Regulated Qualifications (RQF)



VQA Level 2 Award in Principles of COSHH Risk Assessment (RQF)

Qualification Number: 601/3237/1

Version 9.1

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Summary of changes

The following table provides a summary of the changes that have been made to the qualification specification since the publication of the previous version.

Version number	Summary of changes
9.1 June 2026	Summary of changes table added Qualification purpose wording amended Updates to generic information Minor SPAG and formatting errors corrected throughout

Introduction

Welcome to VQA

VQA is an Awarding Organisation recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) in England and CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland.

VQA offers qualifications which are regulated by Ofqual and, in some cases, by CCEA Regulation. All regulated VQA qualifications sit on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications.

Our qualifications are designed to support and encourage learners to develop their knowledge and skills. This development may result in progression into employment or career development in the workplace. Our qualifications also allow learners to progress onto further qualifications. Please visit our website for news of our new and coming soon developments.

Centre Recognition

To offer a VQA qualification, a centre must be recognised by VQA.

The VQA centre recognition process requires a centre to have in place a number of policies and procedures to protect the learners undertaking a VQA qualification and the integrity of VQA's qualifications. These policies and procedures will also support a recognised centre's quality systems and help support the centre to meet the qualification approval criteria.

Recognised centres must seek approval for each qualification they wish to offer.

The approval process requires centres to demonstrate that they have sufficient resources, including; suitably qualified and occupationally competent staff to deliver, assess and quality assure the qualification and access to appropriate support in the form of specialist resources. Qualification approval must be confirmed before any assessment of learners takes place.

Qualification Specifications

Each qualification VQA offers is supported by a specification that includes all the information required by a centre to deliver the qualification. Information in the specification includes unit information, learning outcomes, and how the qualification is assessed.

The aim of the qualification specification is to guide a centre through the process of delivering the qualification.

Please read it alongside the VQA Centre Handbook. Details of VQA's procedures and policies can be found on our website.

Qualification specifications can also be found on our website. If you have any further questions, please contact VQA.

Centres must ensure they are using the most recent version of the qualification specification for planning and delivery purposes.

Reproduction of this document

Centres may reproduce the qualification specification for internal use only but are not permitted to make any changes or manipulate the content in any form.

Centres must ensure they use the most up-to-date pdf version of the specification.

Use of VQA Logo, Name and Qualifications

VQA is a professional organisation and the use of its name and logo is restricted. VQA's name may only be used by recognised centres to promote VQA qualifications. Recognised centres may use the logo for promotional materials such as corporate/business letterheads, pages of the centre's website relating to VQA qualifications, printed brochures, leaflets, or exhibition stands.

When using VQA's logo, there must be no changes or amendments made to it, in terms of colour, size, border or shading. The logo must only be used in a way that easily identifies it as VQA's logo. Any representation of VQA's logo must be a true representation of the logo.

It is the responsibility of the centre to monitor the use and marketing of VQA's logos and qualifications on their own materials as well as on those of any re-sellers or third parties they may use. VQA must be made aware of centre relationships with re-sellers of VQA qualifications. VQA must be made aware of any additional websites where the centre intends to use VQA's name and/or logo. If this information is changed, VQA should be notified immediately. VQA is required to monitor centres' websites and materials to ensure that learners are not being misled.

If a centre ceases to be/surrenders recognition as a VQA centre, it must immediately discontinue the use of VQA's logo, name, and qualifications from all websites and documents.

Accessibility

VQA is committed to ensuring that all qualifications and assessments are accessible, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. We ensure that no aspect of this qualification disadvantages any group of learners who share a protected characteristic or introduces unjustifiable barriers to entry, other than those essential to the qualification's intended purpose. Where such features are necessary, they will be clearly stated and justified.

All assessment design processes actively identify and remove unjustifiable barriers that could prevent learners, including those with physical disabilities, from demonstrating their knowledge, understanding, or skills. VQA monitors and reviews the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) throughout

qualification development to maintain accessibility and inclusivity. This approach promotes positive attitudes and fosters good relations among all learners.

More information can be found in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

For learners seeking guidance on Reasonable Adjustments, please see our Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

The Qualification

The VQA Level 2 Award in COSHH Risk Assessment (RQF) is regulated by Ofqual.

Qualification Purpose

The VQA Level 2 Award in COSHH Risk Assessment provides learners with knowledge and understanding of COSHH risk assessment.

The objectives of the qualification include:

- preparing learners to progress to a qualification in the same subject area but at a higher level or requiring more specific knowledge, skills and understanding
- preparing learners to progress to a qualification in another subject area
- meeting relevant programmes of learning and supporting a role in the workplace.

Entry Requirements

There are no specific entry requirements however learners should have a minimum of level one in literacy and numeracy or equivalent.

The recommended minimum age for this qualification is 16 years.

Progression

Successful learners can progress to other qualifications such as:

- Level 2 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Level 3 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Level 2 Award in Fire Safety
- Level 3 Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health.

Structure

Learners must achieve one credit from the mandatory unit to be awarded the VQA Level 2 Award in Principles of COSHH Risk Assessment (RQF).

Mandatory unit

Unit no.	Unit	Unit ref.	Guided Learning Hours	Credit
1	Principles of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health	Y/502/8521	5	1

Guided Learning Hours

These hours are made up of all real time contact time, guidance or supervision of a learner by a lecturer, supervisor, tutor, trainer or other appropriate provider of education or training.

GLH for this qualification is 5 hours.

Directed Study Requirements

Learners are expected to study and complete aspects of their assessment portfolio in their own time. This additional time is expected to be approximately 5 hours over the cycle of the programme.

Total Qualification Time

This is an estimate of the total length of time it is expected that a learner will typically take to achieve and demonstrate the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification i.e. to achieve all learning outcomes.

Total Qualification Time is comprised of GLH and an estimate of the number of hours a learner is likely to spend in preparation, study or any other learning including assessment, which takes place as directed by, but not under the supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor. The credit value, where given, for a qualification is determined by TQT, as one credit corresponds to 10 hours of learning.

Total Qualification Time for this qualification is 10 hours.

Assessment

It is essential that all learners are assessed in English unless the qualification specification specifically states that another language may be accepted. This ruling also applies to all learner evidence presented for external quality assurance purposes.
The qualification is assessed by internally set and marked assessments subject to external quality assurance.

All learning outcomes which assess knowledge and understanding (usually beginning with ‘understand’ or ‘know how to’) may be assessed through, for example, internally set and marked written assignments, tasks, records of oral or written questions, workbooks, or other portfolio evidence.

Materials for internal assessment must be submitted to VQA for approval prior to use and must be mapped to the relevant unit, learning outcome and assessment criteria.

All learning outcomes and assessment criteria must be met to achieve a pass - there is no grading.

Each unit within the qualification may have its own assessment requirements, assessment guidance and range.

- **Assessment requirements**: sets out the mandatory conditions that must be met for assessment to be valid. They specify how an assessment must be conducted. Centres must adhere to these requirements.
- **Mandatory range**: defines the required breadth and depth of coverage for specific assessment criteria. It sets out the minimum and mandatory expectations for assessment.
- **Assessment guidance**: provides clarification to support the consistent interpretation and application of the assessment criteria. It explains intent, defines key terms where necessary, and offers contextual information to support understanding.
- **Useful websites:** resources that could be used by centres for the delivery of the qualification and by learners to support them with the completion of the unit.

Centre Devised Assessment (CDA) Guidance

Centre-devised assessments play a vital role in the evaluation of a learner's progress as they are based on the qualification's learning objectives. They provide learners with the opportunity to evidence the knowledge, understanding, and skills gained while studying the qualification and support teaching staff in monitoring the learner's progress.

As this qualification is internally assessed, VQA allows centres to produce their own assessments. When designing them, assessors must give consideration to the depth and breadth of knowledge allowed by each task.

VQA has produced centre guidance on our suggested approaches to designing appropriate assessment tasks, and these may be accessed from our website www.vqa.org.uk.

This includes templates to support the design of internal assessments and a checklist to ensure that the assessments are valid and fit for purpose.

To ensure the validity and fairness of our qualifications, centre-devised assessments form part of our quality assurance processes. More information about this and how to prepare for external quality assurance reviews can be found on our website.

Course Delivery

Pre-Course Information

All learners should be given appropriate pre-course information regarding any VQA qualifications. The information should explain the qualification, the fee, the form of the assessment and any entry requirements or resources needed to undertake the qualification.

Initial Assessment

Centres should ensure that any learner registered on a VQA qualification undertakes some form of initial assessment. The initial assessment should be used to inform a teacher/trainer of the level of the learner's current knowledge and/or skills and any additional specific support requirements the learner may need.

The initial assessment can be undertaken by a teacher/trainer in any form suitable for the qualification to be undertaken by the learner/s. It is the centre's responsibility to make available forms of initial assessment that are valid, applicable, and relevant to VQA qualifications.

Teaching resources

All teaching materials and additional resources used to support the delivery of this qualification must be age-appropriate. Centres must ensure when developing or sourcing delivery materials that careful consideration is given to the safeguarding and wellbeing of their learners in line with the centre's policies and procedures.

Learner Registration

Once approved to offer a qualification, centres must follow VQA's procedures for registering learners. Learner registration is at the discretion of the centre and in line with equality legislation and health and safety requirements.

Centres must register learners before any assessment can take place.

Tutor, Assessor and Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

All members of staff involved with the qualification (assessing or IQA) will need to be occupationally competent in the subject area being delivered. This could be evidenced by a combination of:

- A higher level qualification in the same subject area as the qualification approval request
- Experience of the delivery/assessment/IQA of the qualification requested
- Work experience in the subject area of the qualification.

Staff members will also be expected to have a working knowledge of the requirements of the qualification and a thorough knowledge and understanding of the role of tutors/assessors and internal quality assurance. They are also expected to undertake continuous professional development (CPD) to ensure they remain up to date with work practices and developments associated with the qualifications they assess or quality assure.

Tutor

Tutors or trainers who deliver a VQA qualification must possess a teaching qualification appropriate for the level of qualification they deliver. This can include:

- Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate

- Cert Ed/PGCE/Bed/MEd
- PTLLS/CTLLS/DTLLS
- Level 3 Award/Level 4 Certificate/Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training.

Assessor

Staff who assess a VQA qualification must possess an assessing qualification appropriate for the level of qualification they are delivering or be working towards a relevant qualification and have their assessment decisions countersigned by a qualified assessor. This can include:

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- Level 3 Award in Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- A1 or D32/D33.

Specific requirements for assessors may be indicated in the assessment strategy/principles identified in individual unit specifications.

Internal Quality Assurer

Centre staff who undertake the role of an Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) for VQA qualifications must possess or be working towards a relevant qualification and have their quality assurance decisions countersigned by a qualified internal quality assurer. This could include:

- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- V1 qualification (internal quality assurance of the assessment process)
- D34 qualification (internally verify NVQ assessments and processes).

It is best practice that those who quality assure qualifications also hold one of the assessing qualifications outlined above. IQAs must follow the principles set out in Learning and Development NOS 11 - Internally monitor and maintain the quality of assessment.

External Quality Assurance

External Quality Assurance will be undertaken by VQA to ensure that centres are satisfying VQA quality assurance compliance with the requirements associated with their VQA recognised centre status and formal written agreement. This will consist of physical activities and remote reviews.

Useful Websites

- Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
- Register of Regulated Qualifications

For further details regarding approval and funding eligibility please refer to the following websites:

- Department for Education (DfE)
- Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS)

You may also find the following websites useful:

- HSE: Information about health and safety at work
- Home | Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, controlling risk together

Mandatory Units

Title:		Principles of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health	
Unit reference number:		Y/502/8521	
Level:		2	
Credit value:		1	
Guided learning hours:		5	
Learning outcomes The learner will:		**Assessment criteria The learner can:**	
1.	Understand the law relating to hazardous substances in the workplace.	1.1	Outline employers and employees duties relating to hazardous substances at work.
		1.2	Outline the consequences for noncompliance with statutory duties.
		1.3	List the ways in which an employer can communicate hazardous substances safety information.
2.	Understand how risk assessments contribute to the safe use of hazardous substances in the workplace.	2.1	Define the terms hazard and risk with respect to hazardous substances.
		2.2	List the different forms that hazardous substances can take.
		2.3	Outline the health and safety effects that may arise following exposure or release of hazardous substances.
		2.4	Outline the routes that hazardous substances can enter the body.
		2.5	Describe how risk assessments reduce accidents and ill health at work.
		2.6	Outline the five-step process of risk assessment.
3.	Understand the precautions and procedures necessary to ensure the risks associated with	3.1	Outline the control hierarchy in respect of safe use, handling, transporting, storage and disposal of substances hazardous to health.
		3.2	Outline the types of information that should be referred to for the safe identification and use of hazardous substances.

	hazardous substances are properly controlled.	3.3	Describe the general procedures that should be in place for dealing with an incident involving hazardous substances.

Assessment requirements: None

Range: None

Assessment guidance: None

Useful websites: None

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