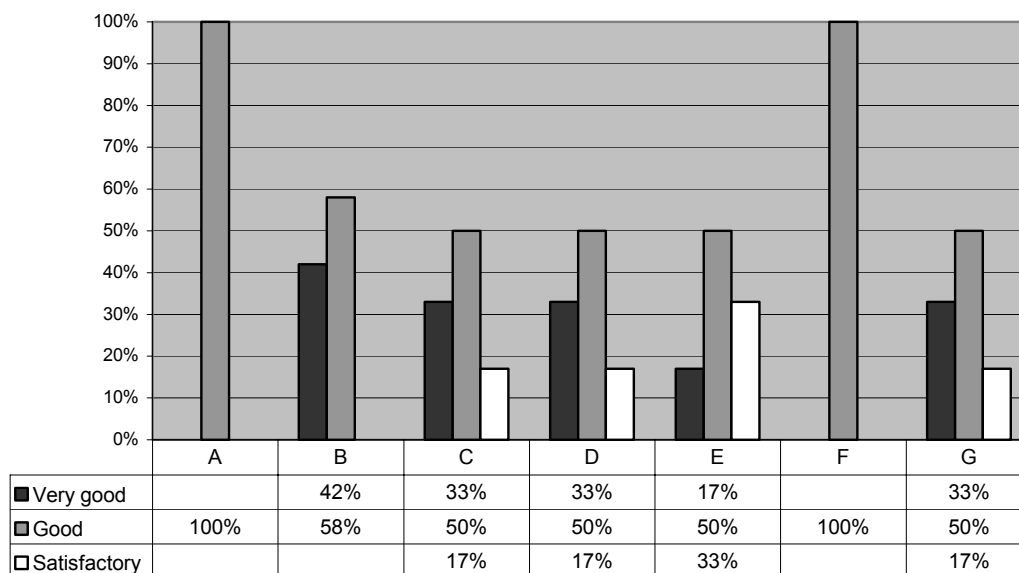
The regulatory authorities use the outcomes of monitoring and subsequent actions taken by awarding bodies to inform decisions on re-accreditation of qualifications, or if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation.

Appendix 1 Feedback from awarding bodies on post accreditation monitoring

Following post accreditation monitoring, feedback from awarding bodies is actively sought. This feedback helps the regulatory authorities review and where necessary improve their own monitoring arrangements. Each awarding body is asked to evaluate the monitoring process from their point of view. Comments are invited on specific activities involved in the whole monitoring process including the planning stage, the conduct of regulatory staff during monitoring, and the production of the monitoring report. Awarding bodies are asked to rate the regulatory authorities on a sliding scale of very good, good, satisfactory, poor or very poor. Awarding bodies are also encouraged to provide feedback via open responses used to record anything they feel is of note. In the results below no poor or very poor ratings were received.

Feedback from awarding bodies on post accreditation monitoring will continue to be actively collected and evaluated. Where necessary the regulatory authorities will review and revise their own monitoring procedures and performance in order to support continual improvement.

Feedback from awarding bodies on the regulatory authorities' performance following post accreditation monitoring



Key	
A	Notification and planning
B	Conduct of opening meeting
C	Examination of documents and systems
D	Interviews with staff
E	Factual accuracy and content of report
F	Level of detail in report was appropriate
G	Overall rating of the post accreditation process

Appendix 2 Post accreditation monitoring of complaints

During the year QCA received 123 formal complaints concerning qualifications or awarding bodies. Approximately one third of these related to allegations of malpractice or maladministration, and the remainder reflected varied individual concerns from candidates.

ACCAC received 17 formal complaints during the year. Approximately a quarter of these reflected concerns from candidates or other individual members of the public. Of the remainder, the majority were cases of maladministration, and a minority related to allegations of malpractice.

CCEA did not receive any formal complaints during the year.

Maladministration/malpractice investigations are a critical part in maintaining public confidence in qualifications. Cases are dealt with sensitively and confidentiality is maintained. QCA works closely with funding agencies and other regulators to ensure that the integrity of qualifications is preserved. During the year some individual qualifications were invalidated by agreement between QCA and the awarding bodies concerned where satisfactory standards had not been maintained. The candidates concerned were provided with appropriate support in order to help them maintain progress and to gain their qualifications.

Individual complaints covered a variety of issues, although no significant threads have emerged following analysis of the data. However, it is clear that communication with learners needs improving. Centres' administrative processes at times fail to protect the interests of candidates effectively, and form one of the principal causes for complaint.

Appendix 3 Awarding bodies subject to monitoring

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance

Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

Chartered Institute of Building

Chartered Institute of Housing

Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply

Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body

City & Guilds

Education Development International

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd

Gemmological Association

Institute of Credit Management

Institute of Legal Executives

Institute of Qualified Lifeguards

Institute of Revenues, Ratings and Valuation

Institute of Public Relations

LANTRA Awards

London Qualifications

Meat Training Council

National Association of Estate Agents

National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health

NPTC

Open College of the North West

Packaging Industry Awarding Body Company

Professional Association of Diving Instructors

The Worshipful Company of Farriers

United Kingdom Society of Investment Professionals

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations

Appendix 4 Glossary of selected terms

Accreditation	The process through which the regulatory authorities confirm that a qualification and associated specifications conform to the relevant accreditation criteria.
Accreditation conditions	Shortfalls in the performance of an awarding body usually noted as a result of post accreditation monitoring. They define specific operational standards which have to be met.
Accreditation criteria	Requirements published by the regulatory authorities against which qualifications are designed and evaluated. The criteria specify the characteristics necessary for the accreditation of a qualification and include codes of practice, criteria common to all qualifications and standards specific to a qualification category or type, subject or occupation.
Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)	ALI is a government funded body responsible, with others, for raising the standards of education and training for young people and adults in England, by inspecting and reporting on the quality of learning provision they receive.
Appeal	A process through which an awarding body may be challenged on the outcome of an enquiry about results or, where appropriate, other procedural decisions affecting a centre or individual candidates.
Approved centre	An organisation (such as a school, college, employer or training provider) which is approved by and accountable to an awarding body for the assessment arrangements leading to an award. Assessment may take place in more than one location.
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a candidate's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessor	The person who assesses a candidate's work.
Awarding	The process through which candidates' results and/or grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.
Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (ACCAC)	The regulatory authority for Wales. ACCAC regulates all external qualifications except for the formal accreditation of individual NVQs which are the sole responsibility of QCA.
Candidate	A person who is registered with an awarding body for a qualification or unit.
Code of practice	Principles and practices specified by the regulatory authorities against which awarding body processes and procedures for the assessing and awarding of particular qualification types are designed and evaluated.
Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)	The regulatory authority for Northern Ireland. CCEA regulates all external qualifications except for the formal accreditation of individual NVQs which are the responsibility of QCA.
Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DEL NI)	DEL NI promotes and improves access to skills and employment through funded programmes of education and training.
Education and Learning in Wales (ELWa)	ELWa is an Assembly Sponsored Public Body established by the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Its remit covers further education, government-supported training, adult community

	learning and school sixth forms.
Enquiry	A process through which an awarding body may be asked to check one or more of the steps leading to an awarding decision.
Estyn	Estyn is the body responsible for raising standards and quality of education and training in Wales through inspection and advice, in support of the vision and strategic direction set out by the Welsh Assembly Government.
Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)	The body that monitors, inspects and reports on the standard of education and training provided by schools, colleges and other grant-aided organisations in Northern Ireland.
External assessment	A form of independent assessment where assessment tasks are set, and candidates' work assessed, by the awarding body.
External verifier	An individual appointed by the awarding body to ensure accurate and consistent standards of assessment, across centres and over time.
Independent assessment	Assessment of candidates' work that is carried out by assessors who do not have a vested interest in the outcome.
Internal assessment	Assessment where assessment tasks are set, and candidates' work assessed, wholly within the candidate's centre, subject where appropriate to external moderation or verification.
Internal verifier	An individual appointed by the centre to ensure accurate and consistent standards of assessment, both within a centre and between centres offering the same award.
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)	The LSC is the organisation responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16 year-olds in England. It also undertakes research and development projects.
Moderator	An individual usually employed by an approved centre or awarding body who is responsible for quality assuring qualifications awarded in the centre.
National occupational standards	Standards of occupational competence developed by a standards setting body and approved by the regulatory authorities.
National training organisation	An approved standards setting body for a particular occupational sector.
National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)	Qualifications which are based on national occupational standards and are work-related. They reflect the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively, and show that a candidate is competent in a particular area of work.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF).	The framework used by the regulatory authorities to position qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)	OFSTED is a non-ministerial government department and has responsibility for inspecting all education and training for ages 16-19 in sixth form and further education colleges. Through area-wide inspection reports the overall planning of education and training provision for post-16 learners is reviewed throughout England.
Other General Qualifications (OG)	Vocational qualifications with graded exams.
Post accreditation monitoring	A process used by QCA to measure if awarding bodies are delivering qualifications according to the accreditation criteria, including the common code of practice and qualification-specific codes of practice.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)	The regulatory authority for England. QCA and ACCAC work with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to ensure that National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) remain aligned.
Regulatory authorities for qualifications	Government-designated statutory organisations required to establish national standards for qualifications and secure consistent compliance with them.
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	The regulatory authority for Scotland.
Sector Skills Councils (SSC)	The Secretary of State licenses SSCs for Education and Skills, in consultation with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to address the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK.
Special arrangements/ reasonable adjustments	Arrangements which are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by candidates with either a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty, or a temporary disability, illness or indisposition.
Special consideration	Approved procedures made for candidates who suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination.
Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs)	Based on national occupational standards these qualifications enable progression and prepare people by developing the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace.

Appendix 5 Bibliography

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting publicly on external qualifications

The common code of practice 2000

The regulatory authorities' accreditation handbook, QCA/ACCAC/CCEA, 2003

The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2000

Monitoring of vocational qualifications (2002-2003)