

**BRITISH FLUID POWER
ASSOCIATION
QUALIFICATIONS –
APPROVED CENTRES
GUIDELINE**

RELATING TO CETOP OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS

FOREWORD

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This document was prepared by John R Savage, Director of the National Fluid Power Centre and Chairman of the BFPA Education & Training Committee. Further copies can be obtained from The British Fluid Power Association, Cromwell Park, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 5SR. Tel: 01608 647900. Fax: 01608 647919.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide an informative guideline to “Approved Centres” and the processes associated with quality assurance and quality control of competence based qualifications. If a person is deemed to be “competent” he or she must have reached a particular “standard” at a particular level (level 1, 2 or 3, etc.) associated with a particular range of skills.

At level 1, competence may be based upon the acquisition of skills based upon an individual task; for example, following the necessary procedures to commission a relief valve to a particular specification (pressure level). Whilst at level 3, competence will be based upon a number of integrated skills, for example, effectively carrying out fault-finding techniques on an electro-hydraulics system.

Whatever the level, “competence” demands individual objective candidate assessment by a competent assessor.

2. Approved Centres

If a person is presented with a competence based qualification, the certificate should clearly state:

- The level of competence
- The range of skills covered
- The specific area covered by these skills
- The Approved Centre at which the qualification was obtained
- The name of the controlling organisation (Qualifying Body) and associated signature of authority.

The Approved Centre must be itself assessed by a representative of the Qualifying Body, to guarantee that it can effectively and continuously meet the criteria necessary to develop the knowledge and skills of personnel to a level at which they are deemed competent.

A major concern is that once a person has been certified competent he or she “must be” competent and there must be no doubt placed upon that person’s capability within the range of skills covered by the certificate.

Approved Centres are the responsible body for ensuring quality and consistency of performance and should therefore guarantee these levels of candidate knowledge and competence based skills.

It is the responsibility of the Qualifying Body to establish a guideline document clearly explaining to educational establishments and training organisations their commitment to achieving and maintaining “Approved Centre Status”. (See BFPA/Q1 Guideline Document to BFPA Competence Based Qualifications.)

Before applying for Approved Centre status, organisations must fully understand that competence can only be achieved through “real hands on experience”. It is therefore necessary for centres to have, or have access to, an extensive range of fully operational equipment, which clearly represents present day technology and which is able to meet the criteria laid down for knowledge and skills development followed by competence-based assessment.

To ensure candidate performance levels, it is necessary for centres to have technically-competent tutors and assessors, with field experience in fluid power and associated engineering technologies as well as good academic qualifications.

To effectively educate, train and carry out competence based assessment, staff themselves should, through their own work-based experiences, have a range of practical skills involving the maintenance and management of fluid power systems.

Other important issues are the centre's ability to:

- (i) Interpret the competence-based programme(s) and effectively integrate the knowledge-based sections with the development of practical skills.
- (ii) Establish individual candidate "action plans" against prior knowledge and experience.
- (iii) Maintain candidate progress records, providing evidence of feedback, evaluation and confidentiality.
- (iv) Establish a series of written assignments to support the knowledge-based sections.
- (v) Establish a series of competence-based tasks to meet the evidence criteria - to be carried out on a "one to one" basis.
- (vi) Establish a Management Control System, covering all aspects of document control, including Tutors, Assessors and Internal Verifiers, involving regular documented management review meetings.
- (vii) Provide quality tuition through an extensive range of visual aids, computer-based presentations, etc. in lecture rooms conducive to learning.
- (viii) Provide good library facilities, including where possible, access to CD and Internet-based information.

Further to these requirements, centres must have in place, an active Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities Policy. ISO 9000 or ISO Approval 14000 would be seen as most supportive when the Qualifying Body makes the final consideration for Approved Centre Status.

Note: Centres approved at Level 3 are automatically approved for Levels 1 and 2.

3. Educational Establishments/Training Organisations

Before applying for centre approval, Educational Establishments/Training Organisation must be conversant with:

- (i) The content of the programme* for which they are applying to run.
- (ii) The guideline document* outlining the centre's specific commitment and requirement to run the scheme.

The Guideline Document will contain the necessary forms for application for centre approval, candidate registration and examination entry, plus details of all costs associated with the Qualifying Body.

* Visit the BFPA website for full details, <http://www.bfpa.co.uk>

4. Qualifying Body/External Verifiers

On receiving the application form for centre approval, the Qualifying Body will arrange a centre visit by one of its elected “External Verifiers”(EV).

The EV will communicate with the centre and finalise a date and time for the visit. The EV will notify the centre in writing of all the necessary arrangements for the visit, clearly outlining all areas to be checked and discussed as part of the approval process and the necessary personnel to be present.

Centres would be advised to forward to the EV, current copies of CV’s for all personnel involved in the scheme, prior to the visit.

The EV will normally work from a checklist system and a copy of this can be forwarded to the respective centre prior to the approval visit (See appendix 1).

During the visit to the centre the EV will provide:

- (i) Advice and guidance to the centre, to help them meet the Qualifying Body’s criteria for centre approval.
- (ii) Advice and guidance regarding the delivery, management and assessment processes required to effectively run the scheme.

On completion of the centre approval visit, the EV will notify the centre whether or not they have met the necessary criteria to become officially approved.

If so, the EV will officially notify the Qualifying Body, forwarding all the necessary approval documentation. The Qualifying Body will then award the centre with its Approved Centre Certificate.

Should a centre fail to meet the approval criteria, the EV will discuss a time-scale with the centre and the necessary remedial actions to be taken.

The Qualifying Body may grant conditional approval, for a period of up to six months. At this stage, full approval will be granted if the centre can present the necessary evidence showing that it has clearly met the criteria. This may involve a re-visit by the EV and this will incur additional costs.

The Qualifying Body will normally approve a centre for a period of **five years**, subject to the EV’s annual visit and report.

The EV, on behalf of the Qualifying Body, will be responsible for developing a close communication link with the centre. It will be the responsibility of the Qualifying Body to provide specimen practical competence-based tasks, including respective marking schemes, ensuring that approved centres adopt a style and content acceptable to the qualification level.

The Qualifying Body will be responsible for setting examinations and establishing the necessary marking schemes, on an agreed time-scale. The approved centre will be responsible for the administration, invigilation, marking and confidentiality.

Where Qualifying Bodies in Europe do not have the resources to set and administer examination papers, etc., the alternative is to establish an acceptable set of examination papers and marking schemes, through the various education and training establishments, allowing them to administer and control them accordingly.

However, the Qualifying Body must agree the standard, whilst ensuring the content meets the programme and qualifications level.

5. External Verifier/Verification visits to Approved Centres

During such visits, the EV will:

- (i) Verify the centre against its original centre approval documentation, systems and management control.
- (ii) Review candidate records of achievement.
- (iii) Observe competence based practical task assessments, where possible.
- (iv) Discuss with Centre Tutors, Assessors and Internal Verifiers, any problems associated with the management and daily running of the scheme.
- (v) Receive from centre staff any objective feedback regarding the scheme and proposed improvements.
- (vi) Provide the centre with any updated information from the Qualifying Body, which they may not yet have received.

It is the responsibility of the Qualifying Body to have in place a programme for scheme/qualification review and improvements. This will normally be an annual process.

The Qualifying Body will notify approved centres in writing through established “Information Updates”. These will include recommendations to approved centres and dates for implementation where necessary. It will be the responsibility of the Approved Centre’s Management Team to meet these requirements.

On completion of the centre visit by the EV, a full report will be submitted to the Qualifying Body and a copy sent to the respective centre, outlining any agreed improvements, actions or observations, which need attention. The EV will discuss the outline of his or her report with the centre at the end of the visit.

6. Successful Candidates

On successful completion of the scheme, the approved centre will, through the necessary documented systems, inform the Qualifying Body of the candidates’ success.

It will be the responsibility of the Qualifying Body to award the respective certificate, showing the competence base level of achievement signed by an authorised representative of the Qualifying Body.

BRITISH FLUID POWER ASSOCIATION

CENTRE APPROVAL REPORT FORM

1	CENTRE DETAILS	2	RECOMMENDATIONS
	Centre Name:		Full Approval Tick
	Address:		
	Centre Contact:		Conditional Approval
	Tel. No. Fax No.		
	E-mail:		Period of Months
	External Verifiers Name:		
	Date/Time/Visit:		Rejection

3	CENTRE APPROVAL SOUGHT FOR	CODE	LEVELS			
			1	2	3	4
	• Hydraulic System Design	HSD				
	• Industrial Hydraulics and Control	IH				
	• Mobile Hydraulics	MH				
	• Power Pneumatics and Control	PP				

Please tick the appropriate box.

4	ACCOMMODATION/FACILITIES (Brief Report)
(a)	<u>Lecture Room Facilities/Layout</u>
(b)	<u>Visual Aids/Presentation Methods</u>
(c)	<u>Programme Notes/Support Materials/Software</u>
(d)	<u>Manufactures Catalogues/CDs/Access to Web Sites/Library</u>
(e)	<u>BFPA Publications and Relevant Standards</u>
	Recommendations/Comments

5	PRACTICAL FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY/ACCESS
<p>At this stage the External Verifier will make reference to “Section B” of the BFPA Guideline Document Q1 (current issue) relating to the equipment necessary to effectively deliver competence based programmes</p>	
<p>Report on the acceptability of the centre’s resources to effectively deliver the programme</p>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 10px;">Comments</div>	
Quality of Equipment	
Range of Equipment	
Age/Current	
<p>Recommendations/Comments</p>	

6	CENTRE PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT	TICK	
		YES	NO
•	Tutor Names <u>Comments</u> CVs Checked		
•	Assessor Names <u>Comments</u> CVs Checked		
•	Internal Verifier <u>Comments</u> CV Checked		
	<u>LEARNING METHODS TO BE USED</u>		
Recommendations/Comments			

7	SCHEME ADMINISTRATION	TICK	
		YES	NO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate Training Plans Established (Format) <u>Comments</u> 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate Personal Development Plans Established (Format) <u>Comments</u> 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Systems for Progress Monitoring/Maintaining/Confidential – Secure Records</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assignments Practical Task Preparation Practical Task Assessment Written Examinations 		
Responsibility/Controlled by – (name)			
	<u>Name of Examinations Officer</u>	Met during visit	
	<u>Tel No.</u> <u>Fax No.</u> <u>E-mail</u>		
	<u>Recommendations/Comments</u>		

8	HEALTH AND SAFETY/HYGIENE	TICK	
		YES	NO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Policy Operational • Relevant Safety Notices in place • Risk Assessment carried out and recorded <p><u>Recommendations/Comments</u></p>		
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunities Policy Implemented <p><u>Comments</u></p>		
10	EXTERNAL VERIFIERS SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS		
<u>EVs Signature</u>		Date	
<u>Signature - Director BFPA</u>		Date	