



GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

Introduction

Congratulations on being registered to take one or more IMI Awards qualifications. This means that when you complete your qualification successfully, IMI Awards will be the organisation that issues you with your certificate having checked that the centre (e.g. college or training provider) has carried out all of your assessments correctly.

Before you start on your programme there are some things you must know. These are:

- how you are registered
- how you will be assessed
- how you will get your certificate
- how to contact IMI Awards
- what to do if you need to complain or appeal against an assessment decision.
- how much your qualification costs.

Your centre should tell you all these things as part of your induction which should also include all the details of the qualification(s) you are taking, plus very important topics such as health and safety, equal opportunities, data protection and the centre's expectations of you while you attend there.

How you are registered:

The centre you are attending has been approved to offer IMI Awards qualifications and will register you on the qualification you have chosen.

Once you have been registered, you will be given a unique registration number. IMI Awards has a customer charter that means we will confirm your registration (i.e. issue this number) between 3 and 10 days depending on the way your centre gives us your details.

You will be given this number by your tutor or assessor. You should make a note of this number and keep it safe as you will need to quote this number should you wish to contact IMI Awards.

How you will be assessed:

This is difficult to summarise as the type and number of assessments you need to pass will depend upon the qualification you are taking.

If you are taking a **Vocational Competence Qualification (VCQ)**, **National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)** or **Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)** a lot of your assessments will take place in your workplace. Your assessor will come and watch you carrying out certain tasks as part of your job and ask you to explain what you are doing. You will also have to collect evidence (e.g. job cards) to help show that you have completed jobs correctly when the assessor isn't there. Your boss and senior workmates may also have to confirm the standard of your work. You will also have to pass a number of online assessments which usually multiple choice theory tests.

If you are taking a **Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ)** – sometimes called technical certificates – your assessments will take place mainly in your college or training centre. You will have to complete a number of practical tasks, answer questions, complete some written tests and maybe an assignment. You will also have to pass a number of on-line tests which are multiple choice theory tests.

If you are taking motor vehicle qualifications as part of an **apprenticeship**, you are likely to have to take other qualifications relating to 'life skills'. Which qualifications you have to take varies from country to country. In England you will do **Key Skills** or **Functional Skills**, in Scotland **Core Skills** or if you live in Wales you will take **Essential Skills Wales**. Each of these qualifications have different requirements and your tutor or assessor will explain exactly what is needed. As an apprentice, you will also have to learn **Employment Rights and Responsibilities**.

This is just a brief outline of the main qualifications that IMI Awards offers. You may also be registered for **Automotive Technician Accreditation (ATA)**, the **irtec Licensing Scheme** or a **Quality Assured Award (QAA)**. These are very different qualifications which will have specific assessment requirements.

Note: IMI Awards will arrange for assessment material to be provided in Welsh at the request of your approved centre.

How you get your certificate:

When you have completed your programme and your assessors are satisfied that you have met all the requirements of the qualification you are taking, your centre will contact IMI Awards to request your certificate.

IMI Awards will check that everything is in order and if we are satisfied that this is a valid claim we will issue your certificate and send it to your centre. IMI Awards has a customer charter that means we will send out your certificate between 3 and 10 days depending on the way your centre makes the claim.

If you haven't received your certificate within a month of you completing your qualification, please ask your tutor or assessor to check that your certificate has been claimed and if necessary contact IMI Awards to find out what's happened to this claim.

How to contact IMI Awards:

The person from IMI Awards you are most likely to meet is your centre's external verifier. These are the people that visit centres to check that all IMI Awards' requirements are met and that the centre is carrying out assessments correctly. Occasionally, the external verifier may talk to you to find out what you think about your qualification and the processes you have to follow.

If you do meet an external verifier, don't hesitate to ask questions or discuss any queries you might have. They will be more than happy to help you. If you want to contact IMI Awards direct at head office the details are:

The Qualifications Office
IMI Awards Limited
Fanshaws
Brickendon
Herts SG13 8PQ
Tel: 01992 511521

If you have a simple query for example about your registration or certificate it is probably easiest to telephone. If you need to contact us on a more serious matter, such as a complaint about your centre (see below), you will need to write to us or email info@imiawards.org.uk.

Note: All communications from IMI Awards will be in English.

How to complain or appeal against an assessment decision:

If you have cause to complain about an assessment decision of any other aspect about the qualification you are taking, you should first discuss the problems with your centre representatives (e.g. your assessor). They will have a procedure which both you and they must follow. The centre should have given you a copy of this procedure at the start of your programme. If not, ask to see a copy before you make your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the centre's response you may complain to IMI Awards direct. The process for doing this is contained at the end of these notes (Appendix 1). Even then, if you are not satisfied with the outcome of this process, you can make an appeal. The way to do this is also explained in Appendix 1.

How much does your qualification cost?

The cost of gaining a qualification varies considerably depending upon the qualification you are taking. Costs can be divided into two areas, the fees paid to IMI Awards for registering and certificating candidates and the amount paid to the centre for any training you may need and all the assessments you have to take. Your centre will be able to provide you with these details and they are also likely to pay the fees to IMI Awards. However, for your information, these costs are listed on the IMI Awards website.



CANDIDATE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

Where a candidate or their representative wishes to complain about an assessment decision or any other aspect of the centre's activities relating to the assessment and verification/moderation of IMI Awards' qualifications, they must in the first instance, follow the approved centre's complaints procedure. Only when this route has been exhausted should a candidate complain to IMI Awards.

Note: All approved centres must have a clear and up-to-date complaints procedure which must be provided to candidates (normally during their induction).

Candidates or their representatives who wish to take their complaint further, or who wish to complain against a decision or action taken by any IMI Awards personnel, should contact IMI Awards.

Complaints should be referred to the IMI Awards Head of Operations and should be made in writing. The Head of Operations will arrange for the Chief Verifier or other members of the quality assurance team to investigate the complaint. Ultimately, it will be the Head of Operations' responsibility to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties wherever possible.

Resolving Complaints

If it not possible to resolve the complaint within a week – often complaints are able to be sorted out immediately – the candidate or their representative will be sent a written acknowledgement stating which member of staff is progressing their complaint. IMI Awards will issue a response as soon as possible thereafter, but no later than one month from the date that the complaint was received.

Any candidate or centre who is not satisfied by the proposals made to resolve their complaint may appeal against the decisions made.

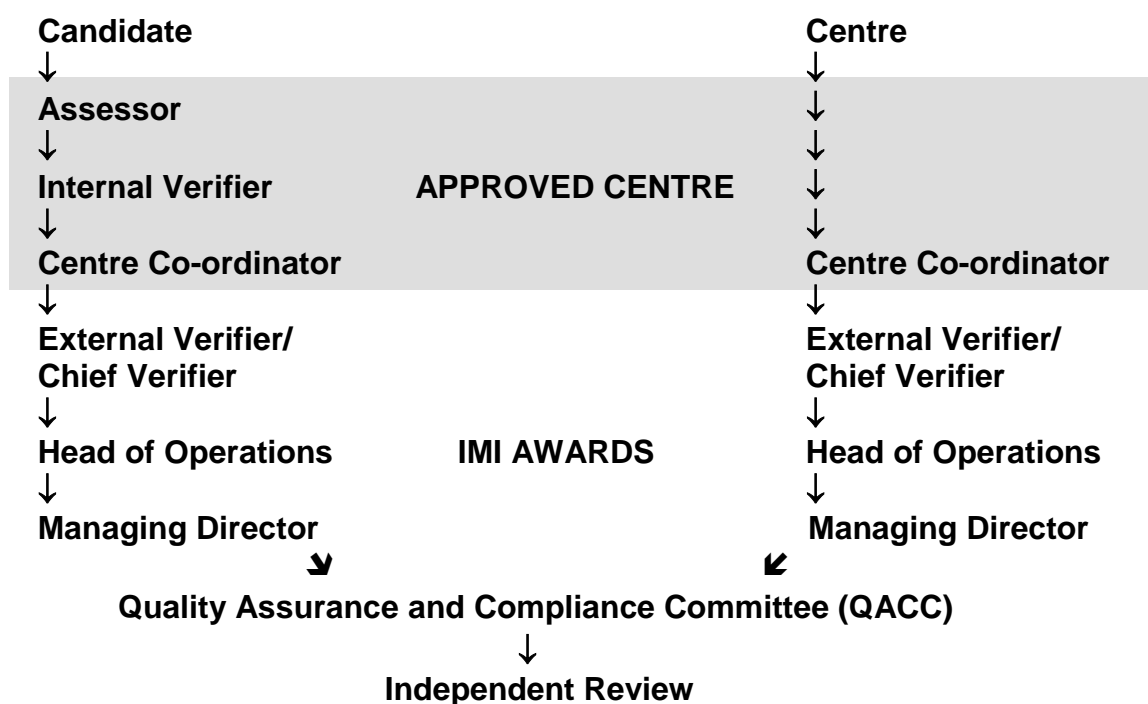
Candidate Appeals

A candidate may appeal to IMI Awards, free of charge, regarding decisions of an approved centre on the following grounds:

- discrimination of any sort
- dissatisfaction over assessment decisions

Candidates may also appeal to IMI Awards, free of charge, if a complaint made about a decision or action taken by any IMI Awards personnel has not been resolved to their satisfaction.

The IMI Awards candidate appeals process follows the stages below:



Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Head of Operations. A written acknowledgement of the appeal, stating when the appeal will be heard, will be issued within two working days from the receipt of the appeal.

The Head of Operations will arrange for the appropriate member(s) of the quality assurance team to investigate the grounds for appeal and to report his/her findings, in writing, within 21 working days.

As part of the appeals process, the Head of Operations will review this report and all information provided by the candidate/centre. He will inform the candidate/centre of the outcome of the appeal, in writing, within one month of receipt of the written appeal.

Note: in some cases and at IMI Awards' discretion, the timescale for the appeal process may be extended.

If the QACC fails to reach an agreement which satisfies all parties, then the appellant will be offered the opportunity to take his/her appeal to independent review.

The outcome of the independent review is final and binding on all parties. The appellant and IMI Awards will be notified of the outcome of an independent review within 14 days of the review taking place.

** Note: Should an appeal be taken to independent review, the appellant may be charged a contribution towards the cost of the independent review.*

Regulatory Bodies

At any stage in the process an individual or centre may complain directly to the appropriate organisation that regulates the qualification (e.g. Ofqual, SQA) or the organisation that governs the accreditation scheme (e.g. IMI SSC or SOE). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle complaints and appeals.

Should an individual or centre complain or appeal to the regulator or governing body, the complainant/appellant will be deemed as having reached the independent review stage of the process (see above).