

Appendix 5

Appropriate qualification criteria

5.1

App5.1.1 G

Introduction

1. TC Appendix 4E contains a list of appropriate qualifications for the purposes of TC 2.1.10 E.
2. This Appendix sets out:
 - (1) the criteria which the *FCA* may take into account when assessing a qualification provider; and
 - (2) the information the *FCA* will expect the qualification provider to provide if it asks the *FCA* to add a qualification to the list of appropriate qualifications in TC Appendix 4 E.

Criteria for assessing a qualification provider

3. The *FCA* will expect the qualification provider of an appropriate qualification to have, in the *FCA*'s opinion:
 - (1) assessors and qualification developers who are trained and qualified;
 - (2) valid, reliable and robust assessment methods;
 - (3) robust governance and a clear separation of function between its qualification services and any other services it performs, including effective procedures for managing any conflicts of interest;
 - (4) procedures for reviewing and refreshing its syllabus and question banks to ensure that they are relevant and up to date;
 - (5) robust and credible procedures for assessing a candidate's demonstration of the learning outcomes specified in the relevant examination standards;
 - (6) robust arrangements for contingency and business continuity planning in relation to its qualification services;
 - (7) appropriate records management procedures in relation to its qualification services;
 - (8) procedures for dealing with inappropriate conduct by candidates, for example, attempting to obtain or obtaining qualifications dishonestly;
 - (9) robust procedures for the setting of assessments and marking of results; and

- (10) adequate resources in order to be financially viable.

Information about the qualification to be provided to the FCA

4. If a qualification provider asks the *FCA* to add a qualification to the list of appropriate qualifications in *TC Appendix 4 E*, the *FCA* will expect the qualification provider to:
 - (1) where relevant, specify the qualifications framework within which the qualification is placed;
 - (2) specify the activity in *TC Appendix 1* to which the qualification relates;
 - (3) set out the recommended prior knowledge, attainment or experience for candidates;
 - (4) where relevant, set out the exemption policy for a candidate's prior learning or achievement;
 - (5) provide the relevant learning materials to the *FCA* together with an explanation of how those learning materials correspond to the content of the most recent examination standards. Any content of the examination standards which has been excluded from the learning materials must be justified;
 - (6) where applicable, explain how grading is applied;
 - (7) where applicable, explain the provider's rules of combination;
 - (8) provide details of expected learning hours or any other similar arrangements;
 - (9) where applicable, specify the level of the overall qualification with reference to the relevant qualification framework or, if there is no relevant qualification framework, the European Qualifications Framework and the percentage of the qualification at that level, as well as the percentages and the levels for the remainder of the qualification;
 - (10) provide details of any credit for prior learning included in the qualification together with an explanation of how it meets the most recent examination standards; and
 - (11) provide an explanation of how the qualification compares in quality and standard to other similar qualifications.

Information about the qualification provider to be provided to the FCA

5. When considering whether to include or retain a qualification in the list of appropriate qualifications, the *FCA* may consider, where relevant:
 - (1) whether the qualification provider has in place suitable arrangements for:
 - (a) meeting its statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity; and
 - (b) reducing barriers to learning, for example, for candidates with learning difficulties;
 - (2) any concerns, issues or investigations which have been raised by the qualification provider's qualifications regulator;
 - (3) the annual pass rates of each of the relevant qualifications;
 - (4) the quality of the service the qualification provider provides to candidates in relation to qualifications and its complaints procedures;
 - (5) how the qualification provider maintains its qualifications to ensure they remain comparable to other qualifications in the same sector; and

- (6) whether the qualification provider gives candidates reasonable notice of any syllabus change, change in method of assessment or pass standards;
- (7) information supporting the criteria in TC Appendix 5G paragraph 3.