

ncfe.

Frequently asked questions regarding the removal of DCS.

Please see below answers to frequently asked questions regarding the removal of DCS.

1. What is CASS?

Ofqual announced in September 2019 that all Awarding Organisations (AOs) are required to introduce a Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) strategy no later than September 2021. This approach forms part of Ofqual's overall strategy to improve the controls AOs have in place where an assessment is marked by a centre (Condition H2). AOs need to determine the most appropriate CASS approach for each of their qualifications and must meet Ofqual's minimum requirements. One specific form of CASS is moderation and for a small number of qualifications (such as GCSEs, A levels and the Technical Qualifications within T Levels) Ofqual has specified that all centre-marked assessments are moderated. Moderation must always take place before results are issued, for every cohort, with any necessary changes to centre marking made before results are issued.

There are other forms of CASS which involve periodically checking the marking of an assessment by a centre either before results are issued, after results are issued or a combination of these which relates to Direct Claims Status (DCS).

To be proactive in our approach to these changes we have started to review our portfolio of qualifications to identify whether other qualifications should be subject to moderation.

2. What factors do we consider when determining our approach to CASS?

- whether the qualification is sessional or roll-on/roll-off
- the typical amount of time a learner will take to complete the qualification
- the type of learners who usually take the qualification
- the assessment model
- the number of components in the qualification and the number of these that are marked by a centre
- the type of evidence generated by a learner in assessments for the qualification
- the number of learners taking the qualification
- the frequency and type of monitoring
- the timing of monitoring activities
- the number of components to sample
- the period over which all components for a qualification are sampled
- the number of learners sampled
- whether sampling activities take place before and/or after results are received by some or all learners.

3. What will the EQA process look like for the affected qualifications?

The EQA process will remain unchanged. The only difference is the EQA will need to take a sample of the learner's work before results are issued. Centres should work closely with their EQA during the first year of this transition period, so that the planning of EQA reviews is managed effectively to ensure timely certification of learners.

4. If we require more than two EQA reviews in the 2021/2022 session, will these be chargeable?

During the first 12 months of DCS being removed from these qualifications, NCFE will not charge centres for additional reviews to sign off learner achievement (if required). This will be monitored throughout the 2021/2022 session with support from your EQA.

5. The guidance says EQAs will action certificate claims within 3 working days. What does this mean?

Once your EQA receives notification of a certificate claim or grades being entered onto the Portal, they'll review the claim within 3 working days and will contact you to arrange an EQA review if one is not already planned in.

As part of your ongoing EQA reviews, it is important that these are planned timely with your EQA across all departments (if applicable). This is so that all learners requiring certification can be sampled at one of the planned reviews already booked in. If not, then an additional review will need to be completed where learners have not been sampled.

Centres should consider any key funding dates e.g. ESFA submissions, so that EQA reviews can be managed and completed prior to these dates to enable sufficient time for the EQA process to be carried out, including the centre review and confirmation of learner grades.

6. Can we still certificate learners when we want, without DCS?

No, learner certification will only take place once the EQA has sampled learners.

7. We offer EYE Workforce as a roll on roll off provision and have learners completing at different times throughout the year, does this mean I need an EQA review each time I want to certificate a learner?

It's important that centres work with their EQA to plan all reviews across the session in a timely manner to ensure that learner completion dates are considered in line with EQA sampling.

In addition, when planning EPA, it is important to consider this in line with the portfolio certification element, so learners results are issued timely when working with learners completing Apprenticeship Standards.

8. If we have learners who have delayed certification due to Covid-19, how will this affect their claims once they are ready?

NCFE will allow a grace period of one month (31 August 2021) to support any learners who were due to complete their qualification by 31 July 2021 but have been delayed due to Covid-19. This means that learners can still be certificated throughout August by the EQA, without sampling learner work.

Please note as per our EQA guidelines, certificates issued via DCS are still subject to EQA review post certification.

9. Does it mean that the qualifications listed are being withdrawn and funding will no longer be available?

The qualifications listed are not being withdrawn and the only change to these qualifications is that centres will no longer be able to claim certificates for learners without prior sampling by the EQA.

10. Where can I find further information on the new requirements?

Further information and guidance on the new requirements can be found in the [Ofqual handbook – Section H](#).

11. Is the removal of DCS linked to the date when the learner was registered?

The date that DCS will be removed is linked to the qualification, not when a learner was registered. If you have any learner certificate claims after 1 August 2021 these will need to be sampled by the EQA prior to certificates being issued.

12. If the batch/qualification has been seen before August 2021 but the learner does not complete until October, can they be certificated, or will they need to be sampled by the EQA?

This will work the same as the current process, with considerations around the previous EQA review, actions set and whether learners are part of the same cohort. If the EQA review has confirmed sufficiency, the batch has been sampled as final within Section 7 of the EQA report and the learners were registered prior to the previous EQA review, the centre can look to submit claims for certification of those learners and the EQA will check and sign off. However, if the learners were registered after the last EQA review where this qualification was sampled, a further review will be required prior to learner certification.

13. What are the cost implications for Training Providers? Will the cost of registration be increased per learner or will centre annual cost be increased?

Costs will not increase for the above for any centre.

14. With roll on roll off delivery, the implication could mean that a monthly (or more often) sample will be required by the EQA. Therefore, will EQAs be able to commit to monthly/more often sampling than twice a year?

Centres will still only be eligible for 2 free EQA reviews per session, therefore centres will need to plan their reviews efficiently to prevent additional reviews and charges. Question 4 also gives detail on this.

15. It will be important to ensure the learner is not disadvantaged having to wait for their certificates, especially those for EPA. Can NCFE confirm that no learner will be disadvantaged if EQA is unable to sample; will there be a bank of EQAs?

Centres should plan their EQA reviews as efficiently as possible to make the best use of their 2 free visits so learners can be certificated timely.

16. Will it mean that all learners will have to be sampled by IQA, as EQA will be checking all learners work?

No, our EQA process remains unchanged. The IQA should still only review a sample of learners as per their IQA strategy. Likewise, the EQA will only review a sample of learners as per NCFE's sampling strategy which states that EQAs will still sample both IQA'd and non-IQA'd learner evidence.

17. How will this impact on an assessor who is Green, will it mean they have to change to Red? This will potentially increase costs for training providers and is against the RAG requirements.

The RAG rating of any Centre Assessor should be linked to their performance, Assessor practices and IQA findings. This is not linked to DCS or the removal of DCS by NCFE. Centres need to follow their own IQA Strategy which must be reviewed regularly; review Assessor RAG ratings on a continual basis and adjust sampling in line with ratings.

18. Many learners get a pay rise upon successful completion of their qualification using the certificate as their evidence. If learners must wait for their certificates the learner is being deprived of pay? How will NCFE ensure this does not happen?

Centres need to plan their EQA reviews effectively to ensure learners can be certificated in a timely manner. As noted above (see question 5), centres will be supported during the first year of this change so EQA reviews can be booked in around learner completion dates.

19. Are you aligned with other Awarding Organisations?

There are many different types of qualifications and assessments, delivered by a wide range of Awarding Organisations. We must implement the most appropriate CASS strategy for the qualifications we offer using a risk-based approach. The most effective approach may vary between Awarding Organisations, depending on the qualification or assessment itself, or the centres delivering them so the controls we put in place may vary over time based on the risks we identify.

