

Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for
IT and Telecoms Professionals

Centre Handbook

OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and
Telecoms Professionals
Entry code 10351

Contents

1	Introduction to Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals	4
1.1	Why choose the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals qualification?	4
1.2	Entry requirement	5
1.3	Funding	5
1.4	Guided learning hours (GLH)	6
2	Qualification summary	7
2.1	Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals summary	7
3	Structure and content	8
3.1	Qualification structure and rule of combination	8
3.2	OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals	9
3.3	Table of units for OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals	10
3.4	Barred combinations and exemptions	12
4	Apprenticeship information	15
4.1	How do I get a certificate for the apprenticeship?	15
4.2	About the apprenticeships	15
4.3	What makes up an apprenticeship?	15
5	Centre assessor and quality assurance personnel requirements	17
5.1	Assessment centre requirements	17
5.2	Centre assessor responsibilities	17
5.3	Expert Witnesses	18
5.4	Internal Quality Assurance Personnel (IQA)	19
6	Verified assessment	20
6.1	Overview of the assessment	20
6.2	Initial assessment of candidates	20
6.3	Planning assessment	20
6.4	Real work	21
6.5	Simulation	21
6.6	Methods of assessment	21
6.7	Authentication	23
6.8	Making assessment decisions	23
6.9	Generation and collection of evidence	23
6.10	How much evidence is needed?	24
6.11	Assessment of the evidence	25
6.12	Observation	25
6.13	Questioning	25
6.14	Professional discussion	26
6.15	Work products	26
6.16	Witness statements	26
6.17	Personal or candidate statement	27
6.18	Candidate cumulative assessment record (CAR)	27
6.19	Verification – how it works	29
6.20	Direct Claim Status (DCS)	31
6.21	Centre malpractice guidance	32
7	Support	33

Contents

7.1	Free resources	33
7.2	Interchange	33
7.3	Professional Development Programme	33
7.4	Documents referred to in this handbook	34
8	Administration	35
8.1	Overview of full process	35
8.2	How to apply for centre approval	36
8.3	Making entries	36
8.4	Unique Learner Numbers (ULN) and the Personal Learning Record (PLR)	37
8.5	How to make certificate claims	37
8.6	Enquiries about results	37
9	Certification	38
9.1	Claiming certificates	38
9.2	Replacement certificates	38
10	Other information	39
10.1	National Occupational Standards (NOS)	39
10.2	Avoidance of bias	39
10.3	Regulatory requirements	39
10.4	Language	39
10.5	Mode of delivery	39
10.6	Centre resources and requirements	40
10.7	Delivery in Wales and Northern Ireland	40
10.8	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	40
10.9	Access arrangements and special consideration	41
10.10	Wider issues	41
11	Contacting us	43
11.1	Enquiries	43
11.2	Customer feedback	43
11.3	Complaints	43

1 Introduction to Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals

The information provided in this handbook is correct at the time of production. Occasionally we may update this information. Please refer to the qualification [webpages](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Staff involved in the delivery of this qualification must have access to and understand the requirements in this handbook.

You should read this document in conjunction with the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#).

You should ensure candidates are informed of the title and level of the qualification they have been entered for and that Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) is the awarding body for their chosen qualification.

1.1 Why choose the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals qualification?

The aim of this qualification is to give candidates the opportunity to:

- develop a high level understanding of the IT and telecoms sector
- develop their skills and competences in the IT and telecoms industry
- achieve a nationally recognised qualification
- work towards the IT, Software, Web and Telecoms Higher Apprenticeship
- progress from qualifications in the QCF and from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- progress to further study in Further Education (FE) or Higher Education (HE)
- continue professional development.

This qualification:

- is vocationally-related
- is credit-based
- includes units based on the national occupational standards (NOS) developed by e-skills, the Sector Skills Council for Business and Information Technology
- is regulated in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and may be eligible for funding
- appears on the Register of Regulated Qualifications <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>
- is supported by e-skills, the sector body for Business and Information Technology
- is internally assessed by your assessors and quality assured by your internal quality assurance personnel and externally verified by us.

1.2 Entry requirement

All staff involved in the assessment or delivery of this qualification should understand the requirements of the qualification and match them to the needs and capabilities of individual learners before entering them for the OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals.

The qualification has been developed so it is free from any barriers restricting access or progression and therefore promotes equal opportunities. It is accredited in the QCF for learners aged 18 years and over.

The units in this competence qualification must be assessed in the workplace therefore candidates undertaking the qualification must be working within the IT and Telecoms sector.

This qualification provides the competence element of the Level 4 IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals Apprenticeship. Potential apprentices should bear in mind that a Higher Apprenticeship combines the challenges of higher-level education with full-time employment, and should be prepared for the greater volume and level of study than in the Advanced Apprenticeship or another Level 3 qualification.

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification, however, candidates wishing to enter a Higher Apprenticeship will need to have achieved one of the following:

- A Levels, or equivalent educational attainment, including the Level 3 IT Diploma. International Baccalaureate or a **relevant** Level 3 Technical Certificate
- An Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3)
- Employment within the technology/telecommunications industry for a number of years and demonstrated to their employer that they have a reasonable expectation of achieving the required outcomes of the Higher Apprenticeship. This can be supported by the demonstration or evidence of prior achievement or performance in the role prior to starting the higher apprenticeship.

1.3 Funding

This qualification is accredited in the QCF and may be eligible for funding.

For further details regarding approval and funding eligibility you should refer to the following websites:

Department for Education (DfE) under [Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000](#)

[Skills Funding Agency](#) for public funding in England

DAQW – [Database of Approved Qualifications](#) for public funding in Wales

[Department for Employment and Learning](#) for public funding in Northern Ireland

Education Funding Agency <http://www.education.gov.uk/efa> for public funding information for 16-19 learners in England

LARA – Learning Aim Reference Application

<https://gateway.imservices.org.uk/sites/lara/Pages/Welcome.aspx> for information on funding rates for qualifications in England.

You should use the QCF Qualifications Number (QN) when looking for public funding for candidates. Each unit within a qualification will also have a QCF unit code.

If you have any queries regarding funding for this qualification contact us by email at funding@ocr.org.uk.

1.4 Guided learning hours (GLH)

Guided learning hours indicate the approximate time (in hours) the tutor will spend supervising or directing study time and assessment. Each unit includes the GLH.

The Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals requires a minimum of 525 guided learning hours.

2 Qualification summary

2.1 Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals summary

OCR entry code	10351	Qualification Number (QN)		601/1690/0
Approved age group	Pre-16	16-18	18+	19+
			✓	✓
This qualification is suitable for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • candidates studying for career development and who are already in employment • candidates wishing to gain a Level 4 qualification to support further study in Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) in the IT and Telecoms sector • candidates taking a Level 4 IT, Software, Web and Telecoms Professionals apprenticeship 			
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification. It is assessed in the workplace and therefore candidates must be employed within the IT and Telecoms sector.			
Credit requirement	minimum credit is 80 credits			
Structure and options	2 mandatory units from core group			15 credits
	minimum credit from optional group			65 credits
	minimum credit to be achieved at level 4			48 credits
Assessment model	<p>This qualification is pass/fail.</p> <p>This qualification is internally assessed by your assessors and quality assurance personnel and externally verified by OCR.</p>			
Last date to enter candidates	This is the operational end date in the Register of Regulated qualifications. We will always provide you with advanced notice when setting a last entry date and a last certification date.			

3 Structure and content

3.1 Qualification structure and rule of combination

Each qualification in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) has a Rule of Combination (ROC).

The ROC specifies how units can be combined and the overall number of credits to be achieved for the qualification to be awarded.

Candidates do not have to achieve units in any particular order and learning programmes should be tailored to meet individual needs. It is recommended that, wherever possible, you deliver this qualification holistically by identifying opportunities to link the units and levels.

If a candidate is not able to complete the full qualification, we will issue unit certificates listing the unit(s) and credits achieved.

When combining units for the qualification, it is your responsibility to ensure the rule of combination is followed.

The units are available to download from our qualification webpage. [OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals](#).

3.2 OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals

Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals

Entry Code 10351

Ofqual Qualification Number 601/1690/0

Total credits

80 credits are required for this qualification, a minimum of 48 credits must be at Level 4

Mandatory credits from core group

A minimum 15 mandatory credits must come from the core group i.e.

Candidates must achieve Unit 221 - Level 4 Develop own effectiveness and professionalism (12 credits)

and one of the following Health and Safety in ICT units

Unit 3 - Level 1 Health and Safety in ICT (3 credits)

or

Unit 222 Level 3 Health and Safety in ICT (12 credits)

+

Optional Group credits

A minimum of 65 credits from the optional group, of which 48 credits must be at Level 4

Refer to section 3.3 and 3.4 for full details of the unit titles, credit values, rule of combination, barred combinations and exemptions.

3.3 Table of units for OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals

Rules of combination for Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals

- A minimum of 80 credits are required for the qualification
- A minimum of 15 mandatory credits must come from core mandatory group (unit 221 and one of either unit 3 or unit 222)
- A minimum of 65 credits from the optional group, of which 48 credits must be at Level 4

Core Mandatory Group

OCR Unit No	Unit Title	Unit reference Number (URN)	Level	Credit	GLH
Note: Unit 221 is mandatory, a second mandatory unit must be chosen from either unit 3 or unit 222					
221	Develop own effectiveness and professionalism	K/601/3502	4	12	60
3	Health and Safety in ICT	Y/500/7183	1	3	45
222	Health and Safety in ICT	H/602/2943	3	12	90

Optional Group

OCR Unit No	Unit Title	Unit reference Number (URN)	Level	Credit	GLH
195	Customer care in ICT	T/500/7157	1	6	50
4	Computer games development	A/601/3164	2	4	28
6	Creating a procedural computer program	L/601/3167	2	7	60
9	Creating an event-driven computer program	T/601/3177	2	7	60
12	Creating an object-oriented computer program	A/601/3181	2	7	60
15	Customer care in ICT	A/500/7158	2	9	45
17	Data modelling	A/601/3200	2	6	45
19	IT project management 2	T/502/1110	2	4	30
21	Software installation and upgrade	D/500/7329	2	9	80
23	System management	Y/500/7331	2	6	55
25	Technical advice and guidance	F/601/3506	2	9	50
27	Technical fault diagnosis	T/601/3292	2	9	45
29	Testing ICT systems	A/500/7354	2	9	80
31	User profile administration	H/500/7378	2	6	55
33	ICT system operation	F/500/7338	2	9	45
34	Introduction to IT systems development	J/600/3247	2	6	50
40	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	K/500/7382	2	9	45
196	Interpersonal and written communication	T/500/7207	2	9	60
5	Computer games development	F/601/3165	3	10	71
7	Creating a procedural computer program	R/601/3171	3	12	90
10	Creating an event-driven computer program	F/601/3179	3	12	90
13	Creating an object-oriented computer program	L/601/3184	3	12	90

16	Customer care in ICT	F/500/7159	3	12	100
18	Data modelling	L/601/3203	3	9	75
20	IT project management 3	L/502/1114	3	10	60
22	Software installation and upgrade	R/500/7330	3	12	100
24	System management	D/500/7332	3	12	100
26	Technical advice and guidance	J/601/3507	3	12	75
28	Technical fault diagnosis	A/601/3293	3	12	75
30	Testing ICT systems	F/500/7355	3	12	100
32	User profile administration	K/500/7379	3	9	80
35	Investigating and defining customer requirements for ICT systems	R/601/3249	3	12	75
36	Quality management of ICT products and services	T/500/7210	3	12	100
37	Remote support for products and services	D/500/7217	3	12	100
38	Security of ICT systems	D/5000/7220	3	12	100
39	System operation	A/500/7340	3	12	100
197	Managing software development	T/500/6798	3	12	90
198	Interpersonal and written communication	A/500/7208	3	12	100
199	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	M/500/7383	3	12	100
8	Designing and developing procedural computer programs	T/601/3311	4	15	90
11	Designing and developing event-driven computer programs	J/601/3300	4	15	90
14	Designing and developing object-oriented computer programs	T/601/3308	4	15	90
41	Data structures and algorithms	R/601/3297	4	15	90
42	Designing and developing a website	L/601/3315	4	15	90
200	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	T/500/7384	4	15	90
201	Security of ICT systems	H/500/7221	4	15	90
223	Customer care for IT and Telecoms Professionals	H/504/5502	4	12	100
224	Remote support for ICT products or services	A/602/1264	4	15	90
225	Technical advice and guidance	Y/500/7345	4	15	90
226	Technical fault diagnosis	L/500/7391	4	15	90
227	Testing ICT & Telecoms systems	M/505/0573	4	15	90
228	Investigating and defining customer requirements for ICT systems	R/602/1772	4	15	90

3.4 Barred combinations and exemptions

Barred combinations: Units available at more than one level are grouped together below. Unit achievement at one level only will count towards the qualification.				
	OCR Unit No	Level	Unit title	Unit Ref No (URN)
One of	3	1	Health and Safety in ICT	Y/500/7183
	222	3	Health and Safety in ICT	H/602/2943
One of	4	2	Computer games development	A/601/3164
	5	3	Computer games development	F/601/3165
One of	6	2	Creating a procedural computer program	L/601/3167
	7	3	Creating a procedural computer program	R/601/3171
	8	4	Designing and developing procedural computer programs	T/601/3311
One of	9	2	Creating an event driven computer program	T/601/3177
	10	3	Creating an event driven computer program	F/601/3179
	11	4	Designing and developing event-driven computer programs	J/601/3300
One of	12	2	Creating an object oriented computer program	A/601/3181
	13	3	Creating an object oriented computer program	L/601/3184
	14	4	Designing and developing object-oriented computer programs	T/601/3308
One of	195	1	Customer care in ICT	T/500/7157
	15	2	Customer care in ICT	A/500/7158
	16	3	Customer care in ICT	F/500/7159
	223	4	Customer care for IT and Telecoms Professionals	H/504/5502
One of	17	2	Data modelling	A/601/3200
	18	3	Data modelling	L/601/3203
	41	4	Data structures and algorithms	R/601/3297
One of	19	2	IT project management 2	T/502/1110
	20	3	IT project management 3	L/502/1114
One of	21	2	Software installation and upgrade	D/500/7329
	22	3	Software installation and upgrade	R/500/7330
One of	23	2	System management	Y/500/7331
	24	3	System management	D/500/7332
One of	25	2	Technical advice and guidance	F/601/3506
	26	3	Technical advice and guidance	J/601/3507
	225	4	Technical advice and guidance	Y/500/7345
One of	27	2	Technical fault diagnosis	T/601/3292
	28	3	Technical fault diagnosis	A/601/3293
	226	4	Technical fault diagnosis	L/500/7391
One of	29	2	Testing ICT systems	A/500/7354
	30	3	Testing ICT systems	F/500/7355
	227	4	Testing ICT & Telecoms systems	M/505/0573
One of	31	2	User profile administration	H/500/7378
	32	3	User profile administration	K/500/7379

One of	33	2	ICT system operation	H/500/7378
	39	3	System operation	A/500/7340
One of	35	3	Investigating and defining customer requirements for ICT systems	R/601/3249
	228	4	Investigating and defining customer requirements for ICT systems	R/602/1772
One of	37	3	Remote support for products and services	T500/7217
	224	4	Remote support for products or services	A/602/1264
One of	38	3	Security of ICT systems	D/500/7220
	201	4	Security of ICT systems	H/500/7221
One of	40	2	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	K/500/7382
	199	3	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	M/500/7383
	200	4	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	T/500/7384
One of	196	2	Interpersonal and written communication	T/500/7207
	198	3	Interpersonal and written communication	A/500/7208

Exemptions: Units achieved from the level 2 and level 3 NVQ IT Practitioner/Professional (06297/06298) can provide exemption for the corresponding QCF unit (see table below for details). The NVQ units must have been achieved within three years of entering for this QCF qualification.

OCR unit number	Unit title	QCF unit ref no (URN)	NVQ exemption unit ref no	NVQ IT unit number
3	Health and safety in ICT	Y/500/7183	K/102/7607	1BB
195	Customer care in ICT	T/500/7157	M/102/7608	1CC
15	Customer care in ICT	A/500/7158	D/102/7619	2CC
196	Interpersonal and written communication	T/500/7207	Y/102/7621	2DD
197	Managing software development	T/500/6798	T/102/7660	2LL
23	System management	Y/500/7331	F/102/7645	2RR
21	Software installation and upgrade	D/500/7329	A/102/7644	2QQ
29	Testing ICT systems	A/500/7354	R/102/7651	2WW
31	User profile administration	H/500/7378	L/102/7650	2XX
40	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	K/500/7382	Y/102/7652	2YY
16	Customer care in ICT	F/500/7159	K/102/7655	3CC
198	Interpersonal and written communication	A/500/7208	M/102/7656	3DD
37	Remote support for products and services	D/500/7217	T/102/7657	3EE
36	Quality management of ICT products and services	T/500/7210	A/102/7661	3MM
38	Security of ICT systems	D/500/7220	F/102/7662	3NN
22	Software installation and upgrade	R/500/7330	R/102/7665	3QQ
24	System management	D/500/7332	Y/102/7666	3RR
39	System operation	A/500/7340	D/102/7667	3SS
30	Testing ICT systems	F/500/7355	M/102/7673	3WW
32	User profile administration	K/500/7379	H/102/7671	3XX
199	Working with ICT hardware and equipment	M/500/7383	K/102/7672	3YY

4 Apprenticeship information

4.1 How do I get a certificate for the apprenticeship?

The IT, Software, Web and Telecoms Professionals Apprenticeship is certificated by e-skills. For full details of frameworks see e-skills website <http://www.e-skills.com/apprenticeships/>

4.2 About the apprenticeships

An Apprenticeship is a job with an accompanying skills development programme designed by employers in the sector. It allows the apprentice to gain technical knowledge and real practical experience required for their immediate job and future career development or progression into further or higher education.

Apprentices acquire skills through a mix of learning in the workplace, formal off the job training and the opportunity to practice and embed new skills in a real work context. This broader mix differentiates the Apprenticeship experience from training delivered to meet narrowly focused job needs.

The Level 4 IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals Apprenticeship framework is designed for people who are working in the IT and Telecoms sector. It is made up of qualifications and learning that will provide apprentices with the skills and knowledge required to become competent in their chosen job role and improve their employment prospects. The framework includes a balance of content in technical, business and interpersonal areas, designed to ensure apprentices have an appropriate set of skills to operate in today's IT and Telecoms job roles. The qualifications include units for Software Development, Web Development, Technical Support, Telecommunications and Databases.

On completion of the Level 4 IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals Higher Apprenticeship the apprentice will have the skills, knowledge and competence required to undertake the full range of duties, in the range of circumstances appropriate to the job, confidently and competently to the standard set by the industry. This will enable them to work in roles such as IT Project Manager, Analyst Developer, IT Service Manager, IT Security Analyst, Network or Telecoms Manager.

4.3 What makes up an apprenticeship?

The Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship is approximately 525 guided learning hours (GLH).

Candidates wishing to enter a Higher Apprenticeship will need to have achieved one of the following:

- A Levels, or equivalent educational attainment, including the Level 3 IT Diploma. International Baccalaureate or a **relevant** Level 3 Technical Certificate
- An Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3)
- Employment within the technology/telecommunications industry for a number of years and demonstrated to their employer that they have a reasonable expectation of achieving the required outcomes of the Higher Apprenticeship. This can be supported by the demonstration or evidence of prior achievement or performance in the role prior to starting the higher apprenticeship.

There is no maximum time frame for the Level 4 IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals Higher Apprenticeship. However, the expected minimum time for the level 4 Higher Apprenticeships is about 18

months. Individual circumstances such as significant prior learning will result in a shorter or longer period of learning. The amount of time the apprenticeship takes will also be influenced by the opportunities available within the workplace and the level of support given by employers and learning providers.

Each apprenticeship is made up of the following elements:

- Competence qualification e.g. OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals
- Knowledge qualification(s) e.g. OCR Level 4 Cambridge Technical Diploma in IT

5 Centre assessor and quality assurance personnel requirements

Competence qualifications are first and foremost about what people can do. They go beyond technical skills to include planning, problem solving, dealing with unexpected occurrences, working with other people and applying the knowledge and understanding that underpins overall competence. This section provides information on centre assessor and quality assurance personnel requirements for verified qualifications.

5.1 Assessment centre requirements

The relevant technical/occupational competence of those undertaking the roles of assessment and internal quality assurance is one of the key factors underpinning valid, fair and reliable assessment. The integrity of assessments and quality assurance is of paramount importance.

Your centre must:

- ensure there are sufficient trained or qualified personnel to assess the number of expected candidates. Ensure there are sufficient trained or qualified personnel to internally quality assure the number of candidates and assessors (i.e. you must have at least one assessor and one Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) to run these qualifications)
- put systems and internal quality assurance personnel in place to ensure that all assessments are valid, reliable, safe and manageable and suitable to the needs of the candidate
- ensure evidence is authentic and sufficient
- ensure there is a standardisation process in place to ensure that all assessments are consistent and fair
- ensure those undertaking the roles of quality assurance and assessment maintain their skills, knowledge and understanding regarding assessment and quality assurance and the associated qualification
- ensure there is sufficient time to conduct effective assessment and internal quality assurance
- ensure any corrective measures, identified by OCR external verifiers and OCR, are addressed.

5.2 Centre assessor responsibilities

Assessment is an activity carried out by an individual either as a specific role or as part of a wider role e.g. teacher, tutor, supervisor, manager.

All centre assessors must:

- have the role of assessor identified within their role profile
- be competent in the areas they are assessing i.e. have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational competence in the unit, at or above the level of the unit being assessed.
- be fully conversant with the unit(s) against which the assessments are to be undertaken
- assess evidence produced through real work or simulation to the recognised standards

- be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work
- actively engage in continuous professional development activities to keep up-to-date with developments within the sector
- judge candidates' work against the assessment criteria identified in the units
- identify valid and sufficient evidence
- ensure authentication of candidates' work (see section 6.7)
- identify gaps in evidence and ensure these are resolved before the unit is claimed
- give feedback to candidates
- liaise with other assessors in the centre to ensure assessment decisions are consistent and to the required standard
- confirm candidate achievement by completing and signing the required OCR documentation
- maintain records of candidates' achievements needed in the event of any submission or results enquiries.

Assessors must have the necessary expertise, which **may** include assessors holding, or be working towards, appropriate qualifications, such as:

- Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- Assess candidates using a range of methods (A1)
- Assess candidate performance D32
- Assess candidate using differing sources of evidence D33

You must provide evidence of the training being undertaken or proof of relevant qualifications.

5.3 Expert Witnesses

Expert witnesses can be drawn from a wide range of people who can confirm performance in the workplace, including line managers and experienced colleagues from inside the candidate's organisation. Expert witnesses must have proven practical experience and knowledge relating to the content of the unit being assessed. The assessor will make the final judgement.

The expert witness is not consulted as a professional assessor, but as someone who is expert in the occupation to be assessed.

It is unlikely that someone could become an expert in their entire job role in less than six to twelve months of being employed in the IT and Telecoms sector. They could, however, very quickly become an expert in the content of a single unit if this was the focus of their job role. The assessor should make a judgement as to the level of expertise held by a potential expert witness and, where necessary, confirm this with the management team.

5.4 Internal Quality Assurance Personnel (IQA)

Internal quality assurance is an activity carried out by an individual either as a specific role or as part of an individual's wider role.

The IQA should have sufficient level of understanding to allow them to judge whether the assessor has fully assessed candidates against all the assessment criteria in the unit.

IQAs must:

- have sufficient and relevant technical/occupational familiarity in the unit(s) being assessed
- be fully conversant with the standards and assessment criteria in the units to be assessed
- understand OCR's quality assurance systems and requirements for this qualifications
- be occupationally knowledgeable and competent across the range of units for which they are responsible prior to commencing the role
- sample the assessment process to ensure accurate and consistent decisions between centre assessors against the qualification standards
- provide feedback to assessors to resolve differences on assessment decisions
- ensure assessment has been carried out by assessors who are occupationally competent within the area they are assessing
- actively engage in continuous professional development activities in order to keep up-to-date with developments within the sector
- respond appropriately to corrective measures identified by OCR external verifiers and OCR
- participate in (or be responsible for) standardisation activities in order to standardise the interpretation of the unit specification.

Those making quality assurance decisions must have the necessary expertise to do so, which **may** include IQA's holding, or be working towards, appropriate qualifications, such as:

- Award in Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Processes and Practices
- Award in Conducting Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process (V1)
- Internally verify the assessment process D34

You must provide evidence of the training being undertaken or proof of relevant qualifications.

6 Verified assessment

This section provides guidance on verified assessment: how to plan and manage assessment and what controls must be applied throughout the process. Your centre must comply with [OCR's criteria for verified qualifications](#).

6.1 Overview of the assessment

This qualification is internally assessed by centre assessors and quality assured by internal quality assurance personnel and externally verified by OCR.

Teaching and Learning

We recommend that teaching and development of subject content and associated skills be referenced to real-life situations, using appropriate work-based contact and vocationally experienced delivery personnel.

Evidence

This IT and Telecoms sector's competence-based qualification recognises competence in the workplace. Therefore evidence of competence should come from workplace activity and reflect attainment within an organisational context.

When you are satisfied that your candidate has met all of the requirements for a unit, you must sign an evidence record sheet to confirm the assessment process is complete and it is the candidate's own work.

6.2 Initial assessment of candidates

It is important that you carry out an initial assessment to identify candidates' level of competence, knowledge and understanding and any potential gaps that need to be addressed.

This will also:

- help you and the candidates identify the most appropriate optional units
- allow you to plan the assessment
- enable candidates to understand the best place to start generating evidence.

See section 1.2 for information about Prior Learning and section 10.8 for Recognition of Prior Learning.

6.3 Planning assessment

Centre assessors must take responsibility for planning assessment with candidates. This will involve discussing details with candidates including:

- agreeing the best source of evidence to use for particular units
- determining the best way of assessing the candidate
- confirming the best times, dates and places for the assessments to take place

- agreeing a flexible timetable for unit completion and assessment.

Centre assessors must make a note of their assessment planning and regularly give feedback to candidates.

6.4 Real work

Real work is where the candidate is engaged in activities that contribute to the aims of the organisation by whom they are employed, for example in paid employment or working in a voluntary capacity.

Candidates undertaking the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals must complete real work activities in order to produce evidence to demonstrate they have met the National Occupational Standards (NOS) and are occupationally competent.

Simulation is allowed for aspects of units when a candidate is required to compete a work activity that does not occur on a regular basis and therefore opportunities to compete a particular work activity do not easily arise; a candidate is required to respond to a situation that rarely occurs, such as responding to an emergency situation; the safety of the candidate, other individuals and/or resources will be put at risk. When simulation is used, assessors must be confident that the simulation replicates the workplace to such an extent that candidates will be able to fully transfer their occupational competence to the workplace and real situations.

Where the candidate's performance is assessed within the workplace, this evidence should naturally occur within the candidate's work role. This will include the candidate's application of knowledge. This principle will apply to competence units, except where simulation is acceptable (see above).

6.5 Simulation

Where simulation is allowed to be used (see section 6.4) it **must** replicate working activities in a realistic working environment.

A realistic working environment (for the purpose of simulated work activities) is regarded as one that replicates what is likely to happen when an individual is carrying out their normal duties and activities in a real working environment.

Internal quality assurance personnel must agree the use of simulated activities before they take place and must sample all evidence produced through simulated activities (see section Internal quality assurance).

6.6 Methods of assessment

Unless otherwise specified, all units may be assessed using any method, or combination of methods, which clearly demonstrates that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. We have identified the main assessment methods suitable for these qualifications:

- [observation](#) of practice by the assessor or expert witness for occupational specific units
- [questioning](#) the candidate or witness by the assessor
- [professional discussion](#)
- [examining work products](#) – e.g. installation plans, fault logs, test plans, minutes of meetings, manuals/user guides.

- [examining written evidence](#) e.g. assignments, tasks, projects
- [simulation](#) (see sections 6.4 and 6.5 for guidance on simulation and when it is allowed).

It is your responsibility to agree the best method of assessing a candidate in relation to their individual circumstances.

The methods agreed must be:

- valid
- reliable
- safe and manageable
- suitable for the candidate.

Valid

A valid assessment method is capable of measuring the knowledge or skills in question. For example, a written test cannot measure a candidate's practical skills or their ability to work well with others.

Validity can be compromised if a candidate does not understand what is required of them. For example, a valid method of assessing a candidate's knowledge and understanding is to question them. If the questions are not relevant to the qualification or how they are phrased makes it difficult for the candidate to understand the validity of the assessment method is threatened.

Evidence must also be valid, for example, it would not be appropriate to simply present a copy of the organisation's procedures for responding to customer requests as evidence towards Unit 225 (Technical Advice and Guidance) as it may not be the candidate's own work. It would be more appropriate for the assessor to carry out an observation or obtain a witness testimony, confirming that the candidate follows the procedures.

Reliable

A reliable method of assessment produces consistent results across different centre assessors on each assessment occasion. Internal quality assurance personnel (IQA) must make sure that all centre assessors' decisions are consistent.

Safe and manageable

Centre assessors and IQA must make sure that assessment methods used are safe and manageable and do not put unnecessary demands on the candidate and the organisation they work for.

Suitable to the needs of the candidate

We have designed this qualification so that achievement is accessible to all candidates, in the context of the units.

For candidates who have access requirements see 'Access arrangements including special consideration'.

If you think that any aspect of this qualification unfairly restricts access and progression, please contact our Customer Contact Centre.

6.7 Authentication

Assessors must be confident that the evidence they assess is the product of the candidate's own work. This does not mean that a candidate must be supervised throughout the completion of all work but the assessor must exercise sufficient supervision, or introduce sufficient checks, to be in a position to judge the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Wherever possible, the assessor should discuss work-in-progress with candidates. This will not only ensure that work is underway in a planned and timely manner but will also provide opportunities for assessors to check authenticity of the work and provide general feedback.

Candidates must not plagiarise. Plagiarism is the submission of another's work as one's own and/or failure to acknowledge a source correctly. Plagiarism is considered to be malpractice and could lead to the candidate being disqualified. Plagiarism sometimes occurs innocently when candidates are unaware of the need to reference or acknowledge their sources. It is therefore important that you ensure candidates understand:

- the work they submit must be their own
- the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties may be applied.

Candidates may refer to research, quotations or evidence but they must list their sources.

Whilst there are no restrictions on the number of times that a candidate can resubmit evidence, it is the responsibility of the assessor to ensure that the details of any feedback and guidance are clearly recorded.

Please note: Your centre must confirm to us that the evidence produced by candidates is authentic. The Evidence Record Sheet includes a declaration for candidates to sign and is available from the webpage.

6.8 Making assessment decisions

Candidates are not required to meet all the criteria every time they carry out an activity, but **it is necessary that all candidates produce evidence to demonstrate they have met all assessment criteria in the unit.**

They must consistently provide sufficient evidence for you to be able to confirm that your candidate is competent in their working environment.

In line with the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for assessors, you should:

- plan with the candidate
- assess candidate performance, knowledge and understanding
- look at the evidence
- question and give feedback to the candidate working towards the qualifications being assessed.

All criteria in the unit must be completed before you as centre assessor can sign the unit off as complete.

6.9 Generation and collection of evidence

Candidates' evidence should be in an appropriate format to demonstrate the skills, competency, or application of knowledge and understanding, as specified in each assessment criterion within the unit in question.

Evidence can take many forms, for example, DVDs, digital recordings, CD and paper-based or digitally formatted documents, screen prints, photographs supported by a personal statement; reports/logs.

If group work is used as evidence, the candidate's contribution must be clearly identified.

Evidence can come from a number of sources. A list of the main sources of evidence is provided below:

- [Observation](#)
- [Questioning](#)
- [Professional discussion](#)
- [Work products](#) – the outcome or product of a candidate's work activity
- [Witness statements](#)
- [Personal statement](#)
- [Simulation](#) (if allowed – see section 6.4 and 6.5).

Candidates should take responsibility for the development of their own portfolios, with appropriate support from tutors, employers and peers, and should be aware of the need for clear presentation and ordering as an aid to assessment and referencing once the work is submitted.

Where evidence is relevant to more than one assessment criterion in one or more units, the candidate should cross-reference the evidence within their unit portfolio so that it can be considered by you as centre assessor and by the OCR external verifier if required.

Evidence Record Sheets are available to download from our website. Candidates can use these sheets to record their evidence and link it to the assessment criteria in one unit. You **must** use this sheet or your own suitable alternative to allow the OCR external verifier to see which assessment criterion each piece of evidence refers to.

6.10 How much evidence is needed?

It is difficult to give detailed guidance regarding the amount of evidence needed, as it depends on the type of evidence collected and the judgement of your centre assessors.

Evidence must meet all of the Assessment Criteria. The quality and breadth of evidence is assessed not the quantity.

Centre assessors should discuss with candidates the most suitable sources of evidence and ensure they are aware of the importance of quality rather than quantity when presenting evidence for assessment. The quality and breadth of evidence presented should determine whether your centre assessor is confident that a candidate is competent in meeting the requirements of the unit.

Assessors must be satisfied, from the evidence presented, that candidates can work independently to the required standard.

6.11 Assessment of the evidence

It is the assessor's responsibility to:

- assess the evidence presented by the candidate
- provide feedback to the candidate
- make an assessment decision which will be confirmed through internal and external quality assurance.

Assessors will judge candidates' evidence against the assessment criteria specified in the unit.

6.12 Observation

Centre assessors may carry out observations of a candidate undertaking activities or tasks and make an assessment decision based on the candidate's performance, i.e. what they can do or the process they have gone through.

Sometimes, the observation can also provide supporting evidence of what a candidate knows.

The observation should be of naturally occurring practice within the candidate's work role.

Centre Assessors and candidates should plan observations together but it is the centre assessor's responsibility to record the observation. After the observation has taken place, you must record an assessment decision and the justification for the decision. This should include sufficient information about what was observed to ensure the assessment criteria has been met and enable the assessment to be quality assured. Centre assessors should also give feedback to the candidate.

An example of an Observation/Witness Statement, for use by assessors, is available to download from our website.

6.13 Questioning

Centre assessors may question a candidate for the assessment of these qualifications.

Questioning the candidate is usually an ongoing part of the assessment process, and it is necessary to:

- test a candidate's knowledge of facts and procedures
- check if a candidate understands principles and theories *and*
- collect information on the type and purpose of the activities a candidate has been involved in.

For the most part, you should use open ended questions; i.e. questions that cannot be answered by the candidate with one word responses (e.g. 'yes' or 'no'). Open ended questions require thought and detail in order to answer the question. You should be careful to avoid complicated questions which may confuse the candidate.

It is important that you record assessment decisions after you have questioned the candidate. You must record enough information to justify your decisions. This does not mean that you must record the questions and answers, word for word, but you must record enough detail to allow the responses to be quality assured against the assessment criteria.

6.14 Professional discussion

Professional discussion is a structured, planned and in-depth discussion recorded by your centre assessor. It allows the candidate to present evidence of competence and to demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding through discussing the evidence and showing how it meets the requirements of the qualification.

The purpose of the discussion is to explore the level of the candidate's competence and ensure their actions are based on a firm understanding of principles which underpins the competence.

You should guide the discussion by using open questioning and active listening.

6.15 Work products

Work products are produced in the workplace. They should be of naturally occurring practice within the candidate's role. The evidence presented for assessment may be the actual product or a record of the product e.g installation plans, fault logs, test plans, minutes of meetings, manuals/user guides.

6.16 Witness statements

Witness statements are a record of witness testimonies. A witness statement is used to support work or evidence sourced from confidential or sensitive material e.g. data protection. It should not be used to evidence achievement of a whole unit.

The witness must not be related to the candidate and must be in a position to make valid comments about their performance, e.g. tutors or workplace supervisors.

It is not acceptable for candidates to produce written witness statements for witnesses to sign.

Witness statements:

- must describe what they witnessed the candidate doing
- can be written or verbal accounts of the candidate's performance
- do not have to be written by the witness, they may be recorded by the assessor after discussion with the witness and confirmed as accurate by the witness
- can be used to directly support work or as evidence of work based on confidential or sensitive sources e.g. data protection
- should not contain a list of skills
- should not be used as evidence of achievement for a whole unit.

A centre assessor will then judge whether the evidence presented meets the standards required by the assessment criteria for the unit. Often it will be necessary for assessors to contact witnesses to ensure:

- the witness statement is authentic
- the assessor's interpretation of the witness statement is accurate.

Where a witness provides a written statement they should include the following:

- the candidate's name

- the date, time and venue of the activity
- a description of the activities performed by the candidate
- the date the statement was written
- a description of their relationship to the candidate
- the witness' signature and job title
- the witness' contact details (e.g. telephone number).

6.17 Personal or candidate statement

This is a candidate's own account of what they did.

Personal statements can be a:

- written or verbal account of specific incidents, activities or situations
- log or diary
- reflective account.

All personal statements made by candidates must be authenticated, as a true account of what took place, by an appropriate witness e.g. tutor, employer, peer.

6.18 Candidate cumulative assessment record (CAR)

A cumulative assessment record (CAR) is the candidate's record of the evidence that has been assessed and accepted as proof of competence by the internal assessor.

Templates are available for the recording documents to be used in a CAR or you may design your own forms which must be approved during the approval visit or by our external verifier. The forms can be in any format but as a minimum they must contain the information identified in our [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#).

Candidates must record, on the relevant documents, all the evidence presented for assessment. These records will also be used by your centre assessor and internal quality assurance personnel to record assessment decisions. They can also be used to record progress towards the achievement of units.

Filling in these documents is an ongoing process, involving discussion and agreement between the candidate and their centre assessor. The candidate should fill in and keep the CAR while working towards their qualification. A centre assessor may help the candidate complete the CAR if necessary. It may be viewed by your centre's internal quality assurance personnel and OCR external verifier for sampling purposes as part of the quality assurance process.

The following forms are available to assist your centre and candidates as they work towards these qualifications.

Evidence Record Sheet (one to be completed for each unit) - mandatory

This form (or a suitable alternative) is **mandatory** for candidates' CARs. It links the evidence in the CAR to the assessment criteria. As evidence for the unit is gathered, it should be listed down the left hand side of the form. Where possible, the candidate should complete the form; an assessor may help if necessary.

The candidate must sign the form to confirm that the work is their own. The assessor must also sign to confirm the candidate has met the assessment criteria. The IQA must sign the form if the unit is part of their sample for quality assurance purposes.

Assessment Planning Record - mandatory

This form (or a suitable alternative) is **mandatory** for centre records. It should be completed by an assessor to capture when and how assessment planning took place.

Assessment Decision Record - mandatory

This form (or a suitable alternative) is **mandatory** for centre records. It should be completed by an assessor to capture the breadth of assessment methods used and the reason behind assessment decisions.

Assessment Feedback Record - mandatory

This form (or a suitable alternative) is **mandatory** for centre records. It should be completed by an assessor to provide candidates with written feedback after an assessment has been carried out. It can also be used to capture any feedback the candidate gives to the assessor.

Please note: the assessment planning, assessment decision and assessment feedback records do not need to be separate documents. One or two forms which combine these activities can be used as long as each stage is clearly recorded.

Evidence Summary Sheet - optional

This form is designed to list all of the assessed evidence and the method of assessment used for each piece of evidence. It will include each piece of evidence's reference code and where it can be found. It allows candidates and assessors to see at a glance where each piece of evidence can be found.

The form also includes a space for the candidate's OCR registration number. The use of this form is optional and you can design a suitable alternative.

Record of Achievement - optional

This form is designed for use by candidates to record progress through their chosen units. There is one form per qualification, allowing candidates to track the units completed and their corresponding credit values. The use of this form is **optional**.

Observation record - optional

This form is designed to capture all the necessary information about candidate's undertaking activities or tasks. The use of this form is **optional**.

Witness List - optional

This form is designed to capture all the necessary information about witnesses who have contributed to a candidate's evidence of competence. The use of this form is **optional**.

6.19 Verification – how it works

6.19.1 Internal quality assurance

It is your centre's responsibility to appoint internal quality assurance personnel (See section 5.4) to manage the internal quality assurance process.

The purpose of internal quality assurance is to make sure and show that assessment is valid, reliable and consistent, through monitoring and sampling assessment decisions.

For this qualification you **must** carry out internal quality assurance to ensure that all candidates' evidence is assessed consistently to the required standard.

The IQA is responsible for:

- ensuring all assessors are assessing to the required standard
- ensuring all assessment decisions are fair, valid, reliable and consistent
- arranging regular standardisation meetings
- ensuring standardisation of work between assessors
- maintaining records of the outcome of standardisation activities
- advising centre assessors of any discrepancies in assessment
- suggesting ways in which assessment may be brought into line to meet the required standard.

6.19.2 External verification

We will allocate an external verifier who will visit your centre to verify assessments and internal quality assurance.

The external verifier **must** interview candidates, centre assessors and internal quality assurance personnel during their visits.

For each external verification visit your centre must have available:

- the candidate assessment records (CAR) and evidence for all candidates claimed
- any candidate assessment records and evidence claimed by Direct Claims Status (DCS) since the last visit
- identified work-in-progress portfolios
- access to observe assessments taking place
- access to our on-line claim system (Interchange)
- as requested by the EV, candidates, centre assessors and internal quality assurance personnel; which may include any claims for certificates through Direct Claims Status (DCS)
- a copy of the external verifier's last visit report
- a sample signature list for all centre assessors and internal quality assurance personnel
- details of training, curriculum vitae and original certificates for new members of the assessment team or updated documents for existing assessment team members
- all **centre records**, see the next section for more details

- evidence of achieving action points and/or recommendations since the last external verifier visit
- if recorded evidence is used, ensure all recordings and appropriate playback equipment is available.

6.19.3 Centre records required for verification

Your centre must make sure that internal quality assurance and candidate assessment records are available for external verification purposes. These records must be securely held by your centre for a minimum of three years following candidate achievement of the qualification (i.e. from the date of certification).

As a minimum these must record the following information:

- the candidate's name and location
- the title and level of the qualification they are taking
- the candidate's start date on the programme and confirmation of candidate entry
- the name of the centre assessor
- the name of the internal quality assurance personnel
- the date and outcome of the initial assessment of the candidate
- dates and details of candidate reviews and feedback sessions
- assessment method(s) used
- dates of all assessments and their outcomes (that is, the decision whether the candidate has met the requirements or not) cross-referenced to the unit
- enough detail of the assessments to justify the decision made
- an indication of the frequency, and reason for, the use of simulation, if used
- dates and outcomes of internal quality assurance
- action resulting from internal quality assurance
- candidate's achievement(s).

Records should show formative assessment decisions (ongoing decision making), summative assessment decisions and feedback to the candidate.

6.19.4 OCR external verifier reports for centres

Our external verifier will report against the OCR criteria for verified qualifications. Our external verifier will use the report to provide feedback to your centre and to OCR.

All EV reports are reviewed by OCR and their actions/recommendations are considered. The final decision on the application of any actions or recommendations lies with OCR.

If your centre is found to be non-compliant this will result in actions or sanctions being identified. If there is a sanction this will always result in one or more actions being identified for your centre to address.

If you wish to appeal a decision then you should follow our [appeals process in vocational qualifications](#).

6.20 Direct Claim Status (DCS)

Centres who have achieved a high level of internal verification and management of the internal quality assurance systems are eligible for Direct Claims Status (DCS). This is when centres can claim certification for identified qualifications in between their external verifier visits. Centres consistently meeting all the required criteria and delivering high quality assessment for an individual qualification over approximately a twelve month period could be awarded DCS.

In the centre report, the OCR external verifier may recommend your centre for direct claim status.

If we agree with the EV's recommendation, you will be sent:

- DCS agreement
- DCS Register of accountable officers (containing the names of your centre's accountable officers who are responsible for the DCS certification claims)
- complete list of qualifications approved for DCS.

Once you return the appropriate documentation we will notify you that you can use DCS.

Once you have submitted claims, the external verifier will select a sample of candidates' work, which will be reviewed at the next external verifier visit. Your centre must retain or have access to all portfolios claimed with direct claim status until the next external verifier visit. Certificates issued under 'Direct Claim' procedures will remain provisional until such time as they are confirmed through a verification visit.

All candidates, including any who leave your centre following certification, must be asked to retain their evidence, portfolios and cumulative assessment record (CAR) for one year as they may be required for audit.

6.20.1 Withdrawal of DCS

DCS may be withdrawn at any time if in the opinion of OCR any of the centre information given is no longer current, the conditions of the approval are not met or the quality of assessment and quality assurance at the centre is compromised.

6.20.2 Re-instatement of DCS

We will apply one of the following:

- reinstate DCS at the next external verifier visit if all action points have been completed
- centre is required to go through the full DCS process and meet the DCS criteria again.

The route for reinstatement will depend upon which of the DCS criteria are not in place at the point of DCS withdrawal.

6.20.3 Critical points regarding Direct Claim Status

- Certificates issued under 'Direct Claim' procedures will remain provisional until such time as they are confirmed through a verification visit.
- Centres must ensure that a verification visit takes place before the end date of a qualification and that all candidates are included at the final visit.
- Direct Claims Status will be withdrawn after the final visit has taken place for the qualification.

- Centres must keep assessment and quality assurance records relating to all candidates for at least three years from the date of the claim.
- The decision on whether DCS is awarded, retained or withdrawn lies with OCR.

6.21 Centre malpractice guidance

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre* to report (in writing) all cases of suspected malpractice involving centre staff or candidates. A JCQ Report of Suspected Malpractice form (JCQ/M1), which is available to download from the JCQ website, should be completed and emailed to malpractice@ocr.org.uk.

When asked to do so by OCR, Heads of Centres are required to investigate instances of malpractice promptly and report the outcomes to OCR.

Further information is contained in the publication, OCR Malpractice Procedures – A Guide for centres <http://www.ocr.org.uk/images/15896-ocr-malpractice-procedures-a-guide-for-centres.pdf> and the JCQ publication: General and Vocational Qualifications – Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments which is available from www.jcq.org.uk.

* The Head of Centre is defined as the most senior officer in the organisation, directly responsible for the delivery of OCR qualifications, e.g. the Principal of a College, the Head Teacher of a school, the Managing Director of a Private Training Provider or the Group Training Manager of a major company.

7 Support

7.1 Free resources

The following materials are available on our website:

- Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals centre handbook
- Assessment documents for use in candidates' assessment records:
 - Evidence record sheet
 - Evidence summary sheet
 - Record of achievement
 - Observation record sheet
 - Witness list
 - Witness statement
 - Assessment planning/ decision/ feedback record

Your centre should use these documents, or you are free to design alternative recording sheets for your candidates to use. See section 6.19 or the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#) for further details.

7.2 Interchange

Interchange has been designed to help you to carry out day-to-day administration functions online, quickly and easily. The site allows you to buy candidate entries, make claims, see the progress of your claims and read centre feedback. In addition, you will have immediate and free access to candidate information. Sign up at www.ocr.org.uk/ocr-for/exams-officers/interchange/.

7.3 Professional Development Programme

We are constantly looking for ways in which we can improve the support we offer to tutors and to make our professional development programme more accessible and convenient to all.

To find out more about our new Professional Development Programme visit our [website](#).

7.4 Documents referred to in this handbook

Our publications:

[*Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications*](#)

[*Making entries for vocational qualifications via Interchange*](#)

[*Making online claims for vocational qualifications*](#)

[*OCR's criteria for verified qualifications*](#)

JCQ publications:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk>

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Instructions for Conducting Examinations

Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments

Ofqual

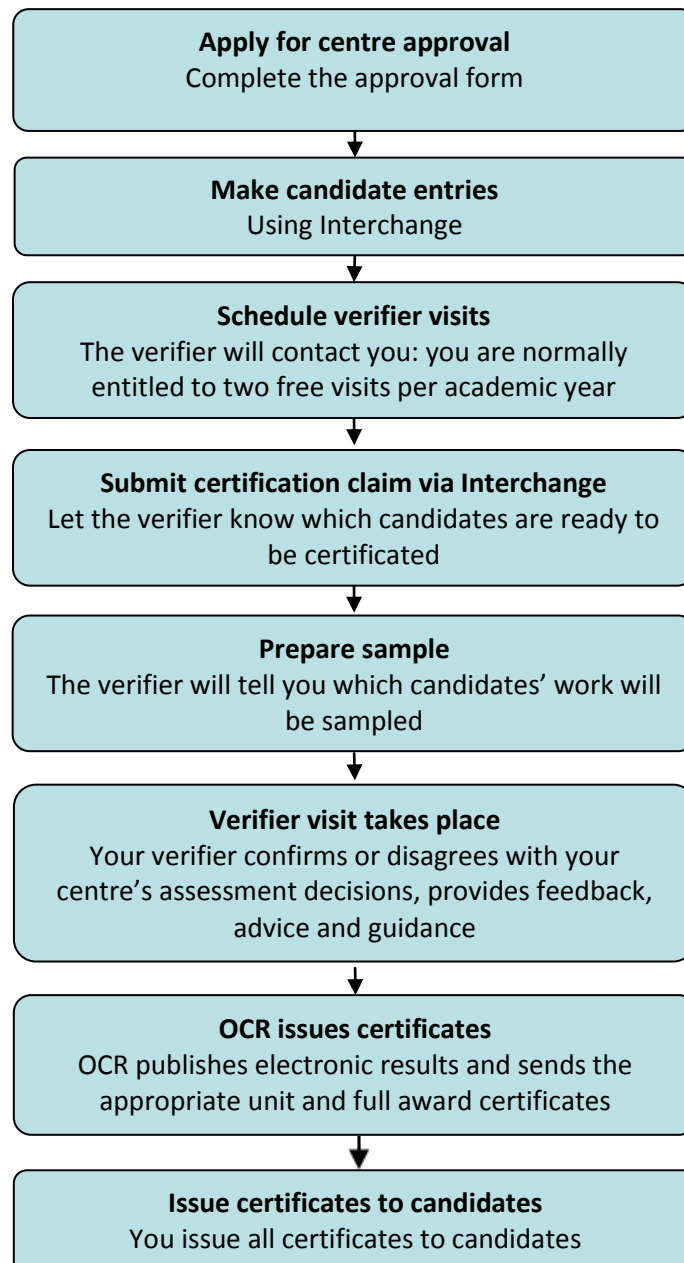
<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/how-we-regulate/regulatory-documents/>

8 Administration

8.1 Overview of full process

The flow chart below provides a brief summary of the administration process for these qualifications. For detailed information refer to our [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#).

8.1.1 Administration flowchart for verified qualifications



8.2 How to apply for centre approval

Your centre can either complete and submit the electronic [Centre Approval Form](#) available on our website or download the form and return the paper version to OCR Operations.

If you have any queries about centre approval contact our Customer Contact Centre on 024 7685 1509.

8.3 Making entries

8.3.1 Qualification or unit entries

Centres must have been approved to offer this qualification in order to make entries. We recommend your centre applies to become an approved centre well in advance of making their first entries.

Entries must be made via Interchange - OCR's secure extranet facility. For full details of the process see [Making entries for vocational qualifications via Interchange](#).

Centres must have made an entry for a qualification or a unit in order for us to provide the assessor details.

Candidates should be entered either for the full award **or** individual units; they should not be entered for both.

Option[s] for candidate entry:

- Full award entry – Where candidates intend to complete the whole qualification, rather than just individual units, they can be entered for the full award. This is often a more cost-effective way of making entries. However if the candidate does not complete the full award, the remaining units cannot be transferred to another candidate. Following qualification achievement, if a candidate wishes to progress to the next size of qualification e.g. from an Award to a Certificate, you could buy additional units or a full award entry. Please see the [fees list](#) for qualification and unit fees.
- Unit entry – Candidates can build their qualification unit by unit. This entry route may be useful if your centre is unsure whether a candidate is intending to complete the full qualification.

Route for making entries:

- Named entry – You provide specific candidate information (e.g. name and date of birth) for each qualification. The advantage of named entry is that any materials we supply are personalised, requiring less manual work later.

8.3.2 Entry code

You can enter candidates for the full qualification or by individual unit using the following qualification entry code:

OCR entry code	Title	Qualification Number
10351	OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals	601/1690/0

The units and any supporting documentation for this qualification can be found on our [website](#).

8.4 Unique Learner Numbers (ULN) and the Personal Learning Record (PLR)

Ofqual require Awarding Bodies to capture the Unique Learner Number (ULN) for all candidates who have claimed certification for any of these qualifications. It is also a condition of funding that all candidates that claim certification for publically funded qualifications must have a valid ULN.

The Personal Learning Record (PLR) is a permanent, online record of a candidate's qualifications and achievements and supports Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT). Each unit and qualification in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) has a credit value. The PLR enables learners to accumulate a record of their achievements within one place and supports the transfer of credit for these units between learning providers and awarding bodies, therefore supporting learners to gain full qualifications.

Learners over the age of 14 in UK education or training can access the PLR using their ULN. Learners keep the same ULN to access their PLR throughout their lives and whatever their level of learning.

Where a candidate has a ULN, you must enter their ten digit number in the ULN field when making entries via Interchange. For candidates who do not have a ULN, a claim will still be accepted if you leave this field blank, but OCR will not be able to send these achievements to the PLR.

When making entries via Interchange, for candidates with a ULN, you should enter the ten digit number in the ULN field.

Further information about this can be found in the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#) and at the [Learner Records Service](#).

8.5 How to make certificate claims

All claims should be carried out via OCR Interchange. For full details of the process see [Making online claims for vocational qualifications](#).

8.6 Enquiries about results

Please refer to the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#).

9 Certification

Candidates who achieve the full qualification will receive:

- a unit certificate listing the unit or units achieved, with their related credit value and the unit reference number(s), and
- a certificate stating the full qualification title and the qualification number.

Candidates who achieve one or more units but who do not meet the credit requirements for a full qualification will receive a certificate listing the units they have achieved along with their credit value.

9.1 Claiming certificates

Certificates will be issued directly to your centre for successful candidates. In order to ensure that these are automatically issued, you must ensure that the OCR candidate number is **always** used where a candidate has already achieved one or more units. See the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#) for full details.

For details on how to make online claims for QCF qualifications see the step-by-step guide; [Making online claims for vocational qualifications](#).

9.2 Replacement certificates

For details on replacement certificates see the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#).

10 Other information

10.1 National Occupational Standards (NOS)

This qualification provides a key progression route between education and employment or further study/training. It is directly relevant to the needs of employers and relates to the IT and Telecoms National Occupational Standards (NOS).

IT and Telecoms Professional NOS have been developed in parallel with and as part of the IT Professional Competency Model – e-skills Procom.

10.2 Avoidance of bias

We have taken great care in the preparation of this qualification to avoid bias of any kind. Special focus is given to the 9 strands of the Equality Act with the aim of ensuring both direct and indirect discrimination is avoided.

10.3 Regulatory requirements

This qualification complies with Ofqual's *General Conditions of Recognition* and Ofqual's *Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual, August 2008)*.

10.4 Language

This qualification and any associated assessment materials are in English only. Only answers provided in English will be assessed.

10.5 Mode of delivery

You are free to deliver this qualification using any mode of delivery that meets the needs of your candidates. Whatever mode of delivery is used, you must ensure that candidates have appropriate access to the resources identified in this handbook and units.

You should consider the candidates' complete learning experience when designing learning programmes. This is particularly important where candidates are studying part time alongside work commitments where candidates may bring with them a wealth of experience that should be utilised to maximum effect by your staff.

We do not specify the mode of study or a time limit for the achievement of this qualification other than the last entry/last certification dates. We will notify you at least 6 months before the qualification closes for entries and this information will be available on Ofqual's register of accredited qualifications and our [last entry/certification notification](#).

10.6 Centre resources and requirements

Your centre should ensure that appropriate physical resources are made available to candidates. Each unit will contain guidance on the resources required.

Your centre must provide appropriate assessment facilities for candidates that comply with our regulations stated in the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#) and [OCR's criteria for verified qualifications](#)

10.7 Delivery in Wales and Northern Ireland

Ofqual regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. They do not regulate degrees.

CCEA regulates non-vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.

The Welsh Government regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in Wales. They do not regulate degrees.

This qualification has been regulated by Ofqual for delivery in England and Northern Ireland during the life of the qualifications and approved by the Welsh Government for use by centres in Wales.

Candidates in Wales or Northern Ireland should not be disadvantaged by terms, legislation or aspects of government that are different from those in England. Where such situations might occur neutral terms have been used so that candidates may apply whatever is appropriate to their own situation.

We will provide handbooks, assessments and supporting documentation in English.

Further information about the provision of assessment materials in Welsh and Irish may be obtained from our Customer Contact Centre: 024 76 851509.

10.8 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Within the QCF, recognition of prior learning (RPL) is defined as 'A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.' ([Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework Ofqual/08/3726](#)). We encourage the use of RPL and your centre should advise their learners that they can bring forward any relevant learning (gained either informally or formally) so that it can be assessed against the assessment criteria specified in the unit, or units, the learner aims to complete. It is important that your centre make it clear to their learners that the RPL process is concerned with how the learner has acquired the knowledge, understanding or skills, it does not mean the learner is exempt from the assessment.

The currency of knowledge and ability is often important when recognising skills and competences. Where assessment is devolved to centres through assignments or portfolio-building, centre staff must judge the relevance of prior learning in all its aspects (including currency) to the qualification being assessed, before we will quality assure and authorise certification.

10.9 Access arrangements and special consideration

Adjustments to standard assessment arrangements are made on the basis of the individual needs of candidates.

It is important, therefore, that your centre identifies as early as possible whether candidates have disabilities or particular difficulties that will put them at a disadvantage in the assessment situation and select an appropriate qualification or adjustment that will allow them to demonstrate attainment.

The responsibility for providing adjustments to assessment is one which is shared between OCR and your centre. Centre staff should consult the Joint Council of Qualifications' (JCQ) booklet *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* www.jcq.org.uk.

You should also refer to this document for candidates who require a post-examination adjustment (special consideration) to reflect temporary illness, indisposition or injury at the time the assessment was taken.

For further guidance on access arrangements and special consideration refer to the [Admin guide: Vocational Qualifications](#).

10.10 Wider issues

This qualification provides opportunities for you to develop candidates' understanding of wider issues: spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues as well as an awareness of sustainable development, health and safety considerations and European developments consistent with international agreements.

10.10.1 Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues

Tutors delivering a programme of learning leading towards this qualification will have opportunities to develop candidates' understanding of ethical, social and moral values throughout the units, for example:

- social and cultural values could be addressed through the exploration of the way in which IT Professionals interact with end-users
- social, cultural and ethical issues could be explored through the way in which organisations use IT
- ethical and moral issues could be explored through a review of confidentiality and security issues in relation to the use of IT
- ethical and moral issues could be explored in relation to responsibilities of those who work with data to ensure that information is accurate and provides an accurate and honest representation of facts.

10.10.2 Sustainable development, health and safety considerations and European developments, consistent with international agreements

Tutors delivering a programme of learning leading towards this qualification will have opportunities to develop candidates' understanding of the issue listed above, for example:

- health and safety issues could be explored in relation to the use of equipment and the importance of ensuring the safety of people, equipment and premises
- health and safety could also be addressed through the review of working practices and through consideration of relevant legislation and procedures

- environmental issues could be addressed through the exploration of the way in which resources are used and disposed of
- European developments could be explored through discussion of regulations in areas such as data security, health and safety and environmental issues.

11 Contacting us

11.1 Enquiries

For enquiries about any of our vocational qualifications, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on:

Telephone: 024 76 851509
Fax: 024 76 421944
Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

Alternatively, you could visit our website at www.ocr.org.uk for further information about our qualifications.

11.2 Customer feedback

We welcome feedback from customers on all aspects of our provision. Comments relating to this documentation should be sent to:

OCR Qualification Manager
OCR Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals
Customers, Curriculum and Qualifications
Coventry Office
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ

11.3 Complaints

All complaints will be handled sensitively and speedily and used to inform how we can improve our service to customers.

If you are not satisfied with a product or service we have provided please follow the process set out in our [complaints policy](#).

You can contact us:

by post –write to:
OCR Director of Standards
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

by email – send your email to complaints@ocr.org.uk

by phone/fax contact our Customer Contact Centre on:

Telephone: 024 76 851509
Fax: 024 76 421944