

<u>Policy Title</u>		NCG Centre Withdrawal Policy
<u>Policy Category</u>		Compliant
<u>Owner</u>		Assistant Director of Quality
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>		Executive Director of Quality
<u>Date Written</u>		September 2023
<u>Considered By</u>		Executive and QA Leads
<u>Approved By</u>		Executive Board
<u>Date Approved</u>		September 2023
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>		The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics
<u>Freedom of Information</u>		This document will be publicly available through the Groups Publication Scheme.
<u>Review Date</u>		September 2026
<u>Policy Summary</u>		The NCG Centre Withdrawal Policy applies is applicable to awards, qualifications and apprenticeships on Further Education and Training learning programmes. The policy articulates the reasons for awarding body programme withdrawals and the guidelines to mitigate risks and managing/supporting the learner with withdrawal of an award / qualification.
<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
Carlisle College	Yes	Yes
Kidderminster College	Yes	Yes
Lewisham College	Yes	Yes
Newcastle College	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Yes	Yes
Southwark College	Yes	Yes
West Lancashire College	Yes	Yes
Professional Services	Yes	Yes
<u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u>		
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>		<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>
May 2021 - Reviewed September 2023		Revised timeline for approval (3 year cycle). Update of terminology IV to IQA. Removal of reference to Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG's). Section 5 – removed 5 working days and changed to timely fashion within AO defined timescales.
<u>Linked Documents</u>		
<u>Document Title</u>		<u>Relevance</u>
NCG Malpractice Policy		Applies to all staff that have a teaching, learning or assessment role or are involved in the associated supporting services.

NCG Non-Examination Assessment Policy	The link to this policy ensures that all JCQ and awarding body guidelines are clearly understood and followed in the completion of non-examination assessments.
NCG Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation Policy	The implementation of an examination contingency plan must ensure that the principles as described in the Assessment, Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation Policy are taken into account.

Definitions

The term **Group** refers to the seven colleges and professional services that make up NCG.

The term **college** refers to the constituent parts of NCG and **professional services** refers to NCG’s centralised services.

The term **centre** refers to the individual college exam centre status – note for Lewisham College and Southwark College this is a single centre.

The term **awarding body/organisation** refers to an examination board which sets examinations and awards qualifications.

The term **learner/student** is used interchangeably and includes all learners/students, whether young people aged 14-18, learners with specific high needs, apprentices, adult learners or higher education students.

The term **teacher** is used to describe all teaching, training and educational staff, including teachers, lecturers, instructors, skills trainers, learning support practitioners, coaches/mentors, work experience coaches and teachers in managing positions.

The term **staff** refers to all NCG staff in the organisation, including volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and volunteers.

1. Introduction and Purpose

NCG is determined to ensure that it maintains centre or programme approval through maintaining quality standards and processes to provide the highest levels of service. In the event that the regulatory and organisation requirements are not met, this policy will set out the arrangements which colleges of NCG will action, in the event of awarding body centre and/or programme approval being withdrawn or suspended. The policy is applicable to awards, qualifications and apprenticeships on Further Education and Training learning programmes. Staff

involved with the delivery and assessment of higher education will follow the NCG Higher Education policies.

2. Reasons for Removal of Centre or Programme Approval

NCG has already in place a number of policies and procedures to ensure regulations are effectively met, including the NCG Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation policy and NCG Malpractice policy. The decision to remove centre or programme approval could be based on a decision from the awarding body or Centre, or through a significant failure in one or more of the above-named policies. Where this has occurred, an investigation of matters raised under this policy may subsequently lead to the matter being pursued through other approved policies / procedures. An awarding body may withdraw NCG's approval status when (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Severe malpractice or maladministration has been reported, investigated and confirmed.
- There are significant and/or repeated quality issues identified through the external Quality Assurance cycle.
- Sanctions have been applied and the Centre has failed to take the necessary action to allow the sanctions to be lifted.
- There are long-standing financial issues (e.g. outstanding invoices) which colleges within NCG have not resolved.
- The terms and conditions outlined in Centre Agreements have been broken through a serious breach or repeated breaches of a less serious nature.

Alternatively:

- The Centre has requested to withdraw from delivering the awarding body regulations.
- The Centre has ceased to operate.

Where an award / qualification / apprenticeship no longer has current market value and / or does not meet the college curriculum intent. It is the responsibility of a college approval panel to approve or reject the decision to withdraw an award / qualification or apprenticeship.

3. In the Event of Malpractice and/or Maladministration

NCG colleges will be expected to comply with the processes set out in the NCG Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation policy, Malpractice policy and Non-Examination Assessment policy in order to avoid the eventuality of programme or Centre withdrawal. Staff must contact the Head of Quality or Head of Department/Curriculum if they have any concerns, or require support at any point, before a serious risk to centre or programme approval occurs. NCG colleges will also be expected to follow the process set out in the awarding organisation malpractice and maladministration procedures.

- Should the assessor and/or verifier discover evidence of academic misconduct by the learner and/or assessor, then this will follow the process contained within NCG's Malpractice Policy.
- Should any learners or staff have concerns associated with wider or widespread professional conduct, then they will follow the process set out in the Disclosure Policy (whistleblowing).

Should the implementation of the NCG policies be unsuccessful and result in the withdrawal of programme and or Centre approval, then guidance should be sought from the awarding body for guidance on alternatives for existing learners.

4. In the Event of Breaches of Terms and Conditions

In some instances, Centre or programme approval is suspended or removed on the grounds that the awarding body(s) terms and conditions have been broken. This route is normally used only where there is a clear breach of terms and conditions and the situation is so serious that immediate action is needed. Examples of this could include:

- There has been a lack of cooperation from NCG colleges with the awarding body, for example, a failure to respond to communications, refused access to premises, learner work or assessment records.

- Marketing a qualification which has not been approved, or actively enrolling learners on such a programme.
- Submitting false documentation to the awarding body, for example fraudulent qualification approval applications.
- Not adhering to the approval criteria as agreed at the approval stages.

NCG colleges will be expected to review compliance against the Terms and Conditions with awarding organisations on an annual basis and realign practices to ensure continued compliance with awarding bodies. Should it be deemed by either NCG colleges or awarding organisation that the terms and conditions have been breached, then quality interventions will be initiated by quality teams within NCG colleges.

5. In the Event of Quality issues

NCG colleges will follow the NCG Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation Policy. The key principles to be followed are:

- Assessors of education and training will be appropriately qualified as per awarding organisation and National Training Organisations requirements.
- Learners are registered in a timely fashion.
- Deliver programmes of study as per the specifications of the qualifications.
- Assessment and internal moderation activities will follow awarding body quality assurance requirements.
- Assessment materials will be internally quality assured for adherence to the qualification specification before submission to learners.
- Awarding Organisation (AO) documentation will be completed in a timely fashion (within AO defined timescales), following assessment board decisions or IQA/EQA meetings and returned to the relevant exam section to be forwarded to awarding bodies.
- Provide clear evidence of the authenticity of learner work.

Colleges are expected to review the awarding organisation Quality Assurance guidance and documentation to maintain quality assurance against national standards. All Internal Quality Assurers (IQA's) should have copies of AO centre

guidance and codes of practice and be aware of the sanctions for non-compliance with the approved centre criteria. Staff should make themselves aware of the reasons that a centre or programme could be sanctioned or blocked for delivery due to insufficient quality and should seek advice from the appropriate AO if you can appeal decisions to remove centre approval.

In the event that on or more of these key principles are not followed, then the awarding body may apply sanctions, failure blocks, suspension or centre/programme removal. NCG Colleges should deal with these issues and promptly in accordance with local College procedures.

6. Guidelines to manage the withdrawal of an award / qualification and support the learner

In instances where the decision to withdraw an award / qualification / apprenticeship has been granted or awarding body has withdrawn the College / NCG approval status, the following guidelines will apply, however this is not an exhaustive list and advice will need to be sought from the awarding body.

- 6.1 Where applicable, the College will endeavour to give reasonable notice to stakeholders, including students, awarding / validating bodies / subcontractors and employers in the case of apprenticeships of the anticipated withdrawal of an award / qualification. This may include the return of a cancellation agreement to the awarding body.
- 6.2 Cease to market or enrol any further learners onto the programme.
- 6.3 Where appropriate, quality /exams will inform awarding / validating bodies, of the anticipated withdrawal of an award / qualification / apprenticeship, prior to the time at which it informs students.
- 6.4 Colleges will clearly, accurately and promptly inform the students and employers in the case of apprenticeships the impact of this withdrawal and sign post to alternative award / qualification / apprenticeship.
- 6.5 Where possible make arrangements to transfer students to a suitable alternative awards/qualification/apprenticeship at the College, subject to students' acceptance of these arrangements.

- 6.6 Where the possibility of transfer to a suitable award / qualification / apprenticeship at the College is not available, then the College will provide the information and guidance regarding alternative providers offering comparable awards / qualifications / apprenticeships, to which the learners can make a direct approach to enquire about admission to the award / qualification / apprenticeship.
- 6.7 The College will take all reasonable steps to protect the interest of the students. Where appropriate the establishment of teach out arrangements to support existing students to complete their award / qualification / apprenticeship.
- 6.8 College Management, ordinarily the Head of Management Information (MI) will ensure that records of credits and units achieved by students are retained, in line with the associated records retention periods.
- 6.9 MI, on receipt of notification of the withdrawal of an award / qualification / apprenticeship will identify on the Student Record System (Unit-e) a status of Cancelled / Archived / Closed as appropriate for the award / qualification / apprenticeship.
- 6.10 Exams, on receipt of notification following the panel meeting, will identify any awarding body registrations that have been made to an award / qualification / apprenticeship that is to be withdrawn identifying and informing accordingly of:
 - a. Existing registrations (prior year registrations), that may require teach out arrangements as identified in 6 above.
 - b. Current registrations (new registrations), that may require teach out arrangements, or may require transfer of registration.
- 6.11 In the event approval is withdrawn by the awarding body, make available the contact details of students/employers, active learner portfolio, assessment and internal quality assurance records to the awarding body.
- 6.12 In the event approval is withdrawn by the awarding body provide the learners and employers in the case of apprenticeships, the awarding body contact details.

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6.13 Follow awarding body requirements for the return of Centre approval certificates.

6.14 Settle any outstanding invoices with the awarding body.

7. Equality and Diversity Statement

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the NCG Equality Strategy and with consideration of the guidelines of awarding organisations in relation to equality of opportunity.

Publication

Group Policy Statements are held centrally on the Group intranet.

http://intranet.ncgrp.co.uk/groupservices/Group_Policies/SitePages/Policies.aspx

Policy Assurance

Group Business Assurance will carry out periodic testing to ensure compliance with this policy.