

## **1st4sport Qualifications**

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

# 1st4sport Recognition and Approval Arrangements

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*Developing and awarding qualifications for the active learning and leisure industry*

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## **1st4sport Qualifications**

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### **Introduction**

We define centre recognition as the process undertaken by organisations wishing to offer a qualification. Recognition status is granted based upon the organisations capacity and capability to comply with the *1st4sport Recognised Centre Requirements* and cannot be achieved without applying to become approved to offer a particular qualification. Qualification approval is the process by which the organisation applies to offer a particular qualification in line with a specific qualification specification.

#### **1.1 The benefits of achieving 1st4sport recognition and approval status**

Being a 1st4sport recognised centre offers many benefits, including access to gaining approval to offer a portfolio of nationally accredited, industry- and sector-specific qualifications. We are one of the few awarding bodies that develop qualifications in an active partnership with the appropriate national governing of sport or lead agency for a particular area of employment in the sector. Many of our qualifications are unique and offer the learner access to the 'industry standard' qualification, enabling them to gain paid or unpaid employment in a particular area.

We try, where possible, and in conjunction with the appropriate partner, to provide the learner with as comprehensive a package as possible. This includes both qualification-specific products and learning resources to support candidates, tutors, assessors and verifiers throughout delivery and assessment.

High-quality customer service is essential in maintaining our procedures. We endeavour to maximise the effectiveness of our administrative and quality-management systems to the benefit of our customers and the requirements of the qualifications we award.

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## 2 Recognition and approval aim

We aim to recognise centres and approve them to offer our qualifications where they demonstrate the capacity and capability to comply with our recognised centre requirements and relevant qualification specification criteria.

### 2.1 Recognition and approval objectives

We have established objectives related to both recognition and approval to ensure we achieve our aim.

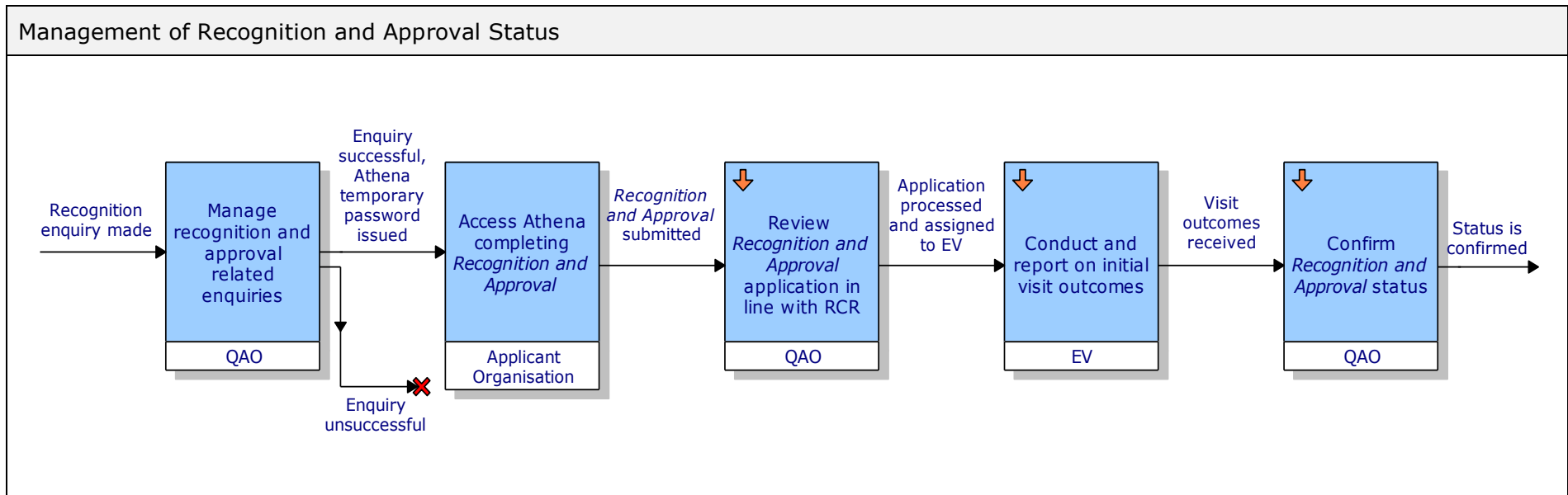
Recognition objectives	Approval objectives
<p>When recognising centres, it is our objectives to review and agree the required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Health and Safety Policy</i></li><li>• <i>Equal Opportunities Policy</i></li><li>• <i>Child Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy</i></li><li>• <i>Malpractice Arrangements</i></li><li>• <i>Appeals Procedure</i></li><li>• <i>Complaints Procedure</i></li></ul> <p>We also ensure that our external verifiers conduct an initial visit to all applicant centres prior to the granting of recognition status to ensure their capacity and capability to operate effectively within the constraints of our recognised centre requirements.</p>	<p>When approving centres to deliver our qualifications it is our objectives to review and agree the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• partnership arrangements (where in place)</li><li>• qualification workforce</li><li>• delivery and assessment sites</li><li>• <i>Internal Verification Strategy</i></li></ul> <p>We also ensure that our external verifiers conduct a Verification of Direct Claims Status activity at the end of the first course to ensure their capacity and capability to operate effectively within the constraints of the appropriate qualification specification.</p>

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### 3 The recognition and approval process

In order to maintain awarding body status we are required to have systems in place to ensure our recognised centres maintain compliance with established regulatory requirements developed to protect the integrity of nationally accredited qualifications. Therefore, to gain recognition and approval status to offer nationally accredited qualifications; we have developed a standard procedure which encompasses a thorough quality check. *Athena*, our web-based system is designed to support the establishment and monitoring of recognised centre status ensuring effective communication across all stakeholders. Centre recognition and qualification approval is gained via the completion of an application via *Athena*. There are a number of stages:



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Process activities	Details	Tools
Manage Recognition and Approval related enquiries	<p>In the event that an organisation would like to achieve recognised centre status, they are required to contact the 1st4sport Quality Management Team (QMT).</p> <p>To ensure that we maintain our commitment to equality and diversity our Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) undertakes a standardised screening process across all recognition and approval enquiries which consists of the following questions which are required to be successfully answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is your awareness of the responsibilities of a 1st4sport recognised centre?</li><li>• What qualification(s) would you like to be approved for?</li><li>• Are you aware of the qualification specification criteria?</li></ul> <p>All enquiries and outcomes are logged by the QAO on <i>Athena</i>, for monitoring purposes. Where the outcome of the enquiry is positive, the applicant will be sent an e-mail containing a temporary password to enable them to access Athena, our Quality Assurance System.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Recognised centre requirements</i></li><li>• <i>List of st4sport Accredited Qualifications</i></li><li>• <i>Qualification Specifications</i></li></ul>

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Process activities	Details	Tools
<p>Accessing <i>Athena</i> and completing the application</p>	<p>Upon accessing <i>Athena</i>, the applicant centre is required to create the <i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> completing the first two sections of the form titled:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Section one of the Recognition and Approval Application: Recognition Arrangements</i></p> </div> <p>This section of the form asks that you outline the capacity and capability to be successful as a recognised centre. Additionally, the following policies and procedures<sup>1</sup> which serve to protect centre staff, candidates and relevant third parties are required to be uploaded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities Policy</li> <li>• Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Malpractice Arrangements</li> <li>• Appeals Procedure</li> <li>• Complaints procedure</li> </ul> <p>The final component of this section asks for an agreement to comply with the terms and conditions outlined in the <i>1st4sport Recognised Centre Requirements</i> published on <i>Athena</i>. The 1st4sport Recognised Centre Requirements set out the arrangements for the regulation of our qualifications within our recognised centres. As an awarding body, we must adhere to the regulations established by the regulatory authorities and, in turn, centres must also comply with their criteria.</p>	<p><i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> contained on <i>Athena</i></p>

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the 1st4sport *Guidance on the Development of Policies and Procedures* and the 1st4sport *Sample Policies and Procedures* contained on *Athena* to assist in your development of these documents ensuring appropriate legislation is referenced.

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Process activities	Details	Tools
Completing the application	<p data-bbox="427 300 1868 360">Section two of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application: Approval Arrangements</i></p> <p data-bbox="427 360 1868 464">This section of the form captures the arrangements and resources required to be in place for the delivery of the qualification<sup>2</sup> you are seeking to offer. These include:</p> <ul data-bbox="488 491 1749 592" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of Partnerships (if any)</li> <li>• Qualification workforces and internal verification arrangements</li> <li>• Qualification delivery and assessment site(s) (if different from the main site of the centre)</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="427 624 1868 751">The final component of this section asks for the agreement to comply with the terms and conditions outlined in the relevant qualification specification. These criteria should be read and understood prior to completing this section to ensure that the appropriate resources are in place and that they meet the minimum requirements.</p> <p data-bbox="427 855 1868 951">Upon completion of section one and two of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> it must be submitted via <i>Athena</i>. The application will be reviewed to ensure all information is complete and meets the <i>1st4sport Recognised Centre Requirements</i> (RCR) and the appropriate qualification specification criteria.</p>	<p data-bbox="1895 300 2119 459"><i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> contained on <i>Athena</i></p>

<sup>2</sup> The recognition and approval process only allows applicants to apply to offer a single qualification. Upon gaining recognition and approval status for one qualification having demonstrated capacity and capability to comply with our recognition criteria, they are then eligible to apply to offer additional qualifications.

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Process activities	Details	Tools
<p>Review <i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> in line with RCR</p>	<p>It is the responsibility of our QAO to ensure the <i>Recognition Arrangements</i> and <i>Approval Arrangements</i> are reviewed against our requirements and criteria. Where further information is required this will be requested via the public comments contained within the appropriate section of the application on <i>Athena</i> and returned to the applicant centre which is required to follow the guidance and resubmit.</p> <p>Once the <i>Recognition Arrangements</i> and <i>Approval Arrangements</i> of the application are deemed fully complete and agreed by the QAO in accordance with all requirements and criteria, we will allocate a Recognised Centre External Verifier (RCEV) to the centre and the qualification the applicant centre is seeking approval to offer. The <i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> will then be assigned to the RCEV via <i>Athena</i>.</p> <p>The RCEV will then establish contact with the applicant centre to introduce themselves and negotiate a date with you for the conduct of an <b>initial visit to take place</b>. The rationale for the visit is to assess whether the information contained within the application is accurate and to ensure the applicant centre's capacity and capability to comply with our requirements and criteria. Additionally, the visit enables personnel at the applicant centre to build a relationship with the RCEV facilitating the opportunity to seek guidance where required.</p> <div data-bbox="432 919 1854 983" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Section Three of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application: Visit Details</i></p> </div> <div data-bbox="432 983 1854 1174" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>The RCEV will plan the initial visit completing <i>Visit Details</i> section of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> on <i>Athena</i>. They will submit this to the applicant centre to enable them to plan accordingly. The applicant centre is required to return this form by selecting Submit to AB. This will arrive in the EVs workload ready to undertake the visit.</p> </div>	<p><i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> contained on <i>Athena</i></p>

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Conduct and report on initial visit outcomes	<p>The RCEV will conduct the visit in accordance with our <i>External Verifier Arrangements</i> on the agreed date in line with the visit plan.</p> <p>Section Four of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application: Visit Finding</i></p> <p>Upon completion of the visit, the RCEV will then record their findings in section four of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application on Athena</i> titled <i>Visit Findings</i> of the application highlighting which of the requirements they perceive the applicant centre to have met.</p> <p>Section Five of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application: Visit Outcomes</i></p> <p>Also upon completion of the visit it is the responsibility of the RCEV to summarise the outcomes of the visit in the final section of the <i>Recognition and Approval Application</i> titled <i>Visit Outcomes</i>, to identify areas of best practice and to provide additional advice. The RCEV must make recommendations to the 1st4sport Quality Management Team (QMT) as to the status of the organisation with regards centre recognition and qualification approval<sup>3</sup> via this mechanism. The RCEV will then assign the application containing the outcome of the initial visit and any recommendations to the 1st4sport QAO for review.</p> <p>In the event that the RCEV identifies actions which must be completed by the centre to ensure their compliance across the breadth of the requirements, these will be detailed in the <i>Visit Outcomes</i> section of the application <i>Recognition and Approval Application on Athena</i>. Actions are set at levels one to five and are directly linked to the established 1st4sport risk management arrangements. Centre recognition and qualification approval will only be granted if the centre does not exceed a level one action plan. In the event that level 2 or above actions are recommended the action plan must be completed prior to the application being deemed successful. Please refer to the <i>Risk Management Arrangements</i> published on <i>Athena</i> for further details.</p>	
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<sup>3</sup> Please be aware that centre recognition cannot be achieved without qualification approval and vice versa.

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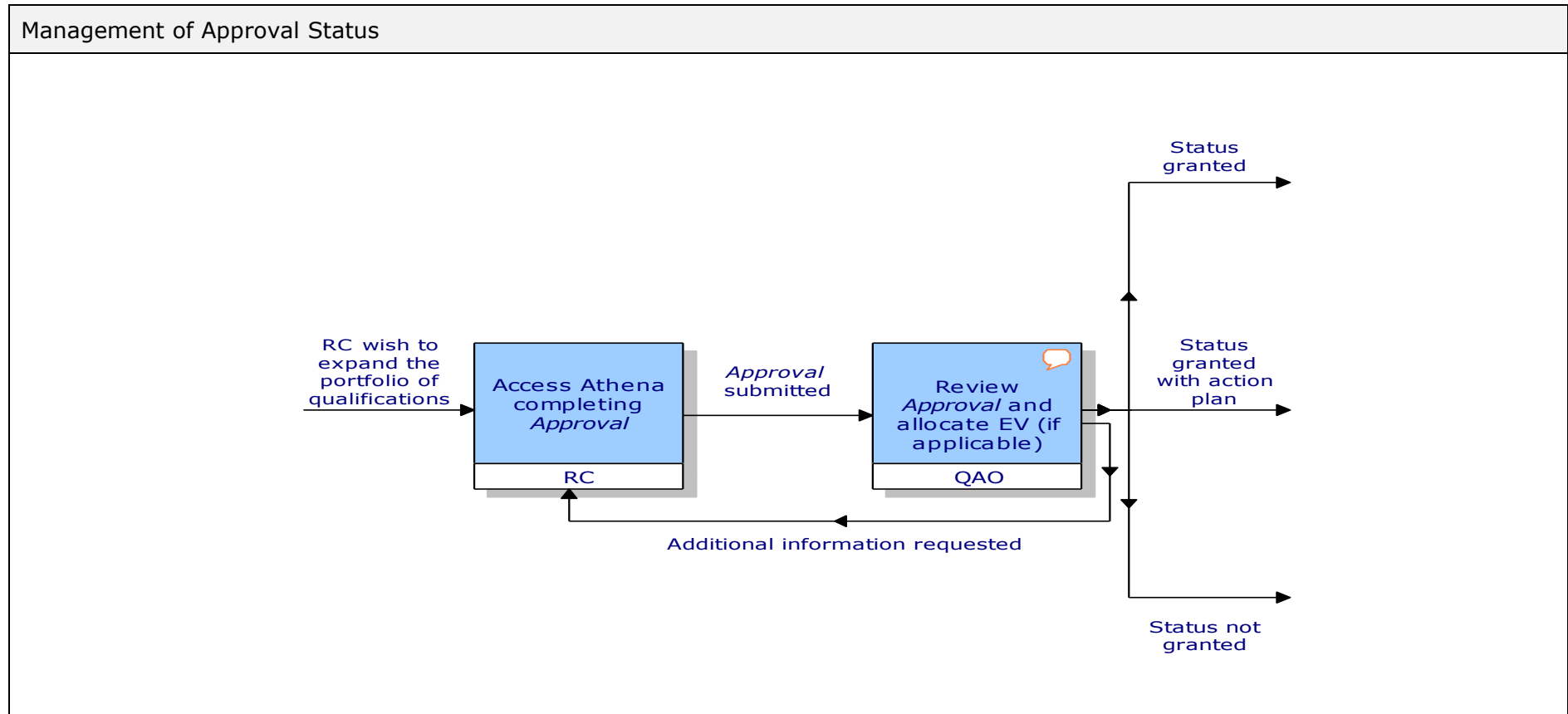
Confirm recognition and approval status	<p>The QAO will ensure the full application, initial visit outcomes, RCEV recommendations and related actions (where relevant) are reviewed against the <i>1st4sport Recognised Centre Requirements</i> and qualification specification criteria and will grant recognition and approval status accordingly. This is done by Athena using the successful (or unsuccessful, where applicable) end button on the application form. An automated e-mail will be forwarded to the centre.</p> <p>In the event that recognition and approval has been granted, the centre must then review their updated profile via <i>Athena</i> to review their allocated centre code. Upon receipt of confirmation of their status the centre is eligible to authorise courses for the qualification they are now approved to offer.</p>	
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### 4 Developing a Portfolio of 1st4sport Qualifications

Upon gaining recognition and approval status to offer a particular qualification recognised centres are then eligible to apply to offer a number of our other qualifications. To do this recognised centres are required to make an application per qualification by creating the *Qualification Approval Application*<sup>4</sup> on Athena completing the following stages to the process:



<sup>4</sup> Recognised centres will not be eligible to apply for qualification approval to offer an additional qualification if they have been placed in a high risk category due to identified noncompliance resulting in a level 3 action plan. Upon completion of the actions, the application will then be reviewed and you may be successful.

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Process activities	Details	Tools
<p>Access Athena completing <i>Approval</i></p>	<p>Recognised centres are required to access <i>Athena</i> to complete section one of the web-based <i>1st4sport Qualification Approval Application</i>.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Section One of the Qualification Approval Application: Approval Arrangements</i></p> <p>This section of the <i>Qualification Approval Application</i> captures the arrangements and resources recognised centres are required to have in place for the delivery of the qualification you are seeking to offer. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of Partnerships (if any)</li> <li>• Your qualification workforce</li> <li>• Your qualification delivery and assessment site(s) (if different from the main site of the centre)</li> </ul> <p>The final component of this section asks that recognised centres agree to comply with the terms and conditions outlined in the relevant qualification specification. They are required to read and understand the criteria prior to completing this section to ensure that you have the appropriate resources in place and that they meet the minimum requirements. Upon completion of the <i>Approval Arrangements</i> they form must be submitted via <i>Athena</i>.</p> </div>	

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Process activities	Details	<i>Tools</i>
Review Approval and allocate EV (if applicable)	<p>It is the responsibility of our QAO to review <i>Qualification Approval Applications</i> on <i>Athena</i> to ensure all information is complete and meets the requirements and qualification specification criteria.</p> <p>Where further information is required this will be requested via the public comments contained within the appropriate section of the application on <i>Athena</i> and returned to the recognised centre which is required to follow the guidance and resubmit.</p> <p>Once the application is deemed fully complete and agrees the QAO will allocate an External Verifier (EV) to the qualification the recognised centre is seeking approval to offer and will grant approval status accordingly. An automated e-mail will then be sent to the recognised centre.</p> <p>Upon receipt of confirmation of their status the centre is eligible to authorise courses for the qualification they are now approved to offer. The EV will contact the centre to establish their sampling plan and will visit the first course to undertake a Verification of Direct Claims Status Activity.</p> <p>Where recognised centres have received an action plan as a result of their application they will only be granted approval status if the action plan was level 1 or lower. Level 2 or above type actions must be addressed as part of the application process prior to granting of Qualification Approval Status.</p>	

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### **5 Direct claims status**

Direct Claims Status (DCS) is a process that allows a centre to claim for certification directly to 1st4sport, once a candidate has successfully completed the qualification. Upon gaining recognition and approval status to offer a particular qualification centres are then eligible to authorise their first course. They do not achieve DCS until their external verifier confirms that they have met the appropriate requirements and the integrity of the assessment is maintained.

DCS is continually monitored via external verification. If the outcome of a course-based EV visit is positive then the status of direct claims will be continued. However, if the outcome of such a visit is not successful, resulting in a sanction being imposed on the centre by the then DCS may be suspended or revoked, depending upon the severity of the sanction applied. Certification will then be confirmed for each course by an appropriately qualified EV. During this period an action plan will be created for the centre to complete to regain their DCS.

### **6 Updating the Centre profile and providing updates**

Upon receipt of centre recognition and/or qualification approval status centres are required to ensure their centre profile as shown within *Athena* is current. The centre profile includes the main site address and contact details and the name and contact details of the Head of Centre, Finance Officer and Centre Administrator. It is essential that these details are continuously updated to enable us to ensure effective communications.

### **7 Qualification Approval Updates**

In addition to the maintenance of the centre profile in accordance with recognition requirements, we also expect that qualification approval details are updated accordingly. Therefore, if there is any change to partnerships, the qualification workforce or delivery and assessment sites this must first be approved by us prior to implementation. This is done via the *Qualification Approval Update* form contained on *Athena*. Use of unauthorised personnel will result in sanctions being placed upon the centre for a specific qualification or in relation to a number of qualifications.

### **8 Withdrawal of centre services**

In the event that a centre no longer wishes to offer st4sport qualifications they are required to raise the *Centre Withdrawal of Service* form contained on *Athena* to ensure communications are severed and the recognition agreement with us is terminated. We reserve the right to withdraw centre services on behalf of a centre in the event that they request us to do so or alternatively to those centres who do not maintain compliance with our requirements and criteria. In such instance our QAO will raise the *Centre Withdrawal of Service* form contained on *Athena* to ensure communications are severed and the recognition agreement with us is terminated