

Guidance Note on Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships

*To support Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships First Edition
and Registration Code of Practice (RCoP) 4.0*

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**Guidance to support the implementation of AAQA –
Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships**

Contents	Page
Introduction	3
Introducing AAQA	6
The role of the employer and benefits/impact of recognition	13
The role of the Delivery Provider and benefits/impact of recognition	18
The role of the Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs)	21
The role of public and regulatory bodies	28
Applying the AAQA standard to the development of qualifications and programmes (including apprenticeship standards)	31

Introduction

The 'Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships' (AAQA) standard document was first published in September 2020. This supporting guidance has been developed to inform a wide variety of stakeholders; including those involved in the development of **qualifications and programmes, Delivery Providers**, assessment organisations, awarding organisations and **Professional Engineering Institutions**.

AAQA is a complement to the pre-existing Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) standard. Whilst AHEP covers university degrees, AAQA has a wider scope, covering apprenticeships and other qualifications from Level 3 to Level 7, a wide range of Delivery Providers, and a diverse range of delivery methods.

AAQA refers to Providers ('eg college, employer or awarding organisation'). For the purpose of this guidance, however, specific reference is made to Delivery Providers. **Delivery Providers** include Private Training Providers, Group Training Associations, Employer Providers, FE Colleges, Specialist Colleges, Institutes of Technology, Higher Education Institutions, Universities, and Company In-House Training and Development departments. Awarding organisations may or may not also be Delivery Providers.

Professional Engineering Institutions, or PEIs for short, are licensed by the Engineering Council, (and thus referred to in the AAQA standard document as 'Licensees') to recognise **qualifications and programmes**. Professional Affiliates also form an integral part of the engineering profession and come under the regulation of the Engineering Council. These are professional membership organisations in their own right, but which do not have their own Engineering Council licences. However, many do have licence agreements with specific PEI Licensees, which allow them to support their members in achieving professional registration.

Qualifications and programmes include degrees, apprenticeships, national and vocational qualifications, and other types of learning and vocational education and training, including those led by employers and PEIs. Qualifications and programmes that meet the high standards set by the Engineering Council may be either approved and/or accredited; the term used by the Engineering Council is **recognition**.

Recognition forms a significant contributing factor to the education and/or professional development of an engineer or technician, leading to the achievement of professional registration as an Engineering Technician (EngTech), ICT Technician (ICTTech), Incorporated Engineer (IEng) or Chartered Engineer (CEng).

Recognition also leads to inclusion on the Engineering Council's publicly searchable Qualifications and Apprenticeships Database under 'recognised course search database'. This is often referred by PEIs as 'QuAD'. The database is regularly accessed around the world by potential registrants, employers, academics, and many other stakeholders, as a means of verifying the credibility and quality assurance of

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qualifications and programmes which have been awarded against the high standards set through Engineering Council **recognition**. Recognition is awarded for a maximum period of five-years.

When considering **recognition** from any stakeholder perspective, this guidance takes the **learner or apprentice** as the key focal point. It also considers the key information and questions which each stakeholder has in relation to the **recognition** process. This ultimately supports the learner or apprentice as a potential registrant.

The term **learner or apprentice** captures the full range of people in receipt of education and includes vocational/training/professional development. Whether an individual is known as a learner, apprentice, student, employee, or course delegate; they are all potential registrants.

The purpose of AAQA is to explain the thinking involved and the processes to be followed by PEIs in translating the regulations in accordance with their licensing responsibilities. AAQA also emphasises the opportunities available to PEIs in recognising the wide variety of qualifications and programmes which are now available.

In encouraging and supporting collaboration between key stakeholders, AAQA provides those involved in developing qualifications and programmes with an overview of PEI and Professional Affiliates requirements which permit them to award formal **recognition** as Licensees of the Engineering Council. AAQA also provides delivery providers with an insight into what criteria a qualification or programme must meet. This includes the requisite mapping and provision of **evidence** which in turn would lead a learner or apprentice to being able to gain the knowledge and understanding needed to underpin the appropriate level of competence, as defined in UK-SPEC, for the most suitable category of professional registration.

Evidence refers to the arrangements which provide knowledge, skills, and behaviours. This will include the extent to which they meet the Learning Outcomes and Competence Statements defined in AAQA. Evidence also includes information on how training is delivered and assessed, the resources used, and how the process is managed and quality assured.

The role of the Employer and Delivery Provider in the delivery process has an important impact on the learner or apprentice and how they become professionally qualified. The Engineering Council actively encourages anyone at any stage of their career who feels they can demonstrate achievement of the requisite knowledge, understanding and competence commensurate with the relevant category of professional registration to apply through their chosen PEI. Each PEI has procedures through which to determine satisfactory provision of evidence to support such applications.

When an application is received from someone who has successfully completed their studies or training/professional development (or both) through an AAQA recognised qualification or programme, the PEI validation process for a potential registrant is much more straightforward.

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Furthermore, many qualifications or programmes that have already been recognised may also be recognised internationally under a number of mutual recognition agreements through which the Engineering Council is a signatory. This provides a learner or apprentice with a much more portable qualification if seeking employment outside of the UK. In short, if a learner's education is at the heart of a provider, or an employee's lifelong learning/professional development is truly valued by their employer, seeking Engineering Council **recognition** makes the process of applying for registration much smoother.

This guidance has been developed by the AAQA Guidance Working Group which includes in its membership representatives of relevant stakeholders. The purpose of the guidance is to address some of the challenges or 'Frequently Asked Questions' raised by the wide variety of stakeholders impacted by the **recognition** process. These can be found in the left-hand column throughout this document.

The information which can be found in the right-hand column is to add clarity or to elaborate on some of the definitions used, for the benefit of the reader.

Readers should note that this guidance is designed to meet the requirements of a range of audiences and is ordered accordingly. To that end, the same question may be repeated in different sections. Under these circumstances, the answer is modified around the particular needs of the audience.

The AAQA standard document is referenced throughout this guidance. A complete copy of AAQA can be found here:

<https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa>

The Engineering Council will review and update this guidance as and when required on the website.

Dated: August 2021

Introducing AAQA

	Frequently asked questions	Additional references and points of clarification
1.	<p>What is AAQA and why is it so important?</p> <p>As a starting point, it is wise to ask yourself what you are trying to achieve. The answer to this will be based upon your experience of the recognition of qualifications and programmes. These come in all shapes and sizes, therefore the starting point should be to develop an understanding of what you are dealing with and what is expected, depending on your circumstances.</p> <p>Fundamentally, AAQA is concerned with making the process of professional registration as smooth as possible. The process of recognition confirms the extent to which the qualification and/or programme delivers the learning and competence required for professional registration with the Engineering Council.</p> <p>Recognition by PEIs against AAQA confirms programmes meet the Standards set by the engineering profession. Where programmes that are designed to be recognised by PEIs are approved or recognised by other bodies, such as government agencies, this should not be confused with PEI recognition, which should be confirmed with reference to the Engineering Council's recognised course search database known as QuAD.</p> <p>Page 5 of AAQA is helpful in describing the purpose of AAQA, including the processes to be followed, the learning outcomes and/or competence to be demonstrated, together with the evidence required to reach a decision. Page 5 also explains who AAQA is for, and this guidance will explore the needs of these different stakeholders in more detail.</p>	<p>QuAD - recognised course search database</p> <p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>
2.	<p>What exactly is the difference between Approval and Accreditation?</p> <p>Both approval and accreditation are concerned with recognition of a qualification and/or programme, including apprenticeships, and incorporating Initial Professional Development (IPD).</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>

<p>Pages 7 and 8 of AAQA are helpful in describing the key difference between the two terms. Both are concerned with Engineering Council recognition with approval being used for programmes subject to External Quality Assurance, whilst accreditation will be more specific to each provider and/or location where the quality assurance arrangements are managed at a local level.</p> <p>AAQA pages 11 and 14 should be read in detail as they explain the procedure followed by each PEI whilst working in association with other stakeholders. By referring to this, it will become clear that no “one size fits all” and that recognition may take many forms ranging from the “desk-based” approval of learning outcomes at one end of the continuum, to the comprehensive scrutiny of competence assessment and delivery arrangements at the other.</p> <p>The process will also draw upon a range of requirements. Although these will be set out by each PEI, the general nature of these is shown on page 24 of AAQA. A delivery provider or awarding organisation that believes it has a qualification or programme which would benefit from Engineering Council recognition, should approach the relevant Licensed PEI holding a licence to approve or accredit, and apply for recognition.</p> <p>The table on page 14 of AAQA gives examples of the variety of arrangements and the flexibility available.</p> <p>The chart on Page 15 of AAQA also seeks to illustrate the diversity of programmes which might be the subject of recognition through AAQA.</p>	<p>External Quality Assurance is likely to be conducted by a qualification awarding body or awarding organisation and will be regulated on a national basis by a national organisation.</p> <p>Awarding bodies and organisations (eg City and Guilds, EAL, Pearson) offer an assessment arrangement, including quality checks and final certification on a commercial basis. These are regulated by public bodies, eg Ofqual in England, CCEA in Northern Ireland, SQA in Scotland, Qualification Wales, etc)</p> <p>Local quality assurance is likely to follow the internal systems of a PEI or delivery provider, therefore demanding a closer scrutiny to ensure that quality is being maintained and assured.</p>
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<p>3.</p>	<p>How is AAQA regulated?</p> <p>The Engineering Council is the regulatory body responsible for conducting regular reviews of AAQA. The Registration Code of Practice (RCoP) which is also authorised by the Engineering Council, stipulates what is expected of PEIs in order to maintain agreed standards for recognition of qualifications and programmes and the decision-making process.</p> <p>Specific details are provided on pages 16 to 18 of AAQA. The key message here is that the PEIs involved in recognition, either through approval or accreditation, should have in place the necessary checks and balances, policies, and procedures to ensure that quality and consistency is assured. For PEIs to maintain and retain a licence associated with recognition, it is essential to have an audit trail in place for each licence they have been awarded.</p>	<p>RCoP 4th edition</p> <p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>What are learning outcomes and competences?</p> <p>Learning outcomes and competences are explained briefly on page 29 of AAQA 'Learning outcomes for approved and accredited programmes' and 'competences developed within approved and accredited programmes'. These provide the means through which the process of approving or accrediting a qualification or programme is followed, and the outputs required in order to achieve a professional registration title, ie: EngTech, ICTTech, IEng, or CEng</p> <p>Essentially, learning outcomes are about the prerequisite knowledge and understanding necessary to underpin competence, whilst competence is about the application of knowledge and in a business environment.</p> <p>Learning Outcomes are shown on pages 36 to 51. These define the different areas of learning commensurate with the work of engineers and technicians and define the agreed learning outcomes for the variety of qualifications and programmes available at level 3 through to level 7 (and their national/international equivalents). Technician level learning is shown on pages 37 to 40, degree level learning on pages 41 to 45, with post graduate degree level learning on pages 46 to 51.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p> <p>Business environment may be a multi-national or global company, or equally, a smaller employer or micro-business. It should be acknowledged that within the engineering sector, the business environment is highly diverse.</p> <p>The categories of professional registration are: EngTech - Engineering Technician. ICTTech - ICT Technician IEng - Incorporated Engineer CEng - Chartered Engineer</p>

	<p>Competences are extracted from UK-SPEC (with the exception of the intermediate competences) and are shown on page 52 to 60 For more detailed information, and for examples of evidence to support the competences, refer to UK-SPEC 4th Edition.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>What is the relationship between Programme Recognition and Professional Registration?</p> <p>For an engineer to become professionally registered as EngTech, ICTTech, IEng or CEng, they will need to have gained a level of knowledge, understanding and competence commensurate with the level of registration. The details of these learning outcomes and competences are shown on page 36 of the AAQA standard</p> <p>This learning and competence may have been gained through the registrant's participation on a learning programme such as a qualification or an apprenticeship. The AAQA process of recognition is designed to evaluate that this learning programme covers the learning outcomes and competences set out on pages 36 to 60 of the AAQA Standard. Through programme recognition, those assessing for professional registration will be assured that the candidate has achieved a level of learning commensurate with a particular grade of registration.</p>	<p>The flow chart on page 12 of UK-SPEC is helpful in showing how recognised qualifications make for a more efficient process when professional registration is being sought.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>How do I use the flowcharts on pages 20 to 21 and 22 to 23 of AAQA?</p> <p>The flow chart on Page 20 to 21 is concerned with the process which needs to be followed when recognition is sought for the delivery of the learning outcomes within a qualification or programme</p> <p>The flow chart on page 22 to 23 is concerned with the process which needs to be followed when recognition is sought for a qualification or programme which develops competence, including how it is delivered and assessed.</p> <p>Further details on how to follow the flow charts is described later in this guidance.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>

7.	Why are intermediate competences specified? It is acknowledged that whilst competence levels are absolute in the way they relate to the different categories of professional registration (EngTech, ICTTech, IEng, CEng), there are levels in between where a qualification or programme may either exceed the competences required to be met for one particular category of professional registration, yet only partially meet the requirements of the next category. Page 19 of AAQA explains this in more detail. Many PEIs are highly experienced in guiding potential registrants who are able to demonstrate intermediate competences, and to help them to determine additional competences to be achieved in order to proceed to a more relevant category of professional registration. It is also recommended as good practice for employers and delivery providers to actively support learners and apprentices in approaching the most appropriate PEI for further information, advice, and guidance.	
8.	What is meant by the approval or accreditation process? This is the procedure which a PEI follows to reach a decision about approval or accreditation. It will be set out in PEI policies and procedures and will follow the requirements set out in the Engineering Council's Registration Code of Practice (RCoP). The process will need to draw upon a range of requirements. Although these will be set out by individual PEIs, the general nature of these is shown on page 24 of AAQA. A Delivery Provider or awarding organisation that believes it has a programme that would benefit from approval or accreditation on behalf of the Engineering Council should approach the relevant PEI, which holds a licence to approve or accredit, and apply for recognition. The decision about which PEI to approach will normally be straightforward, determined by the qualification or programme's specialism or underlying content. In some circumstances, a delivery provider may seek approval or accreditation through one or more PEIs.	RCoP 4th edition In this context, an awarding organisation is an organisation taking responsibility for the development of a new qualification or apprenticeship. It is likely to include employer stakeholders and other, non-PEI representatives with oversight duties.

9.	What is AHEP? AHEP is an acronym which stands for 'Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes'. It sets out the standard for degree accreditation. It also outlines the purpose and process for universities that wish to secure or maintain accreditation of their academic programmes. The AHEP Standard for engineering degrees has been developed through consultation with the engineering profession and includes input from employers and academics. Degree accreditation is undertaken by sector specific PEIs. Each PEI interprets the standards as appropriate for their own sector of the profession and uses them when deciding whether degree programmes meet the requirements to be awarded 'Engineering Council accredited degree' status. For ease of reference, the learning outcomes defined within AHEP are also included in AAQA, thus forming a suite of learning outcomes for qualifications and programmes associated with each of the professional registration categories of EngTech, IEng and CEng.	AHEP fourth edition
10.	What is the relationship between AAQA and AHEP? AAQA and AHEP complement each other. AHEP is frequently used to accredit a specific degree at a specific university, but, where a degree forms part of a wider programme, for example, a Degree Apprenticeship, it will be used as part of the wider recognition process within AAQA. The flowcharts on pages 20 to 23 of AAQA show how this is used.	https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa Page 3 of the AAQA standard provides a useful summary which explains the relationship between each of the standards documents published by the Engineering Council
11.	How do I find my way through this complex language? It is complex and sometimes the terminology used by the variety of organisations and stakeholders involved may be confusing. However, in order to promote a better understanding across the engineering community, further explanation of	https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa

	<p>various terms is provided throughout this guidance. A more detailed glossary is also available on pages 61 to 67 in AAQA.</p> <p>Similarly, the terminology used to describe the different levels of learning and associated competence and defining characteristics varies across the UK nations and internationally. This is explained on pages 32 to 35 of AAQA which explores the different levels of competence and on pages 26 and 27 of AAQA which explores international recognition.</p>	
12.	What evidence is needed to support accreditation? Further details are provided later in this guidance. However, page 30 of AAQA includes a detailed explanation of the components which need to be considered when applying the approval or accreditation procedure. These may be contextualised in line with the specific requirements of each individual PEI.	https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa

The role of the employer, and the benefits and impact of recognition

	Frequently asked questions	Additional references and points of clarification
13.	<p>How does recognition (approval and/or accreditation) of qualifications or programmes benefit employers and employees?</p> <p>Recognition provides the assurance to an employer that their employee has achieved a qualification or apprenticeship at a specific level of knowledge and understanding and competence. This recognition then makes access to professional registration more efficient.</p> <p>Individuals know that by choosing a recognised qualification or programme, they are on a structured pathway leading to professional registration. Successfully completing a recognised qualification or programme, along with undertaking a programme of professional development, smooths the pathway to professional registration. It enables a candidate for registration to be processed more quickly. This is a valuable marketing advantage to all parties and demonstrates a strong commitment to professionalism.</p> <p>Becoming a professionally registered engineer demonstrates a high standard of competence and commitment. Achievement of professional registration, especially with support from their employer throughout their professional development, sets the employee apart as an engineer with high standards and demonstrates their commitment to maintaining their competence in the future.</p> <p>Registration also provides a firm foundation of ethics, commitment to working safely, contribution to sustainable development, and compliance with professional codes of conduct. Achieving a professional title demonstrates that an employee has a positive attitude and the drive to succeed within the engineering profession. These are attributes that are highly valued by employers and customers.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/ethics</p> <p>https://www.engc.org.uk/sustainability</p>

<p>14.</p>	<p>What are post nominals and what is PEI membership?</p> <p>The post-nominals EngTech, ICTTech, IEng and CEng are all legally protected titles and are well respected internationally. They demonstrate an engineer’s level of competence, knowledge and understanding within the profession.</p> <p>PEI membership is compulsory in order to be registered with the Engineering Council.</p> <p>PEI membership also ensures they will belong to a network of skilled professionals in their chosen field. This provides opportunities for involvement in influential activities such as reports and campaigns, as well as access to lifelong learning support and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).</p>	<p>Post nominals are:</p> <p>EngTech - Engineering Technician. ICTTech - ICT Technician IEng - Incorporated Engineer CEng - Chartered Engineer</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>How does an employer get involved in recognition and professional registration?</p> <p>Many employers will already have productive working relationships with Delivery Providers and/or PEIs as part of their workforce recruitment and development strategies. A good starting point is to engage with these to develop an understanding of how professional registration works within their particular sector. It is highly likely that many delivery partners will also have a relationship with PEIs and will be able to facilitate discussions to progress the professional registration for their employees.</p> <p>Where Delivery Providers and/or Employers do not have an established relationship with PEIs, they should find an appropriate PEI using the Engineering Council as a source of information. In addition, many businesses may already be employing professionally registered engineers who will be members of one or more PEIs, and these can be used as a means of contacting each PEI to move forward the process of approval and accreditation, as well as setting up Professional Development Programmes.</p>	<p>The term Delivery Providers in the context of this guidance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Training Providers • Group Training Associations • FE Colleges • Specialist Colleges • Institutes of Technology • Higher Education Institutions • Universities • In-house Training Departments (such as company training/development programmes, in-house professional development programmes, training schools and academies etc)

<p>16.</p>	<p>Where can an employer find further information on recognition and professional registration?</p> <p>Employers with a strong commitment to professional registration should consider the extent to which the qualifications and programmes they use to develop their workforce have been recognised through the AAQA approval and accreditation process and select on this basis. To achieve this, they should refer to QuAD and talk to their delivery provider to establish whether the qualification or programme has been formally recognised.</p> <p>The Engineering Council maintains a recognised course search database known as 'QuAD' which includes only recognised qualifications and programmes that have satisfied the requirements for Engineering Council recognition through the PEIs. QuAD also identifies which PEI(s) has formally recognised each qualification or programme, the date on which the recognition was granted, and if required, any additional requirements that have to be met in order for a potential registrant to be eligible for professional registration.</p>	<p>QuAD - recognised course search database</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>What about employers involved in the development of new qualifications or programmes?</p> <p>Where an employer is involved with the development of new provision, they should ask if it has been designed so that it reflects the relevant learning outcomes and competences as described in AAQA. These are the agreed standards for recognition, and where possible, these should be mapped against the content of the qualification or programme in order that full approval/accreditation/recognition can take place at a later stage. Where partial recognition is given it is preferable that employers and trainees are given advice on how to progress to the next level.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>What about employers involved in the development of the relevant T Level qualifications and Apprenticeship standards <u>specifically in England</u>?</p> <p>In England, T-Levels and Apprenticeship standards are employer-led and outline the key knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to carry out a defined</p>	

	<p>occupation. All apprentices must take an independent End-Point Assessment (EPA) at the end of their training to demonstrate they have achieved the KSBs set out in the occupational standard.</p> <p>Trailblazer groups are responsible for developing apprenticeship standards. Employers wishing to join a Trailblazer group must be representative of the relevant occupation and intend to employ apprentices in the occupation once it is developed. Trailblazer groups should seek advice and guidance from PEIs that award professional status for the occupation where appropriate. For further information on trailblazer group requirements see the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education's website.</p> <p>If ATE approval of an apprenticeship standard is not the same as PEI approval that a programme meets some or all of the requirements for registration.</p>	<p>https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>Can evidence from an apprentice's End Point Assessment (EPA) contribute to an application for assessment for professional registration?</p> <p>Yes, it can contribute, however, professional registration may have additional requirements. The recognition process, as defined in AAQA, should be used to establish the extent to which the outcome of the EPA meets the requirements of professional registration.</p>	<p>If ATE EPA may be carried out by a PEI although it is open for others to offer too. Whilst the requirements for EPA and registration may align closely, they are different processes.</p>
<p>20.</p>	<p>What about In-house Professional Development?</p> <p>Some employers have developed their own professional development programmes or use ones that have been developed by a relevant PEI. Whilst these are not formal qualifications or apprenticeships, they may include input from external delivery providers to a greater or lesser extent. Similarly, these programmes may include the development of learning outcomes and/or competences, which can be mapped against the relevant learning outcomes and competences as described in AAQA.</p>	

	<p>An employer may wish to engage with an appropriate PEI to have the internal professional development programme recognised through the approval and accreditation process. This will permit employees to be assessed for professional registration with the in-house professional development programme acting as a core aspect of professional development. It is advisable to use such schemes alongside training approaches to make sure the workplace element is properly structured and monitored.</p>	
<p>21.</p>	<p>How does an employer decide which PEI to work with?</p> <p>Employers will need to consider which PEI best suits the nature of their work. A wide range of PEIs exist across the engineering spectrum. Some of these are large and cover a range of engineering specialisms, whilst others are small and highly specialist. All are regulated by the Engineering Council so employers should expect the same approach to recognition. Employers need to consider the basis on which they want to work with a PEI when making their choice. The Engineering Council is able to assist employers in contacting the most appropriate PEI.</p> <p>Recognition can be sought through multiple PEIs. Employers should advise each PEI that they would like to apply for a joint recognition approach. This should be accommodated as far as possible by the chosen PEIs or further guidance sought from the Engineering Council where necessary.</p>	<p>Pocket guide to Professional Registration</p>
<p>22.</p>	<p>Is professional registration the same as a trade card (such as CSCS)?</p> <p>No, it is different and considered as a separate activity.</p> <p>The cards systems in use are mainly used to record who is able to work on construction and safety critical sites. The systems of control, assessment, registration etc vary widely so these are not covered here.</p> <p>Some card schemes recognise professional registration, eg the Construction Skills Certifications Scheme card (CSCS)</p>	<p>https://www.cscs.uk.com/professional-bodies/</p>

The role of the Delivery Provider and benefits/impact of recognition

	Frequently asked questions	Additional references and points of clarification
23.	<p>How does recognition of qualifications or programmes benefit Delivery Providers?</p> <p>Formal recognition of a qualification or programme is awarded by the PEI as a licensed body of the Engineering Council. This also includes an exclusive listing on the Engineering Council's public database of recognised qualifications and programmes and their correlation with each of the categories of registration, ie: EngTech, ICTTech, IEng or CEng.</p> <p>Delivery Providers will have established relationships with employers and industry sectors and are likely to have highly effective employer engagement strategies, particularly where the employer is directly involved with the provision of work-based learning and development. Bespoke provision which has been recognised through approval and accreditation is beneficial for the learner or apprentice as it allows them to apply for professional registration through a more formalised pathway. This same benefit is extended to employers and helps to give them an edge over competitors.</p> <p>Engagement with the recognition process also denotes a symbol of commitment from Delivery Providers.</p>	<p>Recognition is the overarching term which the Engineering Council uses to define the processes of approval and/or accreditation of qualifications and programmes</p>
24.	<p>How does this impact on learners and apprentices?</p> <p>Learners or apprentices can be reassured in the knowledge that by choosing a recognised qualification or programme, they are on a structured pathway leading to professional registration. Successfully completing a recognised qualification or programme smooths the pathway to professional registration. It enables a candidate for registration to be processed more quickly.</p>	<p>UK-SPEC</p> <p>The flow chart on page 12 of UK-SPEC is helpful in showing how recognised qualifications make for a more efficient process when professional registration is being sought.</p>

25.	How does a Delivery Provider get involved in recognition? The starting point is to make contact with an appropriate PEI to discuss arrangements in order to achieve recognition . Delivery Providers will need to consider which PEI best suits the nature of their work. A wide range of PEIs exist across the engineering spectrum. Some of these are large and cover a range of engineering specialisms, whilst others are small and highly specialist. All are regulated by the Engineering Council so providers should expect the same approach to approval and accreditation, although the relative size of the different PEIs will impact upon capacity to administer these processes. Delivery providers need to consider the basis on which they want to work with a PEI when making their choice. The Engineering Council is able to assist providers in contacting the most appropriate PEI. Organisations seeking recognition through multiple PEIs should in the first instance advise each PEI that they would like to apply for a joint recognition approach. This should be accommodated as far as possible by the chosen PEIs or further guidance sought from the Engineering Council where necessary.	
26.	What range of programmes can be recognised? The arrangements described in the AAQA Standard have been designed so that they can be applied to the very diverse nature of training and education provision. It recognises the diversity of provision and seeks to allow recognition of this across what is a broad and diverse continuum. There should be no engineering programme which cannot be recognised to a lesser or greater extent. AAQA also embraces the adoption of accreditation for the purposes of recognising non-degree qualifications or programmes, such as technician level, Degree/Graduate Apprenticeships, or other qualifications or programmes deemed by a PEI to satisfy requirements under AAQA.	

<p>A qualification or programme established, assessed and quality assured on a national basis, can be recognised through a desk-based process. This process enables a PEI to check that the relevant learning outcomes and/or competences, have been covered, and recognition will be awarded on that basis. This means that a learner completing this qualification or programme will have been assessed as having the knowledge and skills and/or competence commensurate with a particular category of professional registration and, on account of this being assessed and quality assured nationally, there is strong confidence in the quality of provision. The term “approval” is used under these circumstances.</p> <p>In more complex cases, a qualification (often, but not exclusively degrees) will be linked to a single delivery provider that works with a small number of employers in a specific location. The assessment and quality assurance are therefore handled at a local level and the recognition process needs to reflect this. The process for this is called accreditation and is very well established through the AHEP standard. Whilst AHEP applies solely to degree level programmes, AAQA acknowledges that a variety of qualifications and programmes which could also be accredited, now exist at many levels, thereby necessitating a bespoke recognition approach.</p> <p>The delivery provider should read AAQA in detail, paying particular attention to the flowcharts and to the list of requirements provided on Page 24. They should discuss their proposals with a PEI at the earliest opportunity. The PEI will be able to provide tailored guidance on how to gain recognition through AAQA.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>
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The role of the Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs)

	Frequently asked questions	Additional references and points of clarification
27.	<p>How does recognition benefit PEIs?</p> <p>All PEIs have an interest in recruiting new members, promoting professional registration, and developing strong and productive relationships with employers. Recognition through approval and accreditation helps PEIs to tap into new market potential and provides an opportunity to increase membership.</p> <p>PEIs are more than membership bodies and often provide a range of Initial and Continuing Professional Development (IPD & CPD) opportunities as well as providing a representative voice for the sector and their members. This is valued by employers. The implementation of AAQA develops and enhances a more meaningful relationship with industry, businesses, and delivery providers.</p> <p>The recognition process is a collaborative activity. It is intended to be of benefit to businesses and their employees, the delivery provider involved, and the PEI carrying out the recognition process. It involves the development of a productive working partnership, where the potential registrant is ultimately at the heart of the process. In turn, this will help grow PEI membership as well as demonstrating a commitment to professionalism from businesses and delivery providers.</p>	
28.	<p>What opportunities does AAQA provide for PEIs?</p> <p>AAQA offers PEIs the opportunity to increase their value to their partners, members, and employers in their sector(s). Because professional registrant applicants must be members of a PEI before they can become Professionally Registered with the Engineering Council, AAQA potentially provides PEIs with a wider market and greater opportunities to increase their membership base while solidifying their relationships with partner and employer organisations.</p> <p>AAQA provides PEIs with additional routes to professional registration to help further close the skills gap, while providing opportunities to generate impactful</p>	

	<p>professional development content as well as furthering networking opportunities. For companies struggling to structure balanced, in-house development programmes that can include specific goals such as professional registration, AAQA enables PEIs to offer these companies the ability to benchmark their programmes against a wide range of other qualifications and programmes which are not necessarily in the same field or sector.</p>	
<p>29.</p>	<p>What do PEIs need to do to implement AAQA?</p> <p>PEIs need to have a licence from the Engineering Council to accredit/approve qualifications and undertake the recognition processes. All PEIs should read and fully understand AAQA and its guidance before integrating this standard into their appropriate policies, procedures, arrangements, and risk assessments.</p> <p>There should be a transparent and accessible application process for all delivery providers, with the provision of template examples of good applications to avoid duplicating effort and improving efficiency for the benefit of all stakeholders. PEIs must provide training and support sessions to all employers, partners, and members on how AAQA works and how it will benefit them, the sector and the wider public.</p>	
<p>30.</p>	<p>Does a PEI need to have permission to implement AAQA?</p> <p>Yes, the Engineering Council, in its capacity as regulatory body, grants licences to PEIs to permit them to carry out certain activities in accordance with RCoP.</p> <p>Licensed activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation of Academic Programmes • Accreditation / Approval of Qualifications and Apprenticeships • Accreditation / Approval of Professional Development Schemes <p>It is essential that the correct evidence has been presented to the PEI by the requesting organisation, that there is demonstrable PEI activity on seeking recognition of qualifications and programmes, that each PEI, or representative</p>	

	<p>PEI where a collaborative decision has been made, ensures that such recognitions are formally recorded.</p> <p>PEIs should make the process for applying for recognition as transparent and as accessible as possible, giving organisations an idea of how long the process might take. Where at all possible, PEIs should encourage organisations or delivery providers to share existing evidence which has already been provided to other authorities, in an attempt to avoid duplicating effort and improve efficiency.</p>	
<p>31.</p>	<p>What Policies and Procedures are needed?</p> <p>PEIs that are licensed by the Engineering Council to offer approval and/or accreditation to employers and learning providers, have appropriate policies and procedures to deal with this. As a minimum, this is likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for carrying out the approval of qualification and apprenticeships • Procedures for carrying out the accreditation of degrees, including those which form part of an apprenticeship • Templates for mapping provision, qualifications, and apprenticeships against learning outcomes and competences • Templates and proformas for assessing training providers, further education colleges universities and employers in terms of those criteria and expectations set out in AAQA • Arrangements for ensuring that recognition encompasses the values of “peer review” as espoused in professional engineering including the likely qualifications and experience required by those conducting the process • Arrangements to deal with appeals and complaints • Arrangements for monitoring approved and accredited programmes, qualifications, and apprenticeships • Arrangements for ensuring approved and accredited qualifications and apprenticeships are recorded on the Engineering Council database • Arrangements for dealing with recognition through on-line and virtual arrangements. This can be considered as part of normal procedures as and when required, subject to PEI satisfaction 	

32.	How does a PEI get involved with recognition? If you have no prior experience of recognition, in the first instance, you should seek advice from the Engineering Council Licencing Team. You will need to establish systems of recognition, through either approval or accreditation, or both. This will include processes and procedures, and guidance for potential registrants. This will need to reflect the learning outcomes defined in AAQA (and AHEP), the competences defined in UK-SPEC 4th Edition (again which are also included in AAQA for ease of reference), and any particular requirements set out in RCoP. A PEI that does not yet hold a licence to recognise programmes should contact the Engineering Council licensing team for advice.	
33.	What does an existing PEI involved with recognition need to do? Many PEIs will already be involved and will have well established systems of recognition, through either approval or accreditation, or both. Where these were established under previous Engineering Council arrangements the only requirement is for the PEI to undertake regular review and updating to ensure that their processes and procedures, and the guidance which they provide to potential registrants, reflects the learning outcomes defined in AAQA (and AHEP), the competences defined in UK-SPEC 4th Edition (again which are also included in AAQA for ease of reference), and any particular requirements set out in RCoP. However, given the changing vocational education and training landscape, including qualifications and apprenticeships, all PEIs should routinely review the shape of training and education provision within their sector. This will help them in developing new relationships with Delivery Providers and to enhance their understanding of emerging qualifications and programmes. In turn, this will be helpful in identifying new opportunities for recognition through approval and accreditation over and above those undertaken in the past.	

<p>34.</p>	<p>How should PEIs recognise multiple qualifications or programmes delivered by the same Delivery Provider?</p> <p>If it is possible to make prudent use of time and resources to recognise multiple qualifications or programmes, it is in each party’s interests to do so. However, this is at the PEI’s discretion and will be reached through discussion with the Delivery Provider. It should be acknowledged that there is no “one size fits all” and the key focus should be on maintenance of the standards set out in AAQA as well as AHEP and UK-SPEC.</p> <p>The PEI should engage with the provider to agree arrangements for submitting evidence and the mapping of qualifications and/or programmes, minimising duplication of effort wherever possible, whilst continuing to maintain standards.</p>	
<p>35.</p>	<p>How should PEIs recognise delivery of one qualification and/or programme by multiple Delivery Providers?</p> <p>If the qualification and/or programme is a national programme with a bespoke assessment process assured by a central quality assurance system, there is no reason why the approval should not be conducted by one PEI with this recognition being accepted by other PEIs.</p> <p>In the case of a degree or a location-specific qualification and/or programme, the accreditation process will apply. This may be conducted by one or more PEI and the process may include accreditation of the same qualification or programme delivered at a range of employer sites or different university campuses.</p> <p>The approval or accreditation of a programme will be listed on the Engineering Council Database QuAD and as such is publicly available to all employers, PEIs and future registrants as a record of approval or accreditation and that the standards have been met. Any additional requirements, such as further learning or additional competences, will be included on each record.</p>	<p>QuAD - recognised course search database</p>

<p>36.</p>	<p>Why is it important for PEIs to record newly recognised qualifications or programmes on the Engineering Council database, QuAD and what is the process?</p> <p>When a qualification or programme is listed on the Engineering Council database it helps all stakeholders to know if the learning outcomes and/or competences have been formally recognised. This information will help in making the professional registration process more straightforward. It also adds value for employers, providers, and assessment organisations as it confirms the enhanced status of the qualification or programme.</p> <p>It is a requirement for PEIs to enter a record of newly recognised qualifications and/or programmes on the Engineering Council database under the requirements of their licence to approve and/or accredit these through AAQA.</p>	<p>RCoP 4: 53 Licensees shall notify the Engineering Council of all programmes recognised under this Registration Code, by listing them on the Engineering Council qualifications database. Licensees shall ensure that the data they have listed on the qualifications database is current, complete, and accurate.</p>
<p>37.</p>	<p>How does a PEI engage in assessment and external quality assurance?</p> <p>In terms of assessment and quality assurance, part of the PEI recognition process is to verify the provider’s assessment processes, and the associated awarding body quality assurance arrangements. However, there are some circumstances where a PEI agrees to offer a qualification or programme assessment and/or quality assurance service on a commercial basis.</p> <p>This engagement will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Under such circumstances, it is important that the processes of a PEI providing an assessment and/or quality assurance service is kept separate from the recognition process being applied to the same service.</p>	

38.	Is the process for recognition different for Licensed PEIs that develop their own qualifications or programmes? Yes. Where a PEI develops its own qualifications or programmes, it must submit evidence to the Engineering Council Registration Standards Committee (RSC) for approval, in much the same way as the PEI itself requires of an Awarding Organisation or delivery provider. By adopting this approach, the PEI will avoid the risk of it reaching an invalid recognition of its own provision and maintains assurance of the quality.	
39.	How does a PEI apply for a licence for AAQA? All initial applications must be made to the Engineering Council Licencing team. The complex nature of PEIs licensed by the Engineering Council means that some PEIs have a licence to accredit programmes, but not a licence to approve and vice versa. Under these circumstances, the PEI should liaise with the Engineering Council Licensing team to establish the best way forward and to reach an understanding of what they need to do to progress the process of recognition.	
40.	Can Professional Affiliates apply for a licence for AAQA? Currently, the only scope for a Professional Affiliate to undertake any form of accreditation/approval/registration would be to gain licensed status. Additionally, agreements between Licensed Members and Professional Affiliates are specific to registration. Any extension beyond the current scope of agreements (registration) between Licensed Members and Professional Affiliates would be subject to QAC approval.	

The role of public and regulatory bodies

	Frequently asked questions	Additional references and points of clarification
41.	<p>In the context of AAQA, what is meant by a public or regulatory body?</p> <p>A number of public and regulatory bodies exist, having responsibility for developing, approving (in this context the term ‘approval’ is as defined by their respective organisations and as such, against their own specific criteria), monitoring, reviewing, and revising all apprenticeships and technical qualifications.</p> <p>Arrangements vary across the devolved nations of the United Kingdom with locally used terminology and language. For example, in England, the following bodies are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IfATE: responsible for developing, approving, reviewing and revising apprenticeships and technical qualifications with employers. This includes responsibility for T Levels delivery and for implementing an approval process for higher technical qualifications. • Ofqual: responsible for the External Quality Assurance (EQA) for all apprenticeships with the exception of integrated degree apprenticeships • Office for students/QAA: responsible for EQA for all integrated degree apprenticeships • Ofsted: is the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. It inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages, including degree apprenticeships. 	
42.	<p>How can public and regulatory bodies support the recognition process?</p> <p>In supporting and engaging with employers, public and regulatory bodies should consider adoption of the AAQA Standard from the outset. This will ensure that the learning outcomes and competences required by a learner or apprentice as a</p>	

	<p>prospective registrant, are considered during the formation of qualifications, apprenticeships and other programmes where feasible.</p> <p>Public and regulatory bodies should consider including relevant PEIs in the development process in order that due consideration is given to the requirements of AAQA throughout the development process.</p> <p>In the case of higher education qualifications, the same considerations should be made in order that the degree builds in all due reference to the standards set out in AAQA (and AHEP).</p>	
<p>43.</p>	<p>In practical terms, what are the key tasks which public and regulatory bodies should consider when making use of AAQA?</p> <p>There should be reference to mapping of knowledge, skills, competence and behaviours within the qualification, programme or apprenticeship against those required under AAQA (and AHEP) and this should be made available through a PEI once recognition has been granted through the approval and accreditation process.</p> <p>Innovation and efficiency in the mapping process are to be encouraged to avoid duplication of effort, to minimise bureaucracy and to encourage a consolidated approach to seeking recognition.</p>	
<p>44.</p>	<p>What are the key differences that public and regulatory bodies should note when comparing their own language and terminology with that used in AAQA?</p> <p>Public and regulatory bodies need to acknowledge that recognition through approval and accreditation espouses the concept of “peer review” which is broadly defined as an assessment being made by professionally registered peers.</p> <p>This is a fundamental aspect of the Engineering Council approach, through its Royal Charter and it should not be confused with those approaches and systems used by governmental regulatory bodies.</p>	

	<p>Regulatory bodies should note that the terms ‘approval’ and ‘accreditation’ have different meanings across different organisations and regulatory bodies. The Engineering Council’s definitions of approval and accreditation are well established and have been in use for a considerable period across the engineering profession. Indeed, these are set out in Engineering Council byelaws and cannot be changed. All involved should be careful to point out where the language is being applied in a different context and make use of the glossary of terms provided by the Engineering Council at page 59 of AAQA.</p> <p>All this is underpinned by regulations which licensed PEIs must abide by, as detailed in the Registration Code of Practice (RCoP)</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p> <p>RCoP 4th edition</p>
45.	What is peer review? <p>In programme recognition the process of peer review is one in which PEIs and professionally registered engineers seek to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provision under consideration meets and/or exceeds the learning outcomes and/or competence threshold standard set by the Engineering Council• The provision under consideration meets and/or exceeds the threshold level in the UK’s frameworks for qualifications and credit, or if it lies outside these frameworks, is demonstrably at a comparable level• The technical content is appropriate, which is demonstrated by mapping to the Engineering Council’s learning outcomes for qualifications and apprenticeships, competence and commitment statements, or both• The quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory	

Applying the AAQA standard to the development of qualifications and programmes (including apprenticeship standards)

Introduction

Any programme or qualification will need to demonstrate compliance with, and achievement of the requisite learning outcomes and/or competence commensurate with the associated standard, programme specification or alignment with QAA requirements (for a HEI qualification) in order that it can be approved for delivery.

A key part of the approval process will involve the Delivery Provider in mapping the learning outcomes (and competences where applicable) to the relevant standard and programme specification. Where applicable, Delivery Providers will also be mapping to the requirements of other regulators, and this may be done at the same time to avoid duplication of effort.

It should be noted that AAQA deals with BOTH Learning Outcomes and Competences within its recognition processes.

This mapping information is fundamental evidence that is assessed to show which level of Learning Outcomes the programme satisfies. A similar mapping process is used to determine the range of competences that are achieved within a specific programme, where appropriate, and this data is also a key input to the AAQA Recognition process.

	Frequently asked questions	Additional references and points of clarification
46.	<p>How does the AAQA Standard relate to the development of qualifications and programmes?</p> <p>It is helpful if the requirements of the AAQA Standard are considered when a new qualification or programme is being developed. By doing this, the qualification or programme can be designed so that the Learning Outcomes and/or Competence commensurate with a level of professional registration are built in at the outset.</p> <p>The various stakeholders (PEIs, Awarding Organisations, Delivery Providers, Apprenticeship Development Groups, etc) involved in the development of qualifications and programmes should communicate as appropriate.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that approaches for developing qualifications and programmes differ across England and the devolved nations, but the same</p>	

	<p>broad principle will apply, regardless of local arrangements, as the desired outcome is the same.</p>	
<p>47.</p>	<p>How does an organisation carry out the process of mapping a qualification or programme?</p> <p>There is no “one size fits all”. The mapping process is driven by the concept that it needs to provide the PEI peer review team with sufficient information to allow them to make an assessment as to whether the qualification or programme covers the learning outcomes, and/or the competences defined in AAQA. It is important for any organisation to carry out an appropriate mapping process; whether this is an organisation responsible for the development, award or delivery of a qualification or programme wishing to seek recognition, or a PEI applying the recognition process through AAQA. The most important factor is to ensure that there is complete transparency in how the learning outcomes and/or competences will be met through the qualification or programme. This is also essential from a PEI’s perspective for audit purposes in accordance with Engineering Council licensing requirements.</p> <p>Measures should be taken to commence the mapping process at the earliest possible stage. In the best cases, those responsible for developing the qualification or programme, will be considering the learning outcomes and competences in parallel.</p> <p>In the case of the development of an apprenticeship standard, employer development groups such as Trailblazers, should refer to the AAQA competences and learning outcomes when considering the definition of knowledge, skills and behaviours associated with the apprenticeship standard in question.</p> <p>For example, where the learning programme comprises a module (or a range of modules) of a university degree, these might usefully be included in the</p>	

	<p>cross referencing to the AAQA learning outcomes and competences since they form part of the whole learning programme.</p> <p>There may be some circumstances where the mapping process reveals gaps in the qualification or programme, which could easily be addressed at the development stage and could add to the quality of the outcome.</p> <p>Good communication is at the heart of mapping a qualification or programme and all relevant parties should seek to engage as early as possible.</p>	
<p>48.</p>	<p>What does good practice in mapping look like?</p> <p>There are many situations where a qualification or programme has to use a range of different mapping processes. For example, the approval process within an Apprenticeship may require that Learning Outcomes and competences are mapped against the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour criteria within the relevant Apprenticeship Standard separate from additional mapping requirements, such as those listed by Public and Regulatory Bodies.</p> <p>It would be good practice in such circumstances to seek to bring the separate mapping processes together.</p>	
<p>49.</p>	<p>What is the application process for recognition through the AAQA Standard?</p> <p>The formal recognition process can only be undertaken by Engineering Council licensees (PEIs). Those PEIs licenced to offer recognition will have the necessary procedures in place. The applicant should contact a relevant PEI to discuss specific arrangements. Dialogue is encouraged with details of this shown on page 25 of AAQA.</p> <p>It is likely that the delivery provider will have already considered the extent to which the provision to be recognised covers the Learning Outcomes and Competences set out in AAQA and other associated standards. Whilst this approach is considered good practice, an early meeting between the learning provider and a PEI is important in ensuring that due process is followed, and</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>

	<p>efficient use is made of time. The flow charts on AAQA Pages 20 to 23 should be followed.</p>	
<p>50.</p>	<p>What evidence is required for the recognition process?</p> <p>The recognition process will review a range of evidence when deciding an outcome. The specific requirements are outlined in the Engineering Council Registration Code of Practice (RCoP) and detailed on pages 16 - 18</p> <p>Where AHEP is being used in conjunction with AAQA (for example, with the degree element of an apprenticeship), evidence requirements are outlined therein with further information in the Guidance Note on Academic Accreditation.</p> <p>Paragraph 42 of RCoP is particularly important. It states that in making a judgment, Licensees shall consider evidence from a range of indicators, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learning outcomes of the programme • the teaching and learning processes • the assessment strategies employed • the human, physical and material resources involved • quality assurance arrangements • feedback from meetings with students • how previous accreditation or approval recommendations and requirements have been dealt with, and • entry to the programme and how the cohort entry extremes will be supported <p>The application of AAQA, requires that this approach is used for reaching a judgement on both learning outcomes and competences.</p> <p>Page 30 provides further details of the evidence that is reviewed during the recognition process.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p> <p>RCoP 4th edition</p> <p>Guidance Note on Academic Accreditation</p>

51.	What is the outcome at the end of the recognition process? The AAQA Standard states that: Approval or Accreditation confirms that a programme meets the Standards set by the Engineering Council, as well as any industry contextual requirements set by the Licensee. The outcome of the recognition process is shown in the flow charts on pages 20 to 23 of the AAQA Standard and are stated as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensee confirms approval or accreditation of apprenticeship or qualification as meeting the required learning outcomes, and/or:• Licensee confirms approval or accreditation of apprenticeship or programme as delivering required competence This outcome will be communicated to the applicant accordingly.	https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa
52.	How do I use the flowchart on pages 20 and 21 of AAQA? This flow chart should be followed if recognition is sought for the delivery of the learning outcomes within a qualification or programme. The process is designed to help you identify what you need to do in order to achieve a positive outcome in the decision-making process. The starting point is always to understand what you are seeking to achieve and then use the flowchart as a guide to help you work through the process. Qualification or programme developers and Delivery Providers are encouraged to discuss seeking recognition with their chosen PEI or PEIs at the earliest possible opportunity, and to continue to engage throughout the process.	https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa
53.	How do I use the flowchart on pages 22 and 23 of AAQA? This flow chart should be followed if recognition is sought for a qualification or programme which develops competence, including how it is delivered and	https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa

	<p>assessed. It also provides an indication as to whether the recognition process will be through either approval or accreditation.</p> <p>This flowchart should be followed in conjunction with the competence statements shown on pages 52 to 60 of AAQA as this comprises the complete range of competences required to achieve professional registration.</p>	
<p>54.</p>	<p>Why does the recognition process identify intermediate levels?</p> <p>The outcome of the recognition process will confirm approval or accreditation at a specified level. This is likely to match the levels associated with professional registration at EngTech, ICTTech, IEng, or CEng.</p> <p>However, given the diversity of qualifications, programmes and apprenticeships, the outcome may recognise levels between EngTech and IEng. These intermediate levels are considered important in terms of supporting the process of professional registration and will allow the Delivery Provider and future registrant to identify gaps and shortfalls. This will help them to establish strategies to reach the next level of professional registration as part of any information, advice, and guidance (IAG) arrangements provided by a PEI. AAQA seeks to promote registration by this approach.</p>	
<p>55.</p>	<p>What does partial recognition mean in AAQA?</p> <p>Partial recognition is where a qualification or programme is recognised as delivering a portion of learning and/or competence at a specific level. This is different from AHEP.</p> <p>This is done because AAQA is designed to be flexible, inclusive, and future-proofed. This approach will allow any future registrant to clearly identify where a programme provides partial coverage of learning outcomes and competences, so they can identify the additional learning needed prior to application for registration at a specific level.</p>	

<p>56.</p>	<p>Is there any other guidance available for those involved in qualification or programme development?</p> <p>All those involved in recognition should read the information provided on pages 24 and 25 of the AAQA Standard as well as the evidence requirements shown on page 30.</p> <p>Dialogue with PEIs is also important. Many of these will have specific guidance designed to help those involved in the process of recognition with arrangements for both approval and accreditation. This may include mapping tools and links to people who can offer support. For example, some PEIs have already developed specialist expertise for recognising provision at Technician level.</p> <p>There is much well-established guidance on the accreditation of university degree programmes through AHEP and aspects of this remain appropriate to the application of AAQA.</p> <p>In the case of higher-level apprenticeships (Level 4 and/or Level 5), there are specific organisations such as the Joint Board of Moderators (JBM) which offers guidance and useful information for Universities and HEIs on the process of accreditation.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p> <p>Guidance Note on Academic Accreditation</p> <p>Welcome to Joint Board of Moderators (JBM)</p>
<p>57.</p>	<p>How is the outcome of recognition recorded on the Engineering Council database, QuAD?</p> <p>The Engineering Council maintains a database of recognised programmes. This enables prospective and current students, employers, universities, registration authorities outside the UK and the public to check whether a specific qualification or programme has been approved or accredited as meeting the education and/or competence requirements for a given category of professional registration.</p> <p>The outcome of the recognition process will be recorded on this database by the Licensee. This will list the programme and its associated level of approval</p>	

	<p>and/or accreditation together with the date of recognition and duration, the PEI(s) involved and any conditions of recognition such as the need for further learning.</p>	
<p>58.</p>	<p>Is there a different process for recognising programmes with or without embedded qualifications?</p> <p>AAQA acknowledges that some programmes, such as technician and degree-level apprenticeships, include embedded qualifications. In some cases, these embedded qualifications are a mandatory component of the programme and as such need to be successfully completed before progression is permitted. These mandated qualifications may also be available as standalone qualifications.</p> <p>The AAQA process should focus on programme level. All programmes will include a range of aims, objectives and learning outcomes and even if a programme or apprenticeship does not include an embedded qualification, it is important to map these against the AAQA learning outcomes and the work-based aspects against UK-SPEC competences.</p> <p>Where a qualification or degree is built into an apprenticeship or graduate development programme (ie: an embedded programme), then its delivery will be very different from the conventional, academic learning process in a standalone programme. The learning style and process will involve blended learning, comprising of a mixture of distance and work-based learning. This will necessitate a separate recognition process.</p>	
<p>59.</p>	<p>What happens when an embedded qualification offered by an awarding organisation expires during the period of the overarching programme's recognition by a PEI?</p> <p>Under normal circumstances when a qualification is approved, it is normally for up to a five-year period and relates to those learners and apprentices who commence the qualification within that five-year time span. It is good practice</p>	

	<p>to align approval and accreditation periods with the parallel recognition periods for qualifications and programme. However, this is not always possible.</p> <p>If the qualification expires during that five-year period, its replacement will need to be recognised in the same way. The PEI overseeing recognition requires reassurance that the knowledge component is still being met within the overall programme.</p> <p>The existing embedded qualification may well be superseded by an updated version, or a new qualification developed. Delivery Providers would normally be notified if this was anticipated, and the appropriate advice given. This will require a desk-based review of the new qualification against the learning outcomes and competences by the PEI and the Engineering Council database record updated as appropriate to note any significant changes.</p>	
<p>60.</p>	<p>Will a new recognition be needed at the end of the initial five-year recognition period?</p> <p>When a qualification or programme is renewed, the recognition process of approval and accreditation will need to be revisited with the outcome dependent upon the extent of revision. In most cases, the qualification or programme will be subject to modest changes, and these can be reviewed in a simple desk-based approval. Where the changes are more significant, a new approval or accreditation will be needed with a new database record submitted to the Engineering Council.</p> <p>It is important that PEIs have mechanisms in place to review the qualification they have recognised with a view to identifying when the same qualification expires with its official regulator, awarding organisation and/or awarding body.</p> <p>PEIs have the flexibility to align recognition with the endorsing organisation or awarding body review periods. For example, the PEI might award recognition for 3 years instead of 5 where they feel this would be more appropriate.</p>	

61.	<p>In terms of recognition, what is the difference between an integrated Degree Apprenticeship, a non-integrated Degree Apprenticeship, and a Graduate Apprenticeship?</p> <p>It should be noted that at the time of writing, in England, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is still waiting for the new policy on degree apprenticeships to be published. This may or may not lead to all degree apprenticeships being integrated.</p> <p>Degree apprenticeships can be structured in one of two ways (non-integrated and integrated), as determined by the Trailblazer Group and set out in the occupational standard and in the End-Point Assessment plan (EPA).</p> <p>Non-integrated Degree Apprenticeships require a separate EPA following the achievement of the degree ie: the degree is a gateway requirement like other qualifications in lower-level apprenticeships. This means that the apprentice can achieve their degree before taking their EPA.</p> <p>Integrated degrees have the EPA included as part of the degree itself. This means that the apprentice cannot achieve their degree without also passing their EPA. IfATE does not refer to 'embedded qualifications' within apprenticeships.</p> <p>A degree apprenticeship is known as a Graduate apprenticeship in Scotland. It does not include an EPA.</p>	
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<p>62.</p>	<p>What other evidence do PEIs require in support of a submission for recognition?</p> <p>Page 30 of AAQA provides a checklist of evidence for approval or accreditation.</p> <p>As regards Initial Professional Development (IPD), RCoP 4th Edition paragraph 63 states that, to be accredited (awarded recognition), a scheme (qualification/programme) must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have clear objectives to be achieved, which satisfy the standards of competence and commitment adopted by the Licensee (PEI) • have systems to provide formative and summative assessment against these objectives • provide certification of achievement of objectives, in a way which records evidence sufficiently for the Professional Review • have the commitment of senior and line management and be fully integrated into staff development policies, and • have satisfactory quality assurance arrangements 	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p> <p>RCoP 4th edition</p>
<p>63.</p>	<p>Is there a different process to follow in seeking recognition of programmes with or without embedded qualifications (including apprenticeships with mandatory qualifications)?</p> <p>Yes, a different approach will be needed. Although these approaches are equal in terms of the outcome, the process of reaching that is different.</p> <p>All programmes will include a range of aims, objectives and learning outcomes and, even if a programme or apprenticeship does not include an embedded qualification, it is important to map against the AAQA learning outcomes and the work-based aspects against competence. The only difference is the fact that the embedded qualification is also available as a standalone qualification in its own right.</p>	

<p>64.</p>	<p>Is AAQA applicable to other qualifications or programmes, for example emerging T Levels or programmes at levels 4 and 5 etc?</p> <p>Yes. The AAQA Standard has been designed to facilitate the recognition of any relevant engineering qualification or programme including those which fall between established levels of qualification and programmes associated with professional registration.</p> <p>These programmes are more likely to deliver learning outcomes than they are competences and, given the typical national nature of this provision, the recognition process is more likely to be one of approval than it is accreditation.</p> <p>The outcome of the recognition process will determine the extent to which the qualification and/or programme delivers the learning outcomes and/or competences commensurate with a level of learning.</p>	
<p>65.</p>	<p>How are intermediate recognitions recorded on the Engineering Council Database of recognised qualification and programmes?</p> <p>The database includes qualifications and programmes (including degrees) where further learning is required in order to meet the requirements for professional registration in a particular category. In some cases, further competence development may also be required. The additional requirements will be recorded on the database as a text entry note. There may be a link to more detailed information held by the PEI undertaking the recognition.</p>	
<p>66.</p>	<p>How can a PEI support the progression pathways towards EngTech or ICTTech?</p> <p>There is no category of professional registration for those qualifications and apprenticeships below Level 3. However, there may be circumstances where</p>	

	<p>some units and or modules of a Level 2 qualification or programme contribute to the requirements for registration in the category of EngTech.</p> <p>There is no reason why a PEI should not endorse this, particularly where the Level 2 qualification or programme forms part of a progression pathway. This will be helpful in guiding the Delivery Provider, learner or apprentice on what they need to do to satisfy the learning outcomes and to demonstrate the competence required for the next category of professional registration. The recognition process has been designed so that where the qualification or programme exceeds the requirements for a particular registration category, this can be noted.</p> <p>It should be noted that completion of some programmes may not satisfy registration requirements in full.</p> <p>In the same way, the AAQA recognition process might endorse progression pathways.</p>	
<p>67.</p>	<p>Is an End-Point Assessment (EPA) the same as the Professional Review conducted by a PEI?</p> <p>No, it is not. However, a number of PEIs are also registered as End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) and are therefore able to carry out both an EPA and a Professional Review for an apprentice wishing to achieve professional registration. This is more likely for apprenticeships where there is sufficient time for the apprentice to develop the competence required as part of programme delivery.</p>	<p>Some PEIs are registered as EPAOs with the IfATE. Visit the IfATE website to see the list of approved assessment organisations https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/</p>
<p>68.</p>	<p>What happens within a PEI following submission of evidence of mapping and other associated information for recognition?</p> <p>Where a PEI has a licence from the Engineering Council to grant recognition under AAQA, they will have in place appropriate systems and procedures. These are reviewed by the Engineering Council every five years as part of the</p>	

	<p>licence review process. These arrangements must meet the requirements of RCoP.</p> <p>Since the principle of peer review by professionally registered engineers is at the heart of recognition, the PEI will have arrangements in place to make sure this happens. Although the precise arrangements will vary across the PEI network in line with individual contexts and capacity, it is likely that the submission of evidence of mapping and other associated information will go through a peer review process before final recognition is granted. Given the committee structures and working arrangements across the PEIs, the time taken to reach this decision will vary.</p> <p>The outcome of the recognition process will be notified to relevant stakeholders once all due process has been followed. There may be requests for further information. PEIs will then submit details of the recognition outcome to the Engineering Council Database, QuaD. This data entry will refer to any conditions of recognition or partial recognition such as the need for further learning or further competence development.</p>	
<p>69.</p>	<p>Do PEIs collaborate to offer recognition?</p> <p>In some circumstances, a number of PEIs will work collaboratively to reach a final recognition decision with a joint submission of evidence mapping and other supporting information. In these cases, joint peer review meetings will be required, which may have an impact on the time taken to reach a decision.</p>	
<p>70.</p>	<p>What would be a ‘condition’ recorded on the Engineering Council database?</p> <p>There are a variety of reasons. The mapping of learning outcomes might show gaps. Under these circumstances, the potential registrant will need to pursue further learning to gain the necessary underpinning knowledge. Similarly, recognition might be dependent upon the sampling of assessed work carried out by learners or apprentices, to assure that standards are being maintained. There may be some resource limitations which need to be reviewed. Where</p>	

	the recognition process has been completed remotely using on-line systems, there may be a need for a formal visit to view resources and equipment.	
71.	<p>What is further learning?</p> <p>There will be many circumstances where the outcome of the recognition process states that a programme has learning outcomes and/or competences that do not satisfy the requirements of a professional registration category. In such cases the “graduate” from the programme will need to achieve the additional knowledge and understanding, referred to as “further learning” and/or evidence competence achievement at the requisite level before they apply for registration. The “graduate’s” selected PEI will be able to advise how such further professional development can be obtained.</p> <p>The most common way to obtain further learning is for the “graduate” to undertake a formal programme of study that achieves the requisite learning outcomes at the appropriate level for the registration category under consideration. Other means of further learning include submission of a technical report, work-based project report, or similar for assessment via the selected PEI to determine if the additional learning outcomes have been achieved.</p>	In this context, “graduate” means an individual completing a qualification or programme at any level.
72.	<p>What is further competence development?</p> <p>The outcomes of the recognition process may include detail that shows the qualification or programme achieves a range of competence levels, with the potential that the programme does not achieve all, or indeed any of the competence requirements for a specific registration category. In such circumstances, the candidate will need to determine how they can develop their skills and experiences in order to achieve the requisite competences for the particular category. This activity is recognised as further competence development.</p>	

	AAQA has listed competence requirements for each specific level, including intermediate competences so that a candidate can understand what they need to do to progress towards their chosen registration category.	
73.	<p>How are qualifications and programmes internationally recognised and how is this sought?</p> <p>The Engineering Council is a founding signatory of several international Accords and Agreements on recognition of engineering education and competence-based registration as detailed on AAQA pages 26 and 27.</p> <p>For example, these include the International Engineering Alliance’s Dublin Accord, established in 2002. The Dublin Accord is an International Agreement establishing the required educational base for Engineering Technicians and enables mutual recognition of the professional titles of each signatory.</p> <p>Each signatory participates in a process of peer-review to ensure that the learning outcomes of their Engineering Technician programmes are substantially equivalent to the Dublin Accord benchmark. For the Engineering Council, this means that programmes that are approved for EngTech registration at Level 3 (Scottish Level 6), or above, are recognised under the Accord and may be accepted in the registration processes of other signatories.</p> <p>Similarly, the Sydney Accord exists for recognition at Incorporated Engineer level and the Washington Accord for Chartered Engineer.</p>	<p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p> <p>Dublin Accord Graduate Attributes</p> <p>https://www.enaee.eu/eur-ace-system/</p> <p>https://www.ieagreements.org/</p>
74.	<p>What are the costs and resource implications for business/providers seeking recognition of their qualifications or programmes?</p> <p>Charging for approval and accreditation varies between and is at the discretion of the PEIs.</p> <p>Page 24 of AAQA provides details about applying for recognition. The application will normally bring together documentation and other material that</p>	<p>PEIs will be able to provide details on request and may be able to offer an advisory visit before a formal application for recognition is made.</p> <p>https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa</p>

	<p>already exists, including mapping of learning and competence outcomes. Where the PEI needs to conduct a visit this will usually involve meetings with those responsible for delivery of the qualification or programme, and learners or apprentices who are engaged in or have recently completed the qualification or programme. Recognition is awarded for up to 5 years.</p> <p>Investing time and effort in achieving recognition enables business and providers to have confidence that they are providing the foundations for a professional engineering workforce. Learners and apprentices can have confidence that they are working towards a recognised qualification or programme that provides a pathway to professionalism and eventual professional registration.</p>	
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Appendix A

Change History

Version	Author	Date	Summary of changes	Status
1.0	Education and Skills Senior Executive	August 2021	First Edition	Published

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Approved for publication	Version
Registration Standards Committee (RSC)	13 May 2021	1.0
Head of Professional Standards	18 August 2021	1.0

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Date of Issue	Version
EngC Partner Portal	27/08/2021	1.0
EngC Website	27/08/2021	1.0

Review Period

This document is subject to a review at least every five years as part of the cyclical review of the standards-related documents. Changes may be made more frequently as the need arises.