

The NOCN and One Awards Quality Assurance Team have collated frequently asked questions regarding the current disruption being experienced by centres regarding COVID-19. If you have any concerns or questions regarding how you can continue to support your learners and deliver NOCN qualifications, please contact us on [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk).

These FAQs will be amended and updated as the COVID-19 disruption develops.

## Registration and Certification

### ***1. What assurances can NOCN provide to centres and learners concerned about completion of their NOCN qualification?***

NOCN are working closely with Ofqual and the Regulatory bodies to provide advice and guidance for centres during this period. One Awards will communicate all updates to Centres via the One Awards website. Qualification requirements must continue to be met as per the qualification specification, however, NOCN and One Awards are taking a flexible and pragmatic approach wherever possible to support you whilst also maintaining the quality of qualification delivery standards.

Where a Centre believes alternative arrangements may be required that is not covered by this FAQ document, they can contact One Awards to discuss their individual circumstances. Centres can also complete a [NOCN Special Arrangements Request form](#) and submit this to [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk) detailing the circumstances, proposed arrangements and how NOCN requirements will be maintained. This must be approved before the action is taken and auditable evidence must be maintained of the arrangements made. Learners and centres can be reassured that, at present, EQA monitoring will continue via remote arrangements and that alternative arrangements have been put in place to support centres and learners. See section on external quality assurance for further details.

### ***2. Are NOCN still accepting registrations and issuing certificates for its qualifications?***

Yes. NOCN and One Awards have contingency arrangements in place and will work with centres to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We are expecting to run our normal operations as far as reasonably possible. NOCN are not currently expecting disruptions to its registration and certification processes at present.

### ***3. Can we have certificates delivered directly to a learner's home address if our Centre closes due to COVID-19 disruption?***

Yes. Although this is not standard practice, we will allow for a learner's certificate to be sent directly to their home address. To allow for this to happen, please email your request, detailing the learner's full name and address to [cst@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:cst@oneawards.org.uk). Please note that you will need to submit your request with as much notice as possible to allow One Awards to make the address change as once certificates are issued we will not be able to re-direct them.



## **4. *Can we have certificates delivered to the home address of one of our Centre staff members if our Centre closes due to COVID-19 disruption?***

Although this is not usually possible, if there is a disruption due to COVID-19, One Awards will allow for interim arrangements to be in place for NOCN qualification certificates to be re-directed to the home address of your Centre's named Centre, Certification or Head of Organisation contact.

Your Centre must ensure that you have appropriate arrangements in place to allow for the required certificate checks to continue to take place and that your Centre/Certification/Head of Organisation Contact has the ability to forward certificates to learner's home addresses in line with One Awards requirements. Your Centre will also need to seek authorisation from each learner that they are happy for their certificate to be sent to the designated home address to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act (2018). Records of learner authorisation must be stored at the Centre for audit purposes once normal service resumes.

To allow for certificates to be re-directed, your Centre must contact One Awards detailing where you would like certificates to be delivered via email to [cst@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:cst@oneawards.org.uk). Centres must inform One Awards of when their Centre re-opens to allow for the interim arrangements to end and for certificates to be re-sent to the Centre's usual certificate delivery site.

## **Removing Materials from Centre Premises**

## **5. *Can we allow our Tutors/Assessors to take home Entry Level Functional Skills and ESOL examination papers for marking and assessment purposes?***

Yes, as long as security and confidentiality arrangements and requirements of NOCN are met at all times. Centres must ensure that where Tutors/Assessors will be taking live examination material home that they are aware of their responsibilities regarding maintaining the confidentiality of assessment materials. Centres must have confidentiality agreements signed by their staff members which confirms that they will act in accordance with your Centre and NOCN requirements.

NOCN has produced a separate guidance document and a template confidentiality agreement which centres may wish to utilise. This document outlines the requirements that must be adhered to by all Tutors/Assessors when removing live examination material from Centre premises. This can be found by accessing the following link: [Confidentiality of Assessment Material Guidance and Statement document](#).

## **6. *Can we allow our Tutors/Assessors/IQAs to take home learner portfolios for assessing and IQA purposes?***

Yes, as long as security and confidentiality arrangements and requirements of NOCN are met at all times. Please refer to the following document on the following link: [NOCN Confidentiality of Assessment Material Guidance and Statement](#)

## Examination and Invigilation

### ***7. Should we cancel or re-schedule any of our planned learner examinations?***

In line with current Government advice and guidance, NOCN will not permit face to face examinations to take place. NOCN is currently exploring proctor invigilation facilities which may allow this and One Awards will communicate any developments to centres in due course. NOCN and One Awards appreciate that Centres may not know when examinations can be rescheduled and so will waive the fee to move the examination to an alternative date free of charge.

To re-schedule an examination due to COVID-19, please email [cst@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:cst@oneawards.org.uk) with the learner's name, the run ID for the examination, the original examination date, new location details and the proposed re-scheduled date if known. Centres must continue to notify One Awards of any changes, amendments or cancellations to examinations and must continue to comply with the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy for all examinations

### ***8. Our Centre is closing and we will not be able to deliver future planned examinations, what should we advise One Awards?***

NOCN will not permit face to face examinations to take place, in line with current Government advice and guidance. NOCN is currently exploring proctor invigilation facilities which may allow this and One Awards will communicate any developments to centres. NOCN and One Awards appreciate that Centres may not know when examinations can be rescheduled and so will waive the fee to move the examination to an alternative date free of charge.

To re-schedule or cancel an examination due to COVID-19, please email [cst@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:cst@oneawards.org.uk) with the learner's name, the run ID for the examination, the original examination date, new location details and the proposed re-scheduled date if known. Centres must continue to notify One Awards of any changes, amendments or cancellations to examinations and must continue to comply with the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy for all examinations.

### ***9. Our Centre premises are closed, are we able to administer an examination at a learner's home address?***

If a Centre has exhausted all alternative venues and wishes to use a learner's home address for the examination of a learner, they must complete the [NOCN Special Arrangements request form](#) and submit this to [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk) and await authorisation from One Awards. Centres should ensure that they provide as much detail as possible regarding how they will maintain the confidentiality and security of examination material and uphold NOCN invigilation requirements.

Before submitting their request, centres must consider the safeguarding their staff members and determine whether it is safe and appropriate to attend a learner's home address following the most recent guidelines by Public Health England to social distance where possible.

### ***10. Are NOCN relaxing any of its invigilator requirements?***

Centres must continue to follow the requirements of the NOCN Invigilation Policy for all NOCN examinations throughout this period. If your centre's regular invigilator is not available, you should follow your centre's own contingency arrangements to source an alternative invigilator which meets NOCN and qualification requirements.

Where all other alternative options have been exhausted, centres can request alternative arrangements from NOCN by completing the [NOCN Special Arrangements Request form](#) and submitting this to [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk). Requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

## ***11. We have a learner registered on a legacy Functional Skills qualification, and must certificate no later than 31 August 2020. What if we cannot complete the learner's qualification by this date due to the COVID-19 disruption?***

NOCN is liaising with Ofqual to determine whether the certification period can be extended for the legacy Functional Skills qualifications. As soon as NOCN is aware of the outcome we will inform centres.

## **Qualification Delivery**

## ***12. What can we do if a learner is unable to attend the training elements of their qualification at our Centre?***

NOCN appreciates that face to face delivery may be impacted at present. We encourage all delivery centres to adapt their resources to offer digitally where face to face is not possible, using creative assessment tools to ensure that learners are still able to complete their programmes of learning. Centres can consider remote delivery, deploying e-portfolios, Skype, Zoom and/or Microsoft Teams. Centres must liaise with learners to agree alternative arrangements are appropriate for their needs and ensure alternative arrangements do not place a barrier to entry.

For some qualifications distance learning may be appropriate. When utilising distance learning centres must detail within their centre quality management processes each of the following:

- Whether some, or all, of the permitted learning outcomes from the qualifications/program are to be delivered by distance learning.
- The reason for the special arrangements.
- The method of distance learning to be used.
- The training content to be covered with distance learning.
- The number of hours to be covered by the distance learning material.
- A robust and auditable method for determining that learners have undertaken distance learning.

Training materials must clearly show learners how many hours learning they are expected to undertake, and that they are given sufficient time and support to allow them to complete the distance learning. Centres must be able to check and evidence that the learner has completed the distance learning to ensure that appropriate learning has occurred. Records must be maintained for review by your external quality assurer and show how the qualification requirements are met included the guided learning hours (GLH).

## ***13. What can we do if a learner cannot access a work placement due to COVID-19 disruption?***

We understand that a number of placements are turning learners away due to the Covid-19 outbreak and centres are concerned that it may make it difficult for them to complete the required number of hours for

their specific qualification. Centres need to continue to ensure placement hours are recorded as normal, documenting where there has been an issue and look to mitigate the impact on the learner if possible, by finding them another placement, offering additional time to complete the qualification or re-arranging teaching/placement time.

To mitigate further impact, we would advise that Centres consider how they schedule their programmes so that any units that require placements could be end loaded, in the hope that there is increased access to working environments in the coming months. In some cases, it may be possible for learner's prior attendance to be documented via witness testimonies and NOCN will be happy to consider recording achievement in this way on a case by case basis with centres.

NOCN and One Awards appreciates that this will be a challenging and worrying time for centres and learners and will review Special Considerations. Please complete the [NOCN Special Arrangements Request form](#) and submit it to [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk)

## ***14. What can we do if a learner cannot access an assessor due to COVID-19 disruption?***

We understand that learner observations may be impacted by Covid-19 where face to face contact is limited or not possible. Where this is the case, centres should explore how assessments can be carried out remotely or how these could be recorded ensuring that records and assessments are auditable, and that evidence is robust. To mitigate the impact, centres are advised to consider how they schedule their programmes so that any units requiring assessor observations are temporally end-loaded.

One Awards will work with centres if special considerations are required. Centres can complete and return the [NOCN Special Arrangements Request form](#) and submit it to [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk)

## **External Quality Assurance**

### ***15. Are One Awards still carrying out external quality assurance visits?***

All face-to-face visits have now been suspended and One Awards has issued guidance for centres on the contingency arrangements for the completion of remote external quality assurance sampling and full remote visits. This will be determined by EQAs on a on a case to case basis with centres.

EQAs continue to offer a supportive role and continue to be contactable should you have any external quality assurance queries, or should you wish to arrange an EQA visit. Centres can also contact [Quality@oneawards.org.uk](mailto:Quality@oneawards.org.uk) should they have any queries about remote visit arrangements.

### ***16. We do not have Direct Claims Status, can we still request learner certificates upon achievement?***

Yes, your EQA will arrange a remote EQA visit via Microsoft Teams/Skype or other method, or a remote sample to sign off portfolios.

Your EQA will make you aware before the visit what evidence will be required for the monitoring activity. One Awards would recommend recording live assessments or observations of learners to assist with this process. There should be no impact to DCS/certification claims.