

Open Awards Level 3 Diploma in

Maritime Studies: Officer of the Watch on Merchant Vessels of less than 500 Gross Tonnage (Near Coastal) (RQF)

Ofqual: 610/5503/7

Contents

About the Qualification	3
Any Specified Entry Requirements	4
Recommended Assessment Method Summary	4
Apprenticeship Qualification	5
Qualification Structure	7
Rules of Combination	7
Qualification Units	7
Mandatory Units	7
Delivering this Qualification	8
Becoming a Provider	8
How to Deliver	8
Registering Learners	8
Quality Assurance and Standardisation	9
Provider Staff Requirements	9
Assessment	12
Skills-based Criteria	13
Simulations	14
Knowledge-based Criteria	15
Delivery and Assessment Plans	17
Training and support	17
Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)	18
External Quality Assurance (EQA)	20
Standardisation	20
Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement (RPL)	21
Appendices and Links	22

Version Control

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About the Qualification

Title	Open Awards L3 Diploma in Maritime Studies: Officer of the Watch on Merchant Vessels of less than 500 Gross Tonnage (Near Coastal) (RQF)
Qualification Accreditation Number	610/5503/7
Sector	4.3 Transportation Operations and Maintenance
Level	Three
Funding	Please click here for more information
Pricing Information	Please click here for more information
Review Date	31/08/2027

Purpose	D. Confirm occupational competence and/or 'license to practice'
Sub-Purpose	D1. Confirm competence in an occupational role to the standards required

Total Qualification Time/Guided Learning	
Total Qualification Time (hours)	390
Guided Learning (hours)	335

Age Range and Restrictions	
Pre -16	x
16 – 18	✓
18+	✓
Any other restrictions specific to the qualification(s)	N/A

Any Specified Entry Requirements

This qualification is suitable for learners aged 16+.

If completing this as a standalone qualification, it is recommended that learners have English language skills to at least GCSE Level, or Level 2 equivalent, or have sufficient in-role experience of using the required English language skills.

If completing this qualification as part of an apprenticeship, learners will need to comply with current Department for Education (DfE) funding requirements for maths and English qualifications before gateway.

Learners wishing to undertake these qualifications who are not on an apprenticeship should be either working or have access to work experience for the duration of the qualification to complete and achieve the qualification. This should be agreed by the provider and the Open Awards external quality assurer before commencing the qualification.

Recommended Assessment Method Summary

For the qualification, learners will need to complete all of the mandatory units. This qualification is graded as pass/fail and learners must evidence they have met all Assessment Criteria in the units to meet the rules of combination.

Each learner is required to build a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that all the assessment criteria associated with each unit has been met.

Assessment practices must follow [Maritime Skills Alliance assessment guidance](#). This is to ensure consistency of approaches across awarding organisations offering qualifications in the maritime sector.

Therefore, suggested assessment methods could include:

- a) Observation of performance
- b) Written assignments
- c) Questioning (written or oral)
- d) Practical activities
- e) Reflective logs
- f) Project work
- g) Witness testimonies
- h) Professional or group discussions

As part of the portfolio of evidence, learners must complete holistic observations over a period of time.

Assessment practices must reflect the Equality and Diversity Policy of Open Awards.

Apprenticeship Qualification

This qualification has been designed to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standard: ST0842 Officer of the Watch (near coastal). This qualification will be submitted to be included in the apprenticeship standard once it has been added to the Ofqual register.

In addition, every civil apprentice without exception will need to pass the MCA's strict ENG1 medical requirements. MoD Apprentices will without exception need to pass the respective MoD recruitment entry medical assessment. These medical examinations will check if an apprentice has a health condition that could result in needing urgent treatment, or potentially put fellow crew or passengers' lives at risk. The tests include, but are not limited to, severe deafness or difficulty communicating by radio or telephone, eyesight or colour vision that does not meet standards, and conditions that limit mobility and stamina.

To gain the full apprenticeship, learners will also have to achieve the following mandatory qualifications and the other requirements at the gateway:

- STCW Personal Survival Techniques (PST)
- STCW Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting
- STCW Elementary First Aid
- STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility (PSSR)
- STCW Advanced Firefighting
- STCW Proficiency in Medical First Aid
- STCW Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats
- STCW Navigational Watch Rating Certificate
- MCA approved Efficient Deck Hand (EDH) Certificate (including 6 months statutory sea time)
- AMERC GMDSS General Operators Certificate
- Navigation Aids, Equipment and Simulator Training course at Operational Level (NAEST(O))
- Human Element, Leadership and Management at Operational Level "HELM (O)" certificate
- Signals Certificate

Training and record book (TRB) for assessment method 1 and 2 using the format agreed between the MSA and the Training Provider

Also, the Officer of the Watch certification of competency (the licence to practice) is issued by the MCA following successful completion of the MCA oral exam and the OOW 11/3 Written Examinations

For more information on this standard and its associated assessment plan, please visit the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE) website by clicking [here](#).

The purpose of qualifications within this suite is to confirm occupational competence on achievement, meaning that the learner is fully capable of performing the specific job role related to the qualification, along with the combination of qualifications as set out in the Apprenticeship Standard:

- ST0842 Officer of the Watch (near coastal)

As these are occupational competent qualifications, learners wishing to undertake this qualification outside of the apprenticeship route will not be able to undertake the qualification unless they have an aligned job role and access to the other certification attached to the relevant apprenticeship route.

Qualification Structure

Rules of Combination

Credit Value of the Qualification:	39
Minimum Credits to be achieved at the Level of the Qualification:	39
Mandatory Units:	39

Qualification Units

Mandatory Units (all units must be achieved to be awarded the qualification)

Unit Reference Number	Unit Name	Credits	Level
F/651/5444	Chartwork and Tides	8	Level Three
H/651/5445	Contribute to Vessel Stability and Watertight Integrity	8	Level Three
J/651/5446	Control Vessel Mooring, Anchoring and Securing Operations	4	Level Three
K/651/5447	Interpret Meteorology in the Near Coastal Area	5	Level Three
L/651/5448	Respond to Navigational Emergencies	3	Level Three
D/651/5443	Ship Construction	5	Level Three
M/651/5449	Vessel Navigation and Tides	6	Level Three

Delivering this Qualification

Becoming a Provider

To deliver this qualification you must be an approved Open Awards provider. For more information, head to our [website](#) or contact the team on 0151 494 2072.

How to Deliver

To request to deliver this qualification, please login to [the Portal](#) and then click on 'Tracking' and 'Initiate a Workflow'. You will then need to select 'Apply to Deliver Regulated Qualifications (Specialist Resources)'.

You will be required to upload evidence to demonstrate you have the resources required to deliver this qualification.

For this qualification, you will be required to submit a delivery and assessment plan as part of this application to ensure that you are able to meet the assessment principles outlined below.

In addition, you will be required to provide evidence that you have the following in place:

- Appropriate qualified and experienced staff
- Sufficient staff from relevant disciplines in the Maritime sector to deliver the course content in line with this specification
- Delivery and Assessment plan
- Sufficient resources/facilities to deliver the course
- Access to appropriate learning resources
- Sample assignment briefs
- Recording documents

Please note you may also be required to submit additional policy documents where appropriate.

For support with this process, please see the following document in the Portal 'Provider Portal Guidance – Qualification Approval' or contact the team on customerservices@openawards.org.uk or 0151 494 2072.

Registering Learners

Once you are ready to deliver this qualification, you will need to register your learners in line with the timescales below:

Short courses (15 weeks or less) within 25 working days of the course start date.
Long courses (over 15 weeks) within 60 working days of the course start date.

You will need to register your learners via [the Portal](#).

Quality Assurance and Standardisation

Delivery of this qualification must be done so in accordance with Ofqual regulatory guidelines and in line with Open Awards' quality assurance processes. Please see our website for more information.

Provider Staff Requirements

It is expected that providers will have occupationally competent staff with relevant subject knowledge and/or sector experience for their role in the delivery of the units/qualifications being offered.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are occupationally competent and have access to appropriate training and support. They are also responsible for notifying Open Awards of staff changes.

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Assessors must:

- Provide current evidence of competence, knowledge and understanding in the areas to be assessed, to the satisfaction of the awarding body and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (where appropriate). This will normally be achieved through providing evidence of competence in the roles that are to be assessed, which may be a logbook showing time spent at sea and job roles undertaken, and/ or the achievement of qualifications relevant to the areas being assessed or by virtue of the professional seafaring certification that they hold.
- Demonstrate competent practice in work-based assessment methods through the achievement of appropriate assessor e.g. Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (CAVA). Assessors with previous unit achievement of A1, D32 and/or D33 satisfy requirements, provided evidence of continuous professional development has updated workplace assessment practice.
- Demonstrate their continuing professional development to ensure they are up to date with work practices in their sector area of expertise and developments in the Proficiency Qualifications they assess.
- Have a full and current understanding of the content and requirements of the qualifications being assessed.
- Operate safely as an assessor in a maritime environment. MSA therefore strongly recommends that the relevant MCA recognised safety courses have been undertaken.

- Assessors 'in training' who are not fully recognised as competent by awarding bodies may carry out assessment practice. For the period in training and working towards recognition, the assessor must have assessment activity monitored and signed off (countersigned) by a fully recognised and competent assessor. The 'in training' period should be limited to twelve months and have clear development goals set for achieving recognition and competence.

Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) must:

- Demonstrate sufficient and current understanding of the qualifications to be internally verified and know how they are applied in the sector area(s) concerned.
- Have relevant knowledge and understanding of the workplace areas to be sampled during verification. Relevant experience of working in or with the sector area(s) is preferable.
- Demonstrate competent practice in internal verification and assessment.

IQAs would usually hold an appropriate qualification in internal quality assurance eg 'Award in the internal quality assurance of assessment processes and practice' (RQF) and must be able to understand the principles and practices of internal verification.

Where an internal verifier has not achieved a formal qualification recognised by the Qualification Regulator, they must be working towards one.

Internal Verifiers must:

- Demonstrate their continuing professional development to ensure they are up to date with work practices in their sector and developments in the qualifications they verify.
- Know where and when to access specialist sector advice, where additional specialist or technical knowledge relating to assessment and verification decisions is concerned.
- Operate safely as an internal verifier in a maritime environment, it is therefore strongly recommended that all relevant MCA safety courses have been undertaken.
- Internal verifiers 'in training' who are not fully recognised as competent may carry out verification practice. For the period in training and working towards recognition, the internal verifier must have verification activity monitored and signed off (countersigned) by a fully recognised and competent internal verifier. The 'in training' period should be limited to twelve months and have clear development goals set for achieving recognition and competence.

Expert witnesses

Workplace personnel may contribute to the assessment process by providing workplace testimony. Those providing the testimony must be familiar with the activity being carried out and able to make a judgment that the task has been completed to organisational procedures and to the required standard. The person providing the testimony is not in a position to decide if the learner is competent overall, they are only able to judge the specific instance they observe. The overall decision regarding competence of the learner will be made by the assessor and may be subject to verification.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that all expert witnesses are familiar with the standards for those units for which they are to provide expert witness testimony. They must also understand the provider's recording requirements and will need guidance on the skills required to provide evidence for the units. Whilst desirable, it is not a requirement for expert witnesses to hold an assessor qualification because the qualified assessor makes all assessment decisions about the acceptability of evidence regardless of source. This will include expert witness testimony.

Co-ordinating and Lead Assessors

In order that the requirements for occupational competence of assessors and expert witnesses can be met while allowing flexibility of delivery, learners may have more than one assessor or expert witness involved in the assessment process. Where more than one assessor is involved in the qualification, there must be a named assessor who is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the assessment for each learner. This person will be responsible for integrating, planning and directing the assessment for the whole qualification. Where more than one assessor is involved in a unit, there must be one named assessor (a lead assessor) who is responsible for the overall coordination of the assessment for that unit.

The lead assessor must ensure that the best use is made of all available evidence and will make the final judgment of competence in each unit where other assessors have been involved. It is expected that all assessors will work closely with the internal quality assurer(s) to ensure standardised practice and judgments within the assessment process.

Assessment

This qualification has been designed around the principle that the learner will build evidence towards the achievement of the assessment criteria over a period of time.

Each learner is required to build a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that all the assessment criteria associated with each unit has been met.

This qualification is graded as pass/fail and learners must evidence they have met all Assessment Criteria in the units to meet the rules of combination.

Assessment practices must follow [Maritime Skills Alliance assessment guidance](#). This is to ensure consistency of approaches across awarding organisations offering qualifications in the maritime sector.

Portfolios that do not provide evidence that clearly demonstrates that a learner has achieved all Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria must be deemed to be incomplete. Further evidence will need to be obtained to prove that the learner has completed the qualification/ unit.

As part of the portfolio of evidence, learners must complete holistic observations over a period of time.

Tutors and assessors need to ensure that all evidence presented in a portfolio is:

Valid: it should clearly demonstrate the knowledge or skills that are set out in the assessment criteria. It should also clearly be the work of the learner.

Reliable: it will in general, produce the same range of responses from learners, as long as they are used in similar circumstances and with similar groups of learners.

Inclusive: so that no individual learner is excluded from the opportunity to show their achievement because of their individual background or experience.

Assessors are required to review and assess all learner evidence and must be satisfied that learners have achieved all learning outcomes and assessment criteria relating to the unit being assessed prior to deciding the learner has completed the unit. Assessors will also ensure that the evidence produced by the learner is their own work.

Assessors must retain records (e.g. Feedback Sheets, Individual Progress Record, Group Progress Record) on behalf of the provider which are made available and used by the provider's Internal Quality Assurer and Open Awards' Quality Assurance Team.

Skills-based Criteria

The primary method of assessment for the skills-based criteria is observation in the workplace by an assessor.

Evidence should be generated over a period of time to show consistent performance.

Expert witness testimony may be used where it is difficult for an assessor to observe aspects of practice. Expert witness testimony is NOT a substitute for the requirement of observations by an assessor across the qualification.

At any time during assessment the assessor observes unsafe practice, the assessment will be stopped immediately.

Where the assessment activity involves customers or other individuals, consent should be sought from the individual/ patient that they are happy for the assessor to be present and this should be recorded by the assessor.

Learners will be expected to achieve all learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Where learners are not able to achieve the skills-based criteria in their usual place of employment, the training provider and employer must ensure that the learner is given opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes in a work placement or another suitable setting. This may include simulation only where all other methods for evidencing the criteria has been exhausted. In this eventuality, it is the responsibility of the provider to ensure there is a clear and credible rationale which is subject to confirmation through external quality assurance activities.

The use of simulation to replace normal working practice is only acceptable in agreed circumstances. It includes units of assessment that address rare conditions or emergency situations, which might endanger learner safety. These exceptions are clearly defined in the assessment guidance in the relevant units. In such cases this will require the agreement of the external verifier. When simulations are used they must be designed to mirror the same activity, as it would be carried out in the workplace and include:

- The number and sequence of actions needed to complete the activity
- The number and complexity of factors needed to complete the activity
- The urgency with which the activity must be completed and
- Achievement of an outcome(s) in the same time constraints that might apply in the workplace

Simulation can only be used to provide the sole evidence for one complete unit where the subject to which it relates happens very rarely or is extremely hazardous e.g. firefighting.

Prior to starting the qualification, an assessment of the learner's employment setting should be carried out by the training provider and employer to identify such gaps.

Simulations

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Knowledge-based Criteria

For knowledge-based units, evidence will be assessed using internally set, internally marked assignments. The assignments will be internally quality assured, then subject to externally quality assurance sampling by Open Awards. Providers must also carry out regular standardisation activities as part of the ongoing quality assurance of assessment decisions within the assignments used for knowledge-based units and assignments should be refreshed over time.

Evidence generated from the following assessment methods can be included within the portfolio of evidence. This list is not exhaustive.

Assessment Method	Knowledge/ Skill Based Criteria	Rationale
Observation in the Workplace	S	Enables learners to demonstrate the skills/ competencies outlined in the assessment criteria. It is a mandatory requirement for this qualification for a learner to complete three (3) holistic observations of their practice over a period of time.
Simulated Observation	S	Enables learners to demonstrate additional skills/ competencies that do not occur naturally in the workplace. As the primary method of assessment for skills-based criteria is workplace observation, simulated observation is only likely to be realistically presented where naturally occurring workplace observation is not possible and considered on an individual learner basis. Simulation is seen as a 'last resort' if all other ways of evidencing the criteria had been exhausted. See guidance on page 21.
Professional Discussion	K	Enables targeted questions/ answers to assess learners' knowledge for a specific unit. This assessment method can also be used to sample criteria across all units holistically.
Witness Testimonies	S	Enables learners to provide evidence from their workplace, validated by their workplace tutor, supervisor or manager.
Reflective Essays	S, K	Enables learners to provide evidence from their workplace to demonstrate their application of learning. This assessment method can support the assessment of knowledge, and the application of this knowledge.

Case Studies	S, K	Enables learners to provide evidence from their workplace to demonstrate their application of learning. This assessment method can support the assessment of knowledge, and the application of this knowledge.
Long-answer Questions	K	Enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge/ understanding of specific subject content areas. Long-answer questions can be designed to cover multiple assessment criteria, and to support learners to demonstrate analysis and discussions.
Short-answer Questions	K	Enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge/ understanding of specific subject content areas. Short-answer questions will normally cover one (1) assessment criterion.
Presentations	K	Enables holistic assessment of learners' knowledge across multiple subject content areas/ assessment criteria.
Posters/ leaflets	K	Enables holistic assessment of learners' knowledge across multiple subject content areas/ assessment criteria.
Written Report	K	Enables holistic assessment of learners' knowledge across multiple subject content areas/ assessment criteria.
Synoptic Projects (e.g., creating an induction handbook)	K	Enables holistic assessment of learners' knowledge across multiple subject content areas/ assessment criteria.

Delivery and Assessment Plans

Providers are required to produce a delivery and assessment plan before they start delivering this qualification. This plan is subject to pre-verification by the Open Awards Quality Assurance Team to ensure it meets the following assessment principles.

This qualification must be assessed in line with Open Awards Quality Assurance procedures as well as in line with [Maritime and Skills Alliance assessment guidance](#).

Delivery and assessment plans must include, as a minimum:

- Deadlines and dates for submissions
- Delivery plan for units (i.e. order of delivery; lesson planning)
- Observation plans, methods, and evidence
- Assessment plan and internally set assignments
- Roles and responsibilities (including requirements for designated educational supervisors and assessors)
- Student support and supervision
- Marking criteria for internal assignments
- Procedures for resits and resubmissions
- Procedures for suspected plagiarism and/or malpractice
- Appeals procedures
- Mapping of learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Where there is crossover between policies and guidance, e.g. Open Awards policy for resits and resubmissions, providers are requested to provide evidence of how they will meet Open Awards policy and their plans for implementing any required procedures or guidance.

Training and support

Open Awards offers a variety of training and support to providers. Our online training and support is free of charge and can be accessed on the following link [ehttps://oalearn.org.uk/shop](https://oalearn.org.uk/shop). An everlasting coupon (PLUC code) will be issued to each provider to gain free access to these resources.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

All Providers delivering Open Awards provision must operate rigorous internal quality assurance systems. A provider must identify how they will internally quality assure and standardise their delivery and assessment before delivering a course.

Every course must have an internal quality assurance (IQA) plan agreed before delivery commences. The following outlines the overarching activities that must be completed for all courses.

Pre-Course Verification

Pre-verification activities must be undertaken to ensure that delivery and assessment arrangements:

- Meet the rules of combination for the qualification.
- Align with the assessment methods mandated in the qualification guide.
- Are appropriate to the level.
- Have been mapped against all the Assessment Criteria for the unit.
- Enable students to generate the necessary evidence of achievement.
- Are inclusive and follow the principles of fair design. i.e., the assessment activities should:
 - be reliable,
 - be valid,
 - be fit for purpose,
 - be transparent,
 - recognise and respect equality and diversity,
 - be written in appropriate and accessible language that is free from bias.

Continued Quality Assurance

Internal quality assurance is a process by which an approved provider regularly samples and evaluates consistency and fairness of assessment decisions.

The quality of delivery, assessment and IQA must be reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the course duration. As a minimum, this will include:

- Interim sampling at both the early and middle stages of the assessment process. This enables the IQA to check formative assessment and identify consistency or issues at an early stage for corrective action.
- Standardisation activities as outlined in this policy, and the course IQA plan.
- Quality checks on delivery and assessment including, observations and walk throughs, work scrutiny, learner feedback/ surveys.

It involves two key processes:

1. Verification of assessment decisions in line with the sampling strategy outlined below;
2. Standardisation activities.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy must be included in the IQA plan and take into account:

- This qualification being categorised as high risk.
- Learners across demographics – sampling must cover ethnicity, gender, employed full or part time and special arrangements.
- Assessors – sampling will cover all assessors taking into account a higher risk of new assessors or feedback from EQA reports, across all assessment sites, occupational and qualification and experience.
- Units – sampling will cover all units within the qualification.
- Methods of assessment – sampling will cover all assessment methods within the qualification.
- Evidence types – evidence submitted towards assessment is valid, authentic, current, sufficient, plus a focus on any special requirements and identified problem units.
- Records – all documents relating to assessments and assessor feedback to learners.
- Assessment locations – across different assessment locations, main centre location and delivery sites.

The following sampling sizes are mandated for this qualification:

Learners registered per qualification suite	Minimum sample size
1-15	3
16-50	5
51-250	7
251+	10

All units must be sampled.

The IQA will increase the size of the sample if the minimum sample does not provide the necessary assurances.

Where new assessors are being used, 100% of the first two cohorts assessed will be sampled. This also applies to individual assessors deemed to be high risk due to significant errors in assessment decisions identified in previous sampling. This measure is in place to support new staff and ensure quality.

Learners who withdraw from the course before completing the course are entitled to unit certification (for all units completed) so should be included in the IQA sample and documentation.

External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Provider approval, compliance monitoring and external quality assurance is carried out by the Open Awards Quality Assurance Team/ External Quality Assurers who will confirm that the provider is assessing to standard and ensure that there are robust internal quality assurance systems embedded.

Open Awards will also ensure that External Quality Assurers (EQAs):

- Demonstrate sufficient and current understanding of the areas within the sector being externally verified. Where necessary the MSA will advise the awarding bodies as to the suitability of potential EVs qualifications and/or experience.
- Demonstrate sufficient and current understanding of the Proficiency Qualifications to be externally verified, and know how they are applied in the sector.
- Have achieved an appropriate qualification in external quality assurance acceptable to the Qualifications Regulator, eg 'Award in The external quality assurance of assessment processes and practice' (RQF)
- Conduct external quality assurance of the assessment process, within one year of commencing work as a verifier for an active centre. External verifiers who hold the D35 qualification must provide evidence of continuous professional development which demonstrates updated external verification practice.
- Complete a minimum of two days Continuing Professional Development (CPD) each year, composed of training or other developmental activities relevant to the maritime sector.
- Have good report writing, auditing and communication skills.
- Know where and when to access specialist sector advice, where additional specialist knowledge relating to assessment and verification decisions is concerned.

Standardisation

Providers are required to contribute to national standardisation as requested by Open Awards. Open Awards offers standardisation events that are held throughout the year. Such events will also provide an opportunity to identify and share best practice. Up to date details of training and standardisation events can be found on our website.

For further guidance on Quality Assurance and Standardisation, please refer to the [Provider Handbook](#).

Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement (RPL)

RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they may already possess. Evidence of learning must be sufficient, reliable and valid.

Learners Recognising Prior Learning of previous units from the Award and the Certificate will only have to complete only 28.9% of new content. This does not comply with the Open Awards RPL policy. However, for this qualification an exception has been made, as this has been a precedent set by the MSA for this qualification. This will be discussed with the Quality Assurance team during pre-verification.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the provider to inform Open Awards at registration of any exemptions and/or equivalences for which a claim may be made. These claims will be subject to external quality assurance by the Open Awards Quality Assurance Team.

For more information, please see our Recognition of Prior Learning Policy found on [the Portal](#).

Appendices and Links

The following documents can be viewed on the Open Awards [website](#):

1. Provider Handbook
2. Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals Policy
3. Equality and Diversity Policy
4. Invoicing Policy
5. Privacy Policy

Further supporting information can be found on the Open Awards Portal.

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