

CHOOSING AN AWARDING ORGANISATION

**CLOSER TO
INDUSTRY**

ABOUT EAL

EAL is the specialist skills partner and awarding organisation for industry. We are committed to investing in the industries we serve and the careers of the people working within them. Through industry partnerships and years of experience supporting our core sectors, we have built unrivalled knowledge and understanding of employer skills needs. As a result, EAL's skills solutions and qualifications are respected and chosen by employers and deliver real career benefits for all our learners.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of everything we do. Our long-term partnerships with employers, professional bodies and our parent organisation Semta help us offer qualifications and skills solutions that are fine-tuned for the needs of our sectors. For our learners this delivers added value and underpins their careers in industry.

Through our External Quality Assurance service we work hand in hand with our recognised Centres to support the highest standards in training and qualifications delivery. For employers, this approach delivers a value-added service and assurance that their learners achieve the standards required by their industry. Our Centres can also rely on their dedicated full time, employed EAL External Quality Assurer (EQA) as a trusted partner for expert support and guidance.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT AWARDING ORGANISATION FOR YOU

There are more than 160 recognised awarding organisations in the UK. Choosing the right one to meet the needs of your business and your learners is vital.

This brochure is designed to help you evaluate the differences between awarding organisations, understand how these differences could affect your business and help you to make an informed decision on the right awarding organisation for you.

Awarding organisations offer significantly different levels of support to their customers, based on their resources, budget and requirements. If you are looking for an enhanced level of support, make sure you opt for an awarding organisation with the scope and a track record of delivering bespoke and flexible solutions.



EAL is without a doubt the best awarding organisation we have dealt with. EAL's Customer Services Team always offers first-class service and the support from the External Quality Assurer (EQA) is second to none. We see our relationship with EAL as a partnership because of the level of support we get from them.



Gavin Davies, Assistant Curriculum Director for Technology at Coleg Y Cymoedd

THE TEN
KEY
QUESTIONS
YOU
SHOULD
ASK

1. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE AWARDING ORGANISATION COLLABORATE WITH EMPLOYERS AND INDUSTRY BODIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS QUALIFICATIONS?

Ascertaining this is essential to ensure the qualifications offered are fit for purpose and recognised by employers and relevant industry bodies. Some awarding organisations are specialists in certain areas, whilst others offer a vast range of qualifications but without the same level of employer and industry input or support.

EAL prides itself on being closer to industry – no product or service is designed without engaging with and involving employers, blue chip organisations and SMEs alike

2. HOW IS THE PRICE PACKAGE STRUCTURED AND WILL IT HELP ME TO BUDGET OR LEAVE ME VULNERABLE TO HIDDEN COSTS?

If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is. Some awarding organisations offer low cost packages which exclude many of the support services and materials traditionally offered by awarding organisations. For some customers this may offer advantages but it is vital to consider whether taking on these activities in-house is feasible and weigh up the resulting cost and impact on quality.

Some awarding organisations charge separately for each part of their service, whilst others offer a complete package price. It's well worth doing a rough calculation to check the potential real cost of each qualification. You can do this by estimating the extra time, resources and budget that would be required if you needed to deliver additional activities in-house and adding this to the total amount charged by the awarding organisation.

EAL's pricing structure is clear – one price for registration and certification and services priced fairly and transparently for all customers.

3. WILL WE BE ALLOCATED A DEDICATED EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER (EQA)?

Not all awarding organisations offer their customers the service of a dedicated EQA as standard. To help you ascertain the level of support you will receive, check if your EQA would be a full time employee of the awarding organisation or work on a freelance basis. It is also worth checking whether the awarding organisation will provide you with direct contact details for your EQA; for quick queries this can save time and resources.

The EAL EQA team is employed full time, ensuring a consistent 'people to people' approach that is personalised for your organisation.

4. WHAT LEVEL OF SUPPORT WILL YOUR EQA PROVIDE?

Some awarding organisations have reduced the cost of their qualifications by minimising the level of support they offer, thereby passing on the burden of quality assurance to their customers. Others provide advice and guidance from dedicated, industry experts who tailor their support to each customer and focus on improving performance, encouraging best practice and growing the customer's business.

Try to establish what level of partnership the awarding organisation's EQAs typically have with their customers. The most beneficial relationship is one in which EQAs work hand in hand with their customers to find solutions for their businesses and continually improve the quality of their training provision.

Bear in mind the implications minimal EQA support could have. Will you have to shoulder an additional quality assurance burden on top of assessment and internal verification, including overall responsibility for matters of regulatory compliance?

The personalised service your EQA provides will ensure fit for purpose qualifications delivery and assessment, as well as offering the wider support your organisation may need to guarantee quality assurance.



5. HOW KNOWLEDGEABLE WILL YOUR EQA BE ABOUT THE INDUSTRY AND SPECIFIC BUSINESS AREA IN WHICH WE ARE LOOKING TO OFFER QUALIFICATIONS?

Having an EQA who is a time-served expert in your industry or business area – as opposed to a generalist who works across a number of industry sectors – offers considerable benefits.

It determines whether the support you receive is based on a real affinity with trends and challenges in the sector, whether their advice is founded on specific technical knowledge as well as a wider industry perspective, and whether – when they walk onto your site or premises – they will know exactly what they're looking at!

EAL staff are occupationally competent with continued CPD ensuring you have the expertise you need at your fingertips - from product design and development through to service delivery.

6. ARE SUPPORT MATERIALS PROVIDED AND ARE THEY FREE OR SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL CHARGES?

Some awarding organisations no longer offer support materials within their package. In some cases further payment or an annual subscription is needed to access supporting material. In contrast, other awarding organisations provide access to support materials without charge, helping to reduce preparation time and ensure consistency across all providers.

EAL provides learner and delivery packs as part of our standard packages. We make sure we're transparent about any additional charges for our printed publications, so customers are clear about what they are purchasing from EAL.

7. WILL THE SUPPORT MATERIALS PROVIDED HELP TO RELIEVE THE OPERATIONAL BURDEN OF DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT PREPARATION... OR WILL THERE BE GAPS?

The level of detail and guidance in the support materials provided by an awarding organisation has a direct impact on the preparation time and level of internal resources their customers need to deliver a qualification. Ideally, the materials should guide you through the complete process of delivery and assessment, supporting every element of the learner journey. Some awarding organisations provide the bare minimum and require customers to develop their own materials, whilst others provide comprehensive, interactive support materials that are regularly updated.

EAL recognise that centres have dedicated resources and teaching materials that align to curriculum and therefore ensure that centres can use their own bespoke materials aligned to EAL's qualification needs. Where applicable EAL can provide exemplar materials.

8. WHAT FLEXIBILITY IS THERE IN REGISTERING LEARNERS AND SCHEDULING EXAMS?

The flexibility and responsiveness of an awarding organisation's systems and processes is fundamental to meeting the varying needs of employers and learners. From gaining approval to offer a qualification, to scheduling and delivering exams and receiving your learners' final certificates, the effectiveness of your awarding organisation's services can be the difference between delivering your programme on time or falling short of expectations.

EAL's easy to use systems offer a flexible approach to registration, including candidate bulk upload. Exams are also available on demand in most instances to allow for scheduling that suits the customer.

9. IS THE AWARDING ORGANISATION DRIVEN BY PROFIT OR IS IT NOT-FOR-PROFIT?

Whilst some awarding organisations operate on a solely commercial basis and focus on developing qualifications that are likely to have a high demand, others re-invest their profits back into the industries they serve to create new, and often highly specialised, qualifications. The availability of these types of qualification is critical to support the development of vital skills within their core industry sectors. Typically, not-for-profit awarding organisations can offer a much wider portfolio of relevant qualifications for the industries they serve.

EAL has, in the last 10 years, reinvested over £10m in supporting vital industry skills.

10. WHAT LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SUPPORT DOES THE AWARDING ORGANISATION OFFER AS STANDARD?

Levels of customer support, approaches to problem solving and responses to customer feedback can vary hugely from one awarding organisation to another. A useful benchmark is provided by the UK-wide Customer Satisfaction Index. Look for an awarding organisation that features in the top quartile and scores at or above the sector average of 78%.

EAL has a customer satisfaction score of 86.6% placing our externally benchmarked service in the top quartile for performance, which is confirmation of our personalised services and dedicated service delivery approach.

WHY EAL?

This is what our customers tell us matters most to them and why they choose to work with us:

- **qualifications that match employer needs ...** our long-term partnership with industry and focus on our core sectors gives us unrivalled knowledge and understanding of the workplace and employers' skills needs
- **dedicated support from expert External Quality Assurers ...** we view our relationships with our Centres as partnerships and are committed to making a difference to their businesses
- **EAL invests in the industries we serve ...** by responding to vital skills needs, we can offer the most industry-relevant portfolio, including specialist qualifications that would not exist without EAL's support
- **high quality support materials ...** our qualifications are supported by an extensive range of materials that are continually updated and refined
- **value for money with no hidden extras ...** we offer a highly competitive up-front pricing package, meaning more clarity and no unexpected extras to budget for
- **easy to work with ...** our personal and accessible service is one of the reasons why independent customer satisfaction surveys have consistently ranked EAL as first among UK awarding organisations for its customer service levels
- **fast, reliable systems ...** with our 7-day new Centre recognition commitment, flexible exams and guaranteed 24-hour certificate turnaround, we provide fast, reliable services that meet individual needs
- **news, events and networking ...** our extensive, free news updates and event programmes ensure customers are kept informed at all times.

**ALL EAL'S PROFIT GOES STRAIGHT BACK
INTO SUPPORTING VITAL SKILLS IN OUR
CORE INDUSTRY SECTORS, WITH OVER
£10 MILLION REINVESTED IN THE
LAST 10 YEARS ALONE.**



EAL Awards



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To find out more about EAL qualifications and services
please contact our Customer Services Team on:

+44 (0)1923 652400
customer@eal.org.uk
www.eal.org.uk

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