

Frequently Asked Questions - QCF NVQ Languages

What is the qualification structure?

The qualifications consist of QCF units, and are available from Entry Level to Level 4 (Japanese and Russian are Entry Level only). There are four skill areas per Level; Speaking, Understanding, Reading and Writing. The units can be achieved as standalone qualifications, or as part of an overall Award, Certificate or Diploma. If taken as part of an overall qualification, all units must be in the same language, covering all four skill areas.

My learner is at Level 2 for three skill areas but Level 1 for another – can they still achieve a full Level 2 qualification?

Yes, the qualification rules allow one unit for the full qualification to be one level above or below the other three units (the remainder must be at the same level), so in this scenario the learner would achieve a Level 2 qualification. Obviously all units have to be in the same language, and they must also cover all the skill areas (i.e. Speaking, Writing etc).

If a learner is entered for the overall qualification but does not complete all four units, how will they be certificated for the individual qualifications they have achieved?

Centres need to claim for the units the learner has achieved, which will then automatically generate the relevant individual unit qualifications, at no extra cost.

Are these qualifications suitable for 14 – 18 year old learners?

The qualifications are suitable for delivery as follows:

	Pre-16	16-18	19+
Entry Level	Y	Y	Y
Level 1	Y	Y	Y
Level 2	Y	Y	Y
Level 3		Y	Y
Level 4			Y

Many schools, as well as training providers, offer these qualifications to their learners. Centres should ensure they check with the relevant agency regarding funding of the qualifications.

Do learners have to be work-based?

These qualifications demonstrate learners' ability to use their language skills for work; however it is recognised that not all learners will be working in environments where the language will occur naturally. In these instances, assessment in a simulated environment is acceptable. Simulations must, however, be closely aligned to the potential or actual workplace environment.¹ Centres can contextualise the assessment to suit their learners' situations, e.g. set up a role play of hotel work for learners who wish to pursue this as a career option.

How are the qualifications assessed?

They are centre-assessed and externally verified. All assessors must hold, or be working towards appropriate qualifications (currently A1 or D32/33), and hold the appropriate language skills. Internal Verifiers must hold, or be working towards appropriate qualifications (currently V1 or D34), and have sufficient expertise and language skills to enable

¹ Taken from CILT 2010 Assessment Strategy

them to verify assessment decisions. There are additional requirements for Assessors and Verifiers; full details are in the Centre Handbook for each qualification (Section 4).

We don't have any qualified assessors or internal verifiers in our centre – what can we do?

There are a number of options; staff within the centre may undertake the Assessor and Verifier qualifications, the centre may be able to 'team up' with a local school/training provider who also offer Languages NVQs and who already have trained staff in place, or commercial organisations offer assessment and verifier services for Language NVQs. As a first option, centres should contact OCR for further advice (vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk 024 7685 1509).

We are a school; do our assessors have to hold the A1 or D32/33 qualification if they are qualified teachers?

Yes, as stated above all assessors and verifiers have to hold the appropriate qualifications (A1 or D32/33 for Assessors, and V1 or D34 for Internal Verifiers).

Are there any assessment tasks available from OCR for centres to use when assessing their learners?

OCR does not prescribe the assessment tasks which should be used by learners; centres are free to use their own material for learners to compile a portfolio of evidence. Learners must meet the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria for each unit within the qualification, and assessment can consist of a number of suitable methods such as the product of a learner's work (paper-based

documents, videos, audio tapes etc) or the recording of an observation or witness testimony.

Commercial organisations also offer assessment material for the QCF NVQ Language qualifications, which many OCR centres use. A simple search on the internet for 'NVQ business language resources' will highlight potential commercial sources.

For the 'Speaking' units, does the External Verifier expect to hear recordings, or are witness statements sufficient?

Digital recordings of learners speaking the language are always preferable, as the External Verifier can then review the direct evidence from the candidate. There are many devices available which can be used relatively cost-effectively to record such evidence.

How much is centre approval?

For centres not already approved with OCR for verified schemes, there is an approval fee of £320.00. For centres already approved for verified schemes, there is an approval fee of £250.00, to add QCF NVQ Languages. Centres must comply with certain conditions in order to be approved for verified schemes; full details are within the Centre Handbook (Section 4) and also on the Centre Approval Form and Guidance Notes, and within the 'OCR Criteria for verified qualifications', available on the OCR website.

What funding can I claim?

Most of the qualifications from Entry Level to Level 2 are currently publicly funded for learners aged pre-16 to 19+, and from Level 3 are funded for older age groups. Centres must refer to the Learning Aims

Database and the Skills Funding Agency list to confirm whether the particular qualification they are interested in is eligible for public funding.

What are the performance points for each qualification?

For the overall qualifications: Entry Level - 7 points, (Japanese – 14 points), Level 1 – 25 points, Level 2 – 46 points, Level 3 – 63 points. Mandarin Chinese has not yet been allocated Performance Points due to the time lag between accreditation and point allocation. The individual unit qualifications also carry performance points (separate sheet).

Do the Level 3 qualifications carry UCAS points?

No, the Language NVQs do not carry any UCAS points. For learners who are particularly interested in qualifications carrying UCAS points, please see our Asset Languages (Advanced) qualifications, which do currently carry UCAS points.