



Satellite Site Approval Guidance

proqualab.com

Satellite Site Approval Guidance

1. Introduction

This document serves as a comprehensive guide for the establishment, management, and ongoing operation of Satellite Sites under the auspices of a ProQual Approved Centre. As centres look to expand their reach and serve more candidates across different geographical locations, Satellite Sites provide a valuable opportunity to do so. However, with this expansion comes the need for strict oversight to ensure that quality standards, compliance, and qualifications integrity are maintained throughout.

The purpose of this guidance is to clearly outline the responsibilities of the Main Approved Centre, the approval procedures for Satellite Sites, and the ongoing requirements to sustain their operation within ProQual's compliance framework. It is designed to promote consistency in delivery, uphold the reputation of ProQual qualifications, and safeguard the interests of candidates, centres, and regulators alike.

Satellite Sites enable centres to broaden their service offerings and improve accessibility for candidates. They are especially useful for franchise models or partnerships where the main centre retains oversight and accountability for all qualification-related activities. While this model offers flexibility and growth potential, it also introduces additional obligations related to compliance, quality assurance, and record-keeping, which this guidance seeks to clarify.

2. Definitions

Before delving into specific procedures and conditions, it is important to establish a clear understanding of the key terms used throughout this document:

- **ProQual Approved Centre**

The primary centre that has received formal approval from ProQual to deliver qualifications. This centre holds the main responsibility for all activities related to qualification delivery, assessment, certification, and compliance.

- **Satellite Site**

An additional operational location that functions under the management and control of the Main Approved Centre. Satellite Sites may be operated as wholly owned branches, franchises, or contractual partnerships. They deliver qualifications under the oversight of the Main Approved Centre.

- **Assessment Site/Venue**

A designated location, which may be separate from the Satellite Site, used primarily for conducting assessments for candidates. This venue is typically used by the Main Approved centre for assessing its own candidates or by Satellite Sites for their assessments.

- **Head of Centre**

The individual who holds overall responsibility for ensuring that the centre and its Satellite Sites meet all ProQual requirements. They oversee compliance, quality assurance, and operational standards.

- **Centre Contact / Coordinator**

The person responsible for the day-to-day management of the Main Approved Centre and the Satellite Site. They act as the point of liaison for operational matters and communication with ProQual.

3. Definitions and Characteristics of a Satellite Site

A Satellite Site is a location that operates in a different geographical area from the Main Approved Centre but remains under its governance and oversight. The main purpose of a Satellite Site is to extend the reach of qualification delivery without compromising the standards set by ProQual.

The Main Approved Centre maintains full accountability for the quality of assessment, certification, and compliance at the Satellite Site. It oversees all operational aspects, including staff appointments, assessment procedures, candidate registration, and record-keeping. Whether the Satellite Site is a wholly owned branch or a franchise, the core principle remains that the main centre bears ultimate responsibility.

Examples of Satellite Sites include franchise arrangements, chain branches, or regional offices where the Main Approved Centre controls all qualification delivery activities.

The Satellite Site may be authorised to deliver either the full qualification or specific units, depending on arrangements agreed upon between the Main Approved Centre and the Satellite Site.

4. Conditions for Operating a Satellite Site

Operating a Satellite Site involves meeting specific conditions to ensure standards are upheld:

- The Main Approved Centre must control all aspects of qualification delivery, assessment, and quality assurance at the Satellite Site.
- Satellite Sites may deliver the entire qualification or only selected units, depending on the contractual agreement between the Main Approved Centre and the Satellite Site.
- The Main Approved Centre must ensure that contractual agreements with Satellite Sites are maintained and up to date for as long as they are approved by ProQual.
- If a Satellite Site is suspended, the main centre's operations are also impacted and may be suspended by ProQual. The approval status of a Satellite Site cannot be transferred to another Satellite Site.
- All marketing and publicity materials must clearly state that the location is a Satellite Site of a ProQual Main Approved Centre, ensuring transparency with candidates and stakeholders.
- Satellite Sites may employ Assessors and IQAs, however, all such staff must be vetted and formally approved by ProQual through the Main Approved Centre. Robust assessment, internal verification, candidate registration, and certification issuance will remain the responsibility of the Main Approved Centre.
- Candidates registered with the Satellite Site must be clearly informed about the relationship between the Main Approved Centre and the Satellite Site. This includes providing an explanation of how the Satellite Site operates under the oversight of the Main Centre, ensuring transparency about accountability and governance.
- Candidates must be provided with the contact details for the Main Approved Centre from the outset, ensuring this information is clearly communicated during the candidate induction and enrolment process. It must be made explicitly clear to candidates at the very beginning whom to contact for any queries or concerns that cannot be resolved directly by the Satellite Site.
- The Main Approved Centre must take responsibility for ensuring that Satellite Site operate in full compliance with the same policies, procedures, and standards outlined in the ProQual Centre Handbook and the Centre Agreement. This includes adherence to assessment practices, internal quality assurance, candidate registration, data protection, safeguarding, and other regulatory requirements. The Main Approved Centre must establish robust oversight mechanisms such as regular audits, standardisation meetings, and reporting protocols to verify ongoing compliance. It is also responsible for ensuring that all staff at Satellite Sites understand their obligations and are trained to implement the policies consistently.

5. The Approval Process

Establishing a Satellite Site involves a formal approval process designed to safeguard standards and ensure readiness:

- The Main Approved Centre must complete and submit a Satellite Site Approval Form, along with an organisational chart, partnership or franchise agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, and other supporting evidence as outlined in the Satellite Site Approval Form and pay the applicable fee. All fees are non-refundable, even in cases where the Satellite Site application is not approved.
- ProQual will conduct a desk-based review of the application and due diligence. Where the proposed Satellite Site is located outside the UK, ProQual will interview relevant staff from both the Main Approved Centre and the Satellite Site. In other cases, ProQual will exercise discretion in deciding whether interviews are required. Where necessary, ProQual may also carry out site visits to verify compliance and suitability.
- Approval is granted for a specific physical address. Each Satellite Site requires its own separate approval. A Satellite Site is not permitted to operate or approve another Satellite Site. ProQual's approval for a satellite site is non-transferable and cannot be applied to any other location.
- Moving the Satellite Site to a different location requires a new application and fee. All fees are non-refundable, even in cases where the Satellite Site application is not approved.
- The Main Approved Centre must maintain candidate records for the Satellite Site and ensure these are accessible

6. Ongoing Compliance and Quality Assurance

Once approved, Satellite Sites are subject to ongoing oversight to ensure continued compliance:

- ProQual will conduct a review of the Main Approved Centre's ongoing suitability to remain approved through the annual EQA verification visit, which will include the assessment of the Satellite Site, to ensure continued adherence to standards and policies.
- Main Approved Centres are required to notify ProQual of any operational changes using the Notification of Changes Form. This includes staffing, physical location, change of ownership etc. as set out in the Centre Handbook.

- Main Approved Centres must organise regular standardisation meetings with assessors and IQAs, including those working at Satellite Sites. Records of these meetings must be maintained.
- Main Approved Centres must include candidate portfolios from Satellite Sites in sampling plans for internal and external quality assurance. These portfolios will be subject to sampling during audits and visits.

While EQA visits typically focus on the Main Approved Centre, ProQual reserves the right to visit Satellite Sites, including unannounced visits, to verify compliance and maintain standards.

7. Registration and Certification

Candidate registration processes must be managed centrally by the Main Approved Centre. All candidate data, including assessments and results, must be maintained at the Main Approved Centre and made available upon request.

All certificates will be issued to the Main Approved Centre and can be withheld if there are ongoing compliance issues or breaches of standards.

8. Withdrawal and Termination Procedures

If a Satellite Site needs to cease operations, a formal withdrawal process must be followed:

- The Main Approved Centre must submit a written request to ProQual to withdraw the Satellite Site and outlines their withdrawal plans to protect the interests of candidates.
- ProQual may also request the removal of a Satellite Site if problems are identified or if the Satellite Site is inactive.
- If the Main Approved Centre's approval is revoked due to serious issues such as malpractice or non-compliance or other significant issues which threatens the integrity of ProQual qualifications, this action will be extend to all Satellite Sites under its control. In some cases, senior management or directors involved in the Main Approved Centres may be restricted from holding further approvals.
- The Main Approved Centre must ensure that contractual agreements with Satellite Sites are maintained and up to date throughout its relationship with ProQual.

9. Sanctions and Restrictions

ProQual reserves the right to impose temporary sanctions or withdraw approval if certain conditions are met:

- Breaches of contractual agreements or policies.
- Major deficiencies in assessment or internal quality assurance procedures.
- Evidence of malpractice, maladministration, or significant compliance breaches.
- Failure to register sufficient candidate numbers, the Main Approved Centre/Satellite Site inactivity.
- Non-payment of fees or other financial irregularities.
- The centre becoming insolvent or ceasing trading.
- Significant changes in ownership or control that raise compliance concerns.
- Receipt of credible risk information from regulators or third parties.
- Failure to report issues, maintain timely communication, or address operational breakdowns that impact standards.

This is not an exhaustive list of conditions.

These measures are intended to protect the integrity of qualifications, candidates, the reputation of ProQual and uphold public confidence in ProQual qualifications.

10. Reviewing Approach

This guidance is maintained by the Head of Compliance and approved by the Strategic Planning Team. It will be reviewed and updated periodically, as necessary, to reflect changes in legislation, customer feedback, operational improvements, and developments within the regulatory environment.



ProQual Awarding Body
ProQual House
Unit 1, Innovation Drive
Newport, Brough
HU15 2GX

Tel: 01430 423 822
enquiries@proqualab.com

proqualab.com