



# Endorsed, Regulated & Non Regulated Qualifications



# Who we are

OAL are a leading not for profit industry-focused Awarding and Assessment Organisation. Our service combines the rigour, authority and expertise of an awarding organisation with the flexibility, efficiency, and commercial awareness of a private commercial business. We work collaboratively with our customers and employers to provide relevant occupational specific qualifications, independent assessment, validation of CPD programmes and endorsement of organisational courses.

As an Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisation we have the capability, capacity and authority to create both regulated and non-regulated qualifications, as well as being able to endorse programmes of learning delivered by OAL approved centres.

Regulated Qualifications must adhere to a fixed set of rules that are regulated and required by Ofqual. Non-regulated qualifications and endorsed programmes have more flexibility but do still need to meet some criteria, which are detailed in the table on page 3.



# Benefits of working with OAL

- O pportunities for growth through industry-recognised programmes of learning.
- A ccess to customised learning experiences designed to meet your organisation's unique goals.
- L ifelong skills development that empowers employees at every stage of their careers.



## What is the difference between a Regulated Qualification, a Non-Regulated Qualification and an Endorsed Programme?

The regulated qualifications sector can be complex and sometimes challenging to navigate. In order to be classed as an Awarding Organisation in England, OAL must meet very strict criteria and regulations that are set and enforced by Ofqual. The regulations set specific criteria and conditions that qualifications must meet, if they are to be recognised by Ofqual. Non-regulated qualifications and endorsed programmes, whilst still having certain minimum standards, which are set by the Awarding Organisation, are much more flexible and adaptable to change. The table below details some of the key differences between the Regulated, Non-Regulated and Endorsed and the minimum requirements of each.

<p><b>Endorsed</b></p> <p>An Endorsed Programme is a learning programme, training course, or professional development activity that has been formally reviewed and approved by OAL for its quality, structure, and relevance.</p>	<p><b>Non-Regulated Qualification</b></p> <p>A Non-Regulated Qualification is a structured programme of learning and assessment that leads to the achievement of defined learning outcomes and competencies, but which is not regulated by a government qualifications regulator such as Ofqual.</p>	<p><b>Regulated Qualification</b></p> <p>A regulated qualification is one that is formally recognised by Ofqual. OAL is required to ensure it meets nationally defined standards for content, assessment, delivery, and awarding and the required Ofqual Conditions of Recognition.</p>
<p><u>Programme Proposal &amp; Rationale</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined purpose and outcomes with learning aims and objectives.</li> <li>• Defined target audience.</li> <li>• Total Learning Hours (TLH).</li> </ul>	<p><u>Qualification Specification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear aims and objectives.</li> <li>• Qualification purpose &amp; intended outcomes.</li> <li>• Entry requirements and progression routes.</li> </ul> <p>Detailed syllabus/module breakdown (e.g. lesson plans/scheme of work).</p>	<p><u>Qualification Specification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed qualification specification (format per Ofqual General Conditions).</li> <li>• Learning out comes and assessment criteria per unit.</li> <li>• Total Qualification Time(TQT) &amp; Guided Learning Hours (GLH).(section E).</li> <li>• OAL to provide/sign off specification, qualification Handbook and Assessment Forms.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Programme Structure &amp; Content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson plan/s./Course outline. Clear learning outcomes per unit/module.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Qualification Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit structure with indicative hours for each unit module/guided learning hours (GLH).</li> <li>• Total programme length.</li> <li>• Learning outcomes &amp; assessment criteria per unit. Benchmarking of level for consistency (informal alignment).</li> <li>• OAL to provide a qualification Handbook.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Qualification Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined need and purpose for the qualification. E.g. market research &amp; stakeholder consultation (letters of Support).</li> <li>• Qualification purpose statement aligned to Ofqual criteria.</li> <li>• Mapping to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level descriptors.</li> <li>• General Conditions of Recognition need to be met e.g. (section E).</li> <li>• Industry relevance or employer demand evidence.</li> </ul>



<u>Assessment Approach</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details on how learning will be confirmed/assessed on programme or at the end.</li> <li>• Assessment aligned to learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Process for internal moderation (optional but recommended).</li> </ul>	<u>Assessment Strategy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair and consistent assessment methods.</li> <li>• Grading structure (e.g. Pass, Merit, Distinction if used).</li> <li>• Some internal quality assurance/verification/standardisation processes.</li> </ul>	<u>Assessment &amp; Grading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valid, reliable, and fair assessment methodologies.</li> <li>• Assessment strategy aligned to Ofqual's principles.</li> <li>• Grading descriptors and pass mark standards.</li> </ul>
<u>Centre Approval &amp; Delivery</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OAL centre approval process needs to be completed.</li> </ul>	<u>Centre &amp; Assessor Requirements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OAL centre approval process needs to be completed.</li> <li>• Occupationally competent staff in place for delivery.</li> </ul>	<u>Centre Approval &amp; Delivery</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust centre recognition process (per Ofqual C1-C3 Conditions).</li> <li>• Assessor/IQA requirements and training.</li> <li>• Delivery guidance for centres.</li> <li>• Policies: Malpractice, Appeals, Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations.</li> <li>• Conflict of Interest management.</li> <li>• Data protection and record-keeping</li> </ul>
<u>Branding &amp; Certification</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic certification approved by OAL.</li> <li>• Clear differentiation from regulated qualifications.</li> <li>• Endorsement statement wording compliance (no misleading claims).</li> <li>• Template for certificate design showing 'Endorsed by [Awarding Organisation]'.</li> <li>• There can either be a process for registration on the OAL system and certificates issued or just a yearly fee for continued endorsement and certificates produced by the organisation.</li> </ul>	<u>Certification &amp; Recognition</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate would be produced by OAL electronic or paper based.</li> <li>• Non-regulated qualification built on Creatio.</li> <li>• Registrations per learner on Creatio.</li> <li>• Distinct certification wording for non-regulated qualifications.</li> <li>• Optional - Potential for professional body recognition or employer endorsement.</li> </ul>	<u>Certification &amp; Awarding</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure certification processes managed by OAL.</li> <li>• Ofqual branded certificate produced electronic, or paper based.</li> <li>• Certification claims verification.</li> <li>• Regulated qualification built on Creatio.</li> <li>• Registrations per learner on Creatio.</li> <li>• Transparent appeals and results review process.</li> <li>• Compliance with Ofqual's Conditions of Recognition (section I).</li> </ul>

<u>Quality Assurance &amp; Review</u>	<u>Quality Assurance Framework</u>	<u>Quality Assurance &amp; Compliance</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly EQA visit to check quality and consistency.</li> <li>• Ability to withdraw endorsement if standards are not maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly EQA visit to check quality and consistency.</li> <li>• Learner feedback and complaints procedures.</li> <li>• Annual review and continuous improvement plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre internal quality assurance (IQA) framework in place.</li> <li>• External Quality Assurance (EQA) carried out by OAL.</li> <li>• Monitoring and sanctions procedures.</li> <li>• Compliance with Ofqual's Conditions of Recognition.</li> </ul>

## What is an Endorsed Programme?

An endorsed programme is a customised learning or training course that is recognised or accredited by Occupational Awards Limited (OAL). Unlike formal qualifications, an endorsed programme does not lead to a regulated qualification. Instead, it validates the quality, content, and structure of the course, ensuring it meets specific industry or educational standards.

These programmes are developed and delivered by employers, training providers, colleges, or other OAL-approved centres. They are submitted to OAL for review and evaluation against our endorsed programme criteria.

Endorsed Programmes are learning programmes or courses created by your organisation and endorsed by OAL. They must have clearly defined, measurable learning outcomes that demonstrate what learners will be able to achieve upon completion. If required, we can offer additional support to help you meet these standards as part of our bespoke support package.





- Tailored and Flexible: You create the programme you want, or already have, without having to jump through the hoops of regulation. You even get to decide whether you want to issue a certificate or not!
- Externally Recognised: OAL's endorsement ensures your course/programme, is relevant, valued and respected within your organisation and in your sector.
- Quality Assured: OAL's initial and annual review of your programme, gives you and your learners the reassurance that your training is meeting the quality requirements of an industry leading Awarding Organisation
- Retain Control: The intellectual property rights remain with you. Unlike a Regulated Qualification, the learning outcomes and assessment criteria remain private to you and out of the public domain. This means you can change and update your programme at pace, just remember to inform OAL so we can quickly quality assure and changes!

## Are Endorsed Programmes Certificated by OAL?

You have the option to choose, whether OAL are issuing a certificate for your programme or if we are just endorsing the quality of it and you are producing your own attendance certificate. However, we must ensure any certificate produced cannot be confused with a certificate for a regulated qualification. We must ensure certain conventions are met in the design of any certificate, whether that is issued by you or OAL.

If you want OAL to issue a certificate, then each individual learner would need to be registered with us through the OAL Portal (Creatio) which would incur a registration fee per learner.

If you do not want us to issue a certificate then there would be no registration fee, just your annual centre fee, and any agreed fees for the annual quality assurance review of your programme.

## Benefits of OAL Endorsed Programmes

Endorsed programmes give organisations the ability to offer unique, customised learning solutions that directly meet the needs of their business and/or their customers. Whilst ensuring that the quality and content of the programme is recognised and endorsed by an external and Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisation. When OAL endorses a programme, it signals confidence in your ability to deliver high-quality training within your areas of expertise. This gives your learners the comfort and confidence that the programme they are on, is one that has been endorsed by OAL.

- **Competitive Advantage** Offering externally endorsed, high-quality programmes position your organisation as a leader in professional development within your sector.
- **Trusted Recognition** Boost credibility with OAL's official endorsement behind your programmes.
- **Tailored Learning Design** bespoke training that directly addresses the specific needs of your business and industry, ensuring your workforce gains the most relevant skills and knowledge.
- **Increased Trust and Confidence** OAL's endorsement provides assurance to employers and learners alike that your training meets high-quality, industry-relevant standards.
- **Flexibility in Delivery:** Structure and deliver programmes in a way that best suits your organisation — whether face-to-face, online, or through blended learning approaches.



# What is a Non-Regulated Qualification

Non-Regulated Qualifications, sometimes referred to as Accredited Programmes, are the next step up from an Endorsed Programme. They are closer to a nationally recognised and Ofqual regulated qualification, without having to adhere to some of the strict conditions required by Ofqual. Structurally they can be very similar to Regulated Qualifications, but the content and the intellectual property will remain in your control. This gives you more control over the content, the delivery and the assessment methodology and enables you to have more flexibility, when it comes to updating and changing the content, as technologies, processes and systems move on.

Non-Regulated Qualifications are best suited to Personal Development/CPD Programmes, Specialist Training in niche, emerging or rapidly evolving fields, or for supplementing Regulated Qualifications with additional skills and knowledge requirements. They cannot duplicate or replace existing Regulated Qualifications. Unlike Regulated Qualifications, they are not on the Ofqual Register and they are not in the public domain, so cannot be used by other Awarding Organisations or Training Providers without your express permission.





- Tailored and Flexible: You create the programme you want, or already have, without having to jump through the hoops of regulation.
- Externally Recognised: OAL's accreditation of your Non-Regulated Qualification ensures your delivery and assessment methodology are standardised and benchmarked against industry standards and levels.
- Quality Assured: OAL's involvement and guidance in developing your Non-Regulated Qualification, gives you and your learners the reassurance that your training is meeting the quality requirements of an industry leading Awarding Organisation
- Retain Control: The intellectual property rights remain with you. Unlike a Regulated Qualification, the learning outcomes and assessment criteria remain private to you and out of the public domain. This means you can change and update your programme at pace, but you need to work with OAL so we can quickly quality assure any changes.

## Are Non-Regulated Qualifications Certificated by OAL?

All Regulated and Non-Regulated Qualifications require learners to be registered with OAL and have an OAL produced certificate. The certificate can be dual branded with your logo, can be either paper based or digital, and can be bespoke for you. However, we must ensure any certificate produced cannot be confused with a certificate for a regulated qualification. This means that we must apply certain conventions to certificates in terms of their design and content. This applies to both paper based and digital certificates.



# Benefits of Non-Regulated Qualifications

Non-Regulated Qualifications give organisations the ability to offer unique, customised learning solutions that directly meet the needs of their business and/or their customers. Whilst ensuring that the quality and content of the programme is recognised, accredited and certificated by an external and Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisation. When OAL develop a Non-Regulated Qualification with you, it signals confidence in your ability to deliver high-quality training within your areas of expertise. This gives your learners the comfort and confidence that the programme they are on, is one that has been accredited by OAL.

- **Competitive Advantage** Offering externally accredited; high-quality programmes position your organisation as a leader in professional development within your sector.
- **Trusted Recognition** Boost credibility with OAL's official accreditation behind your programmes.
- **Tailored Learning Design** bespoke training that directly addresses the specific needs of your business and industry, ensuring your workforce gains the most relevant skills and knowledge.
- **Increased Trust and Confidence** OAL's accreditation provides assurance to employers and learners alike that your training meets high-quality, industry-relevant standards.
- **Flexibility in Delivery:** Structure and deliver programmes in a way that best suits your organisation — whether face-to-face, online, or through blended learning approaches.

# What is a Regulated Qualification?

A regulated qualification in England is a qualification that is officially recognised and overseen by a government body, Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) in England, to ensure it meets specific standards of quality and consistency. Regulated qualifications are listed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and are in the public domain. Ofqual is the regulator of all qualifications in England, but individual Awarding Organisations (AOs) such as OAL, own the rights to the qualifications they develop and are responsible for approving training providers to deliver and assess those qualifications. The AO must also quality assure all of the qualifications in their portfolio to ensure they meet the specific conditions required by Ofqual, and the AO must also quality assure the assessment decisions of the training providers they approve to deliver the qualifications.

Qualifications come in many different guises, such as GCSEs, A-Levels, Technical Certificates and Diplomas etc.. They can be different sizes and levels, but must conform to regulatory standards, when classifying those sizes and levels. Most commonly, OAL produces qualifications, from Entry Level to Level 6, that are either an Award, a Certificate or a Diploma. Sounds complicated? Don't worry, with OAL you are working with an industry leading and Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisation, and we will help you navigate the complexity and ensure that we build qualifications in partnership with you, that not only meet your requirements but that are also compliant with regulations.





# Are Regulated Qualifications Certificated by OAL?

All Regulated and Non-Regulated Qualifications require learners to be registered with OAL and have an OAL produced certificate. The certificate itself can be either paper based or digital, you decide. However, we must ensure that any certificate produced meets the guidelines and structure required by Ofqual. This means that we must apply certain conventions to certificates in terms of their design and content. This applies to both paper based and digital certificates.

## Benefits of Developing a New and Regulated Qualification

Regulated Qualifications give an unrivalled level of quality assurance, nationally recognised levelling and consistency of assessment. They can open the door to both national and local funding streams and although they are not always officially recognised overseas, English qualifications have an unparalleled reputation internationally.



Here are some of the key benefits and reasons to develop a regulated qualification:

- **Credibility and Trust** Regulated qualifications are overseen by Ofqual, ensuring they meet rigorous standards. They carry the Ofqual logo, which signals quality and legitimacy to learners, employers, and educational institutions.
- **Global Recognition** Because they are held to high standards, regulated qualifications are widely accepted internationally, enhancing learners' mobility and employability.
- **Quality Assurance** Regulated qualifications must comply with the General Conditions of Recognition, which include:
  - Market research to ensure relevance.
  - Input from industry and subject experts.
  - Valid and reliable assessment methods.
  - Ongoing monitoring and updates to remain current.
- **Relevance to Industry** Regular reviews ensure that qualifications stay aligned with industry developments, helping learners gain up-to-date skills that employers value.
- **Learner Confidence** Learners are reassured that the qualification is fit for purpose, thoroughly assessed, and provides the skills needed to succeed in their field.
- **Standardisation** Regulated qualifications offer consistency in content and assessment, regardless of where or how they are delivered.
- **Access to Funding and Progression** Many regulated qualifications are eligible for government funding and are recognised for progression to further education or employment.