



ECITB Awarding Organisation Withdrawal Policy and Procedure

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Introduction

This policy is for use by ECITB Awarding Organisation (AO) Approved Centres delivering ECITB's qualifications and should also be referenced by ECITB AO staff.

As a recognised Awarding Organisation, ECITB AO is required to manage the withdrawal of its qualifications in line with regulatory requirements and provide clear information about the withdrawal of our qualifications to Centres and candidates.

Whether ECITB AO withdraws a qualification from an individual Approved Centre, or from operation completely, or an Approved Centre decides to withdraw a qualification from its portfolio, it is essential that the interests of registered candidates are protected, and withdrawal plans are developed and implemented accordingly.

This document outlines the arrangements to be followed by Approved Centres and the ECITB AO in the event of:

- An Approved Centre no longer wishing to deliver one or more of ECITB qualifications.
- An Approved Centre wishing to surrender their centre approval.
- The ECITB AO's withdrawal of an Approved Centres approval to deliver one or more ECITB qualifications.
- The ECITB AO's withdrawal of an Approved Centre's approval status.
- The ECITB AO decides to withdraw a qualification.

The arrangements outlined in this document are designed to protect the interests of candidates and provide guidance and clarity to ECITB AO Approved Centres. It is the responsibility of the Approved Centre to ensure that Centre staff and candidates are aware of the contents of this policy.

Please note: Whilst the ECITB AO and its Approved Centres have a regulatory responsibility to protect the interests of candidates, they are recruited and contracted directly with the Approved Centre, and not with the ECITB, therefore any fees candidates may have paid upon enrolment were paid to the Approved Centre and not to ECITB. As such, ECITB are not liable for refunding any fees to candidates. Registration fees paid to the ECITB by the centre are not refundable.

Regulatory authorities

ECITB AO is regulated by Ofqual, SQA Accreditation and Qualifications Wales (the Regulators). We are required to comply with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition, SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles and Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of Recognition.

Every attempt has been made to ensure that the contents of this policy are consistent with the requirements of the Regulators. Where regulatory requirements are amended and require change, such changes will be made as soon as practicable.

ECITB withdrawal of a qualification from operation

ECITB may withdraw a qualification from operation for several reasons, this may include where:

- there is a lack of demand for the qualification
- the national occupational standards have been updated therefore new qualifications are required
- the qualifications are out of date and no longer relevant
- we surrender our regulatory recognition for a particular qualification
- we have our recognition withdrawn by the Regulator for a particular qualification.

Where ECITB proposes to withdraw a qualification from operation, this must be approved by the Head of Awarding Organisation and the timeline for withdrawal agreed. The detail of the qualification(s) to be withdrawn will then be communicated to the relevant Regulator before Approved Centres are informed.

For SQA Accreditation accredited qualifications, an AC2 withdrawal submission will be submitted where the qualification is coming to an end and is not being replaced by another qualification which is being submitted for reaccreditation.

For all three regulators, a written withdrawal plan will be developed and complied with, which protects the interests of all registered candidates, Centres, and purchasers of our qualifications who are likely to be affected by the withdrawal.

The withdrawal plan will include the following:

- the registration end date – this will normally be communicated to the Regulator and Approved Centres at least 12 months in advance.
- The certification end date – this must allow sufficient time for any registered candidates to complete their qualification. This will normally be two years for Level 2 and three years for Level 3 qualifications after the end registration date.

For SQA Accreditation accredited qualifications, this will be three years after the end registration date for all levels.

- Communication points, which will include details of the transition arrangements to new qualifications where applicable.

Approved centres' responsibility to provide withdrawal notice

Where an Approved Centre wishes to surrender their centre approval or no longer wishes to deliver one or more of ECITB qualifications, they are required to take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of their candidates.

The Approved Centre should provide ECITB AO with no less than **six weeks' notice** by submitting a Qualification Withdrawal Form (VQ008) to qualifications@ecitb.org.uk. A copy of this form is available for download from the ECITB Membership Services Portal.

The form must contain the following information:

- rationale for the withdrawal;
- number of current registered candidates
- contact details of all candidates that may be affected;
- an action plan including timescales that details plans to support candidates where possible with the opportunity to complete their qualification.

It is acknowledged that there may be some instances where Approved Centres may cease to operate, e.g. due to financial circumstances, and may have no opportunity to provide us with due notice.

ECITB Awarding Organisation removal of centre or qualification approval

ECITB AO may withdraw an Approved Centre's approval for one or more qualifications, or remove centre approval for several reasons, this may include, but is not limited to where:

- the centre has not registered any candidates onto one or more qualifications for more than 18 months
- there is a lack of progress for candidates on a qualification
- ECITB applies its Restrictions and Sanctions Policy and Procedure, for example in response to a malpractice or maladministration case
- the centre is in persistent breach of the Centre Agreement
- we are unable to make contact and/or receive a response from an Approved Centre.

If the ECITB AO decides to withdraw a Centre's approval or approval to offer a qualification(s), this decision will be communicated to the Approved Centre in writing, where possible providing a **minimum of one calendar months' notice** and in accordance with the *ECITB Awarding Organisation Restrictions and Sanctions Policy and Procedure*.

Where appropriate the ECITB AO will implement a restriction/sanction in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the *ECITB Awarding Organisation Restrictions and Sanctions Policy and Procedure* which may include the sanction of immediate withdrawal.

The withdrawal procedure

The ECITB AO will be responsible for ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to protect the interests of any candidates currently registered on the qualification(s) and will implement the following:

- A Level 3 Restriction will be applied to the Approved Centre, preventing further registration of candidates and removing Direct Claims Status, where no previous restriction of sanction is in place. Another level of sanction may be applied if more appropriate.
- The ECITB AO will review the VQ008, if applicable, and in all cases will work with the Approved Centre to develop a withdrawal plan that protects the interest of the candidates and where possible that provides candidates with the opportunity to complete their qualification, including claiming for certification.
- If completion is not possible the ECITB AO will work with the Approved Centre and/or any candidates affected to transfer them – where possible and feasible to another Approved Centre to enable the candidates to continue with the qualification(s) they are registered for. The Approved Centre will be responsible for any additional costs relating to supporting the candidate to completion of the qualification for which they are registered.
- If no alternative Approved Centres are available/suitable and/or the candidates do not wish to carry on with the qualification(s), ECITB AO will seek to ensure the candidates are certificated for any achievement to date in accordance with the requirements of the associated qualification specification(s). This may be subject to external quality assurance by an ECITB AO External Quality Assurer.
- The Approved Centre's records will be updated upon activation of the withdrawal, to reflect the fact the centre is no longer approved to offer the qualification(s).
- The ECITB AO may inform other departments within ECITB and the qualification regulators if appropriate.

At all times the ECITB AO will seek to ensure that all parties affected by the withdrawal are kept appropriately informed throughout.



Right of complaint and appeal

If any candidates or any other party are unhappy with how the ECITB AO may have dealt with the withdrawal, they should contact the qualifications@ecitb.org.uk in the first instance, after which the matter should follow the *ECITB Awarding Organisation Complaints Policy and Procedure*.

If an Approved Centre disagrees with the decision to withdraw centre or qualification approval, they may appeal in accordance with the *ECITB Awarding Organisation Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

Appeals against the outcome of a withdrawal can only be submitted by a Centre. It is the responsibility of the Approved Centre to obtain written consent from the candidate(s) prior to submitting an appeal.

Review arrangements

To ensure this policy remains relevant, useful and fit for purpose, it will be reviewed along with associated procedures every three years, as part of our self-evaluation process. There may be instances however that trigger the need to review the policy earlier, such as, in response to customer, candidate or regulatory feedback, or trends that may emerge in the subject matter from enquiries.

Contact us

If you have any queries about any aspect of this process, please contact:

The Awarding Organisation
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
Office F15, Kings House Business Centre
Home Park Estate
Station Road
Kings Langley
WD4 8LZ

Telephone: 01923 260 000
Email: Qualifications@ecitb.org.uk
Website: www.ecitb.org.uk