

RSL VQ Non-Standard Academic Year Delivery Policy

This is Version 4 of the RSL VQ Non-Standard Academic Year Delivery Policy. This policy is intended for internal and external use.

The guidance is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically. Electronic copies are version controlled.

Introduction

This policy is for all centres that are or may be considering delivering RSL Vocational Qualifications on a non-standard academic year.

The purpose of the policy is to set out the procedures related to non-standard academic delivery at RSL centres.

RSL is aware that not all centres which deliver its qualifications work to a standard UK academic calendar of September to July, and that providers which deliver qualifications outside the academic year model often have several cohorts throughout the academic year.

This policy is available on our website at <https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/>

This policy will be subject to review and monitoring by RSL and if necessary, will be amended and updated following feedback from centres. All future versions of this policy will be posted on our website.

This document has been reviewed and updated in January 2023

What is a non-standard academic year?

- 1.1 A standard academic year is defined as the traditional UK academic year of September to July, completing by the end date for grading as identified in our key dates calendar (available here - <https://www.rslawards.com/vocational/vocational-qualifications-dates-fees/>) A non-standard academic year is any model which differs from this.
- 1.2 This could include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Short course delivery
 - Centres outside the UK where a traditional academic year is not September to July
 - Centres which finish delivery and assessment later than the end date in the key dates calendar

2. Which qualifications does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 Non-standard academic delivery applies to all RSL qualifications that do not include an externally assessed unit.
- 2.2 It is not possible to apply for non-standard academic delivery for qualifications which include an externally assessed unit due to the conditions surrounding these types of units.

3. Key Dates and Timescales

- 3.1 Centres delivering to a non-standard academic year will still need to complete all tasks in the key dates calendar and adhere to the same quality assurance and moderation processes as standard academic years.
- 3.2 Once their application has been processed, centres will receive a bespoke key dates calendar.
- 3.3 RSL provide three cycles throughout the academic year which can be accessed by non-standard academic year centres.
- 3.4 Each cycle identifies registration deadlines, summative moderation sample deadlines and the assessment board for certification.
- 3.5 When centres make their applications, RSL will identify the appropriate cycle or combination of cycles based on the assessment and internal verification plan submitted.
- 3.6 Centres do not need to work within a single cycle. RSL will determine the most appropriate cycle based on the dates given. For example, a centre could have the registration deadline in cycle 1, summative moderation sample in cycle 2 and assessment board in cycle 3.

- 3.7 The shortest timescale possible with regards to learner registration to assessment board is 5 months.
- 3.8 Please refer to the appendix for details of the cycles.

4. Learner Registrations

- 4.1 The bespoke key dates calendar will identify when registrations can be made with no late fees incurred.
- 4.2 The Annual Self-Assessment Review must be completed by the centre prior to the first registration point by the deadline in the bespoke key dates calendar.
- 4.3 Learners must be registered by the deadline in the bespoke key dates calendar. If learners are registered outside of the agreed dates, late registration fees will apply.
- 4.4 Centres must complete and submit a 'Learner Registration Check Declaration' by the date identified in the bespoke key dates calendar.
- 4.5 If centres have cohorts who sign up to complete a smaller qualification and then wish to top up to a larger qualification, this will not be possible until the relevant learners have been certificated following an assessment board.
- 4.6 Centres will be invoiced for learner registration fees two weeks after registrations to allow time to make any withdrawals necessary.

5. Centre Visits

- 5.1 Non-standard academic year centres will require an annual centre visit.
- 5.2 The visit will take place after the registration of the first cohort and prior to the deadline for input of grades for the summative sample for moderation.
- 5.3 Where more than one cohort is registered, additional centre visits will not be required unless a problem is found which requires intervention.

6. Moderation

- 6.1 All cohorts will be subject to moderation.
- 6.2 The Qualification Moderation Monitoring Requirement (QMMR) which determines the sample size for moderation will be confirmed after the centre visit.

- 6.3 The centre will need to upload grades by the deadline in their bespoke key dates calendar before a sample can be selected.
- 6.4 Moderation requests will be sent via the cloud.rslawards.com site 10 working days prior to the deadline for submission of summative sample for moderation in the bespoke key dates calendar.
- 6.5 The centre will then have 10 working days to upload learner evidence for moderation.
- 6.6 Centres will receive a moderation report 10 working days after the deadline for submission of evidence.
- 6.7 Should a second sample be required, RSL will negotiate a deadline with the centre to make amendments and resubmit.
- 6.8 Should a second sample be required, there is potential for certification to be delayed. If this is the case, the centre will be kept informed and the learners will be certificated at the next available assessment board

7. Grading Deadline

- 7.1 Centres must ensure that the remaining internally assessed grades are input by the deadline in the bespoke key dates calendar to ensure validation and certification. If the grades are not input by the deadline, this may delay validation and certification.
- 7.2 Centres must also complete and submit the declaration of accuracy of grades by the deadline in the bespoke key dates calendar.

8. Assessment Boards, Validation and Certification

- 8.1 Qualifications are validated following Assessment Board ratification once all quality assurance and moderation processes have been successfully completed.
- 8.2 The RSL Assessment Board is responsible for confirming certification and ratifies the results for all learners who have completed a vocational qualification.
- 8.3 Certification will take place following ratification at an RSL Assessment Board.
- 8.4 Non-standard academic year Assessment Boards are held in January, May and September (in addition to the main board in July).
- 8.5 If grading or moderation deadlines are not met, learners can be validated at the next available Assessment Board following successful completion of any outstanding matters.

- 8.6 In some cases, where there have been extensive delays and/or issues have not been resolved, it may not be possible to validate and certificate learners.
- 8.7 At the point of confirmation of application, the centre will be told which assessment board the learners will be ratified at.
- 8.8 If there is more than one cohort finishing at different times, they may be certificated at different boards.
- 8.9 Certificates will be posted to the centre on the date agreed at application

9. Applying for non-standard academic year delivery

- 9.1 To apply for non-standard academic year delivery, centres will need to complete a 'Non-Standard Academic Year Application Form' and an assessment and internal verification plan for each cohort.
- 9.2 Both documents must be uploaded to the Documents section of the cloud.rslawards.com site under the heading 'Non-standard academic year Application.'
- 9.3 If an assessment and internal verification plan is not submitted with the application form, the application will be delayed until the plan is provided.
- 9.4 Where multiple non-standard year cohorts are planned for, where possible, centres should submit for all cohorts at once to ensure accurate tracking.
- 9.5 Applications must be made at least 28 working days prior to the start of delivery
- 9.6 The application will be processed within 10 working days of receipt and a response will be uploaded against the initial application in the cloud.rslawards.com site.

Appendix

Cycles for non-standard academic year centres

	2023												2024
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Cycle 1	Registration Deadline		Summative moderation sample		Assessment Board								
Cycle 2				Registration Deadline			Summative moderation sample		Assessment Board				
Cycle 3								Registration Deadline			Summative moderation sample		Assessment Board