

Qualification Development Policy

BHS Qualifications (BHSQ) produces valid, reliable, and manageable qualifications that meet the needs of the equestrian industry. BHSQ go through a rigorous process to develop its qualifications. Qualifications are also regularly reviewed to ensure their currency. BHSQ may withdraw qualifications if there is no demand or consider to be out of date.

It is BHSQ's responsibility to decide what qualifications to award, how to develop and deliver them, and that they are of the right quality and standard. BHSQ is responsible for ensuring that their qualifications, comply with the requirements of the Regulators.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the development of qualifications. BHSQ will be mindful at all times of its regulatory requirements.

It is important all BHSQ qualifications are valid, reliable, and manageable to support the equestrian industry. To ensure this, key stages of development are identified in this policy.

All those involved in the process will be appropriately experienced and qualified, asked to declare any conflicts of interest and sign a non-disclosure agreement.

As part of this development process, BHSQ may work with:

- Candidates.
- BHSQ Approved Centres.
- Assessors and internal quality assurers.
- BHSQ's External Quality Assurers (EQA).
- Employers.
- Training providers and further education colleges.
- Other equine bodies such as The British Equestrian Federation (BEF).
- Other Awarding Organisations.
- Regulators.

Qualification development procedure

This procedure will outline the necessary steps BHSQ will follow, with further details outlined below.

Though this policy identifies key steps, there may be a need to carry out the development of a qualification differently. If this is the case this will be agreed with the Responsible/Accountable Officer, providing a rationale for this change.

Steps

1. Produce a proposal for a new BHSQ regulated qualification.
2. Carry out initial market research.
3. Establish a Qualification Development Group (QDG) to review and decide if it wants to pursue with qualification.
4. Produce a more detailed overview of the qualification.
5. Carry out consultation.
6. Produce a project plan where necessary.
7. Produce a detailed qualification specification and example assessment materials.
8. Carry out further consultation.
9. Make amendments from the consultation and check regulatory requirements are addressed fully.
10. OPTIONAL – pilot delivery of the new qualification.
11. Make amendments and finalise all materials.
12. Develop support systems.
13. Internal sign off.
14. Submit qualification to the Regulator(s).
15. Launch the qualification.

Step 1: Proposal for a new BHSQ regulated qualification

This document is populated by the proposer using the '*Proposal for a new BHSQ regulated qualification*' and briefly outlines the qualification. It should answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the qualification?
- Who is the qualification for?
- Why does the industry need this qualification?
- Does it fall within the mission and vision of BHSQ and/or BHS and partners?
- Are there any conflicts of interest with other stakeholders or qualifications?
- How many registrations would you estimate for the qualification over the next 1, 2 and 5 years?
- Are there any financial commitments required for this qualification to be developed and who would be providing this?

BHSQ will ask the proposer for clarification as required. At this stage BHSQ may ask for any market research to be included to support the proposal.

Step 2: Market research

It is important that need for the qualification is determined. Evidence for this may be carried out by BHSQ or by the proposer. It should be current so within the last five years. BHSQ may ask the proposer to conduct market research if further clarification/evidence is required.

Evidence of need may include support from employers, providers, BEF Member Bodies, learners, and other stakeholders. It may also include a competitor analysis if relevant. Any evidence should be sent to BHSQ to support the outline in step 1.

Step 3: Qualification Development Group (QDG) review

A Qualification Development Group (QDG) will be formed to support the development of the qualification. This will include a minimum of:

- The Responsible/Accountable Officer.
- One sector specific specialist who is suitably experienced in the specifics of the proposed qualification and the job it prepares candidates for. This will ensure the currency of working practices and needs of the sector.
- One education specialist who is suitably experienced in qualification development and compliance. This will ensure an effective review of validity and reliability. This can be the BHSQ Responsible/Accountable Officer.
- A representative of one BHSQ Approved Centre to ensure any changes are manageable.
- One administrator who will ensure appropriate records are taken and this policy is adhered to. This can be the Responsible/Accountable Officer.

The QDG will review the outline of the proposed qualification and decide whether the development of the qualification should be pursued further. If the decision is yes, then steps 4 onwards are to be continued. If the decision is no, reasons for the proposal being declined will be provided to the proposer.

Step 4: Produce a more detailed overview

This step builds on the initial rationale created in steps 1 and 2. If required further information may be requested. Additional information may include:

- Size of the qualification.
- Outline of content.
- Outline of assessment.
- Any professional body endorsements if applicable.
- Projected candidate registrations supported by market research over the next 1, 2 and 5 years.
- Any other areas.

Step 5: Consultation

BHSQ and the QDG will identify those who may be interested in the development of the proposed qualification and ask if they would provide feedback about the proposed qualification outline. The feedback will be discussed by BHSQ and the QDG, who will make any amendments.

Step 6: Produce a project plan where necessary

BHSQ and the QDG will produce a project plan for the development of the qualification. This will include:

- Identifying tasks to be completed.
- Who will complete which tasks.
- When tasks will be completed.
- Any contingency planning.
- Any other areas.

Step 7: Production of the qualification (phase one)

BHSQ and the QDG will produce a detailed qualification specification including assessment materials. This may mean further expertise is needed to complete the project. The minimum requirements for the QDG will be maintained.

Considerations at this phase may include:

- Determining the overall design.
- Producing, reviewing, and revising content.
- Developing assessment and where relevant grading models.
- Developing internal and external verification models.
- Determining Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and Total Qualification Time (TQT).
- For qualifications to be accredited in Scotland – credit rating and levelling for the SCQF.
- Entry criteria such as recognition of prior Learning, pre-requisites, and exemptions.
- Progression routes such as employment, further training, development, and career opportunities).
- Titling.
- Any additional resourcing.
- Mapping to National Occupational Standards.
- Mapping against existing and/or previous qualifications.
- Ensuring equality, diversity, and accessibility; including completing and implementing an equalities impact analysis.
- Review and note any potential reasonable adjustments/special consideration.
- Research funding opportunities.
- Consider adaptations for localities, regions, and nations.
- Check regulatory requirements are met and consult with regulators, where appropriate.
- Decide fee structures such as assessment, facility, registration fees and so on.
 - Fees should be proportionate to, or commensurate with, the reasonable costs incurred in making the product/service available.
 - The development, delivery and award of qualifications should be efficient and effective so that any costs reflected in fees are reasonable.

Step 8: Further consultation

BHSQ and the QDG will decide if further consultation is useful, if so it will identify those who may be interested in the development of the proposed qualification and ask if they would provide feedback at this stage. The feedback will be discussed by BHSQ and the QDG, who will make any further amendments.

Step 9: Production of the qualification (phase two)

BHSQ and the QDG will reconvene and review feedback, making amendments.

Considerations at this phase may include:

- Checking regulatory requirements are met and consult with regulators, where appropriate.
- Deciding if the qualification is to be piloted and what these arrangements are.
- Developing assessor guidelines.
- Developing other guidelines.
- Producing assessment materials including samples.
- Producing an assessment strategy.

- Developing any training and development.
- Developing the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) strategy for the qualification.

Step 10: OPTIONAL – Pilot delivery of the new qualification

BHSQ and the QDG will arrange a pilot if this is considered beneficial. This may be repeated.

Step 11: Make any final amendments and finalise all materials

The pilot will be reviewed by BHSQ and the QDG who will make amendments.

Step 12: Develop support systems

Considerations and preparations may include:

- Internal processes, for example, registration, centre approval, IT functionality and finance.
- Staff training.
- Development of a marketing plan.
- Communications to interested parties.

Step 13: Internal sign-off

The qualification is to be signed off by the BHSQ Responsible/Accountable Officer and a representative of the BHSQ Board of Directors. The Responsible/Accountable Officer is to check and ensure that all reasonable steps have been followed in the development of the qualification.

Step 14: Submit qualification to the Regulator(s)

Each regulator has their own process for the regulation of qualifications. Their individual requirements will be taken into consideration throughout the qualification development process. BHSQ will submit qualifications at the appropriate time depending on the Regulator.

Ofqual

To add the qualification to the Register of Regulated Qualifications for England only, BHSQ will follow the procedure for creating qualifications and units in The Portal.

CCEA Regulation

Apply for accreditation by CCEA if required, for example if the qualification is to be included in the apprenticeship framework for Northern Ireland, or funding.

Awarding organisations recognised by CCEA Regulation submit a return on a quarterly basis listing the qualifications it intends to upload to the Register. This is outlined in CCEA General Conditions of Recognition E5.2. The quarterly return must list new or significantly amended qualifications BHSQ intends to upload to the Register for offer in Northern Ireland.

For each qualification, the following documentation and information may need to be submitted to CCEA as part of the process:

- specifications, SAMs and associated mark schemes for the qualification.
- the rationale and purpose of the qualification.

- evidence of sector support for the qualification (at least one item should be from a Northern Ireland company or delivery partner, or one that operates throughout the UK).
- how the content of the qualification was developed.

The Register of Regulated Qualifications website is shared by Ofqual and CCEA Regulation

Qualifications Wales

Awarding organisations that are recognised in Wales automatically have all qualifications regulated (except where the scope of recognition has been surrendered). However only those qualifications that are approved or designated will be available for funding. The process for designation to be followed where funding is to be available for providers based in Wales. Alternatively follow the process for adding regulated qualifications to the database of regulated qualifications in Wales - QiW.

SQA Accreditation

SQA Accreditation have a process by which it decides whether the awarding organisation satisfies their regulatory requirements for qualifications to be 'accredited' in Scotland. BHSQ will engage with the appointed accreditation manager at all stages of the development process prior to submitting an application for qualification accreditation. Applications are considered by the Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG).

Step 15: Launch the qualification

Once a qualification has been fully developed it then moves to launch. BHSQ and the QDG will consider how best to do this. This may include:

- types of media to maximise impact.
- the specific message to be conveyed.
- timeframes.
- areas of responsibility.

At this point the qualification is now established. It will then be subject to BHSQ's Qualification Review Policy.

Monitoring and review

This document and its content will be reviewed on a three-year cycle, or earlier should it be needed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Date for review: June 2026

Document history

Version	Revision date	Reason
3	16/06/2023	To revise and replace previously produced document

Please note: This document is uncontrolled once printed. Please check with BHSQ for the most up to date version.

The British Horse Society Qualifications Limited is a company registered in England and Wales and trades as BHS Qualifications (BHSQ).