

# **Direct Claims Status Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose of the policy

This policy outlines the criteria, procedures, responsibilities, and parameters associated with the awarding and maintenance of Direct Claims Status (DCS) for eligible approved centres by VTCT Skills. To encourage exemplary standards, across its centres, VTCT Skills provides a framework known as Direct Claims Status (DCS). Upon successful attainment of DCS for a qualification, the centre is granted the ability to claim learner certificates for qualifications in which the centre typically determines competence. VTCT Skills permits the centre, through its DCS protocols, the ability to seek certification without the necessity for authorisation from the relevant centre External Quality Assurer (EQA). Whilst the EQA may recommend DCS, in line with specified criteria (see section 2), VTCT Skills reserve the right to withhold or rescind a centre's ability to retain DCS, subject to ongoing monitoring against risk related criteria.

### 1.2. Scope of Policy

Approved Centres are awarded DCS status for specific qualifications which meet the appropriate criteria. It should be noted that DCS is not granted to centres for all qualifications unless individual qualifications meet specific criteria. There are also specific qualifications for which DCS will not be awarded regardless of the status of the centre. VTCT Skills will not approve DCS for Technical Qualifications or Applied General Qualifications, Apprentice Standards, VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 4 & 5 Aesthetic Therapies Qualifications or VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 7 qualifications.

VTCT Skills reserves the right to specify other qualifications where DCS will not be applied as appropriate.

### 1.3. Granting and Reviewing of Direct Claims Criteria

This section of the policy outlines the specific criteria that approved centres must meet and adhere to in order to be considered for Direct Claims Status.

### 1.4. Eligibility Criteria

The assessment for DCS is conducted per qualification, ensuring a focused evaluation of each qualification offered by the approved centre. The evaluation for DCS is carried out by a member of the EQA team, providing an objective evaluation and fulfilment of the following:

- Completion of two successive external monitoring activities within an 18-month timeframe
- Absence of outstanding action points at the end of the second visit very low risk
- Demonstration of the robustness and effectiveness of the centre's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes
- Sampling a minimum of five registered learners across the two external monitoring activities per qualification

Whilst the EQA may recommend DCS, in line with specified criteria (see section 2), VTCT Skills reserve the right to withhold or rescind a centre's ability to retain DCS, subject to ongoing monitoring against risk related criteria.

### **1.5. Reviewing of Direct Claims Status**

To maintain DCS the centre must ensure adherence to the following:

- Continued maintenance of very low risk rating
- Sampling of a minimum of three registered learners during each visit
- Continued demonstration of robustness and effectiveness of the centre's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes.

## **2. Withdrawal of Direct Claims Status**

Centres are obligated to ensure they are compliant against VTCT Skills centre approval criteria and conditions stated in the enforceable (and signed) centre agreement. Should the centre fail to adhere to its known responsibilities, VTCT Skills may suspend or remove a centre's eligibility of DCS. Typically, this may be due, but is not limited, to the following:

- Failure to meet the DCS criteria during your external quality assurance monitoring activity.
- Loss of integrity to the standards in relation to assessment or internal quality assurance.
- Concerns about the quality and validity of work.
- An Approved Centre incurs sanctions.
- Failure to communicate with VTCT Skills.
- Significant faults in the assessment or internal quality assurance arrangements.
- Insufficient resources and qualified staffing.
- Failure to adhere to VTCT Skills instructions for conducting examinations.
- An Approved Centre is subject to a compliance/malpractice investigation.
- When an EQA visit has not been undertaken for 12 months.
- Failure to co-operate with investigations or provide access to VTCT Skills.
- Information from external sources e.g. complaints.

## **3. Centre Responsibility**

Centres awarded DCS are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the validity and reliability of assessment practices. To maintain transparency and accountability, centres must adhere to the following requirements for all qualifications for which DCS has been approved:

- Assessment and IQA Records – Centres are required to maintain thorough records of assessments and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes.

- Learner Evidence/Portfolios for EQA Sample – Centres must retain learner evidence and portfolios.
- Ongoing External Monitoring Activities – Centres are not exempted from routine EQA activities and will continue to receive external quality assurance scrutiny and will be sampled as part of VTCT Skills’ CASS strategy in a minimum of one EQA activity per annum. Centres are obligated to engage in ongoing compliance monitoring against VTCT Skills centre approval and centre agreement requirements.

## **4. Appeals**

If a centre wishes to appeal against a decision regarding the withdrawal of DCS, the appeal must be submitted in writing to [qualityassurance@vtct.org.uk](mailto:qualityassurance@vtct.org.uk) The appellant is required to initiate the appeal no later than 15 working days from the date of receipt of the decision.



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