



# Becoming an OCN NI Recognised Centre

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## Introduction

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Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI) is a nationally recognised Awarding Organisation with charitable status. Our vision is to support lifelong learning and progression through the provision of high quality qualifications and endorsed courses. We are committed to recognising learner-centred achievement. We do this through the development of united qualifications and courses, which are flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and communities.

We are an education charity and an awarding organisation working with the community, education and training providers and with businesses, creating qualifications and endorsed courses that enable those communities, businesses and people to grow and develop. 'We make a difference; we help make people's lives better'.

We welcome applications from organisations that share our aims. Please note that OCN NI considers applications for Centre Recognition from legally constituted organisations only. \*

These guidance notes have been produced to explain the process of becoming an OCN NI Recognised Centre. Please read them thoroughly before submitting a 'Prospective Centre Enquiry'. If you have any queries about any aspect of the application process do not hesitate to contact our Customer Service team.

Key documents referred to in this publication:

- OCN NI Policies and Procedures
- OCN NI Fees and Charges
- OCN NI Qualification Prospectus
- OCN NI Customer Service Standards
- OCN NI Application for Centre Recognition
- OCN NI Centre Recognition Application Guidance Notes
- OCN NI Assessment Requirements
- OCN NI Internal Verification Requirements

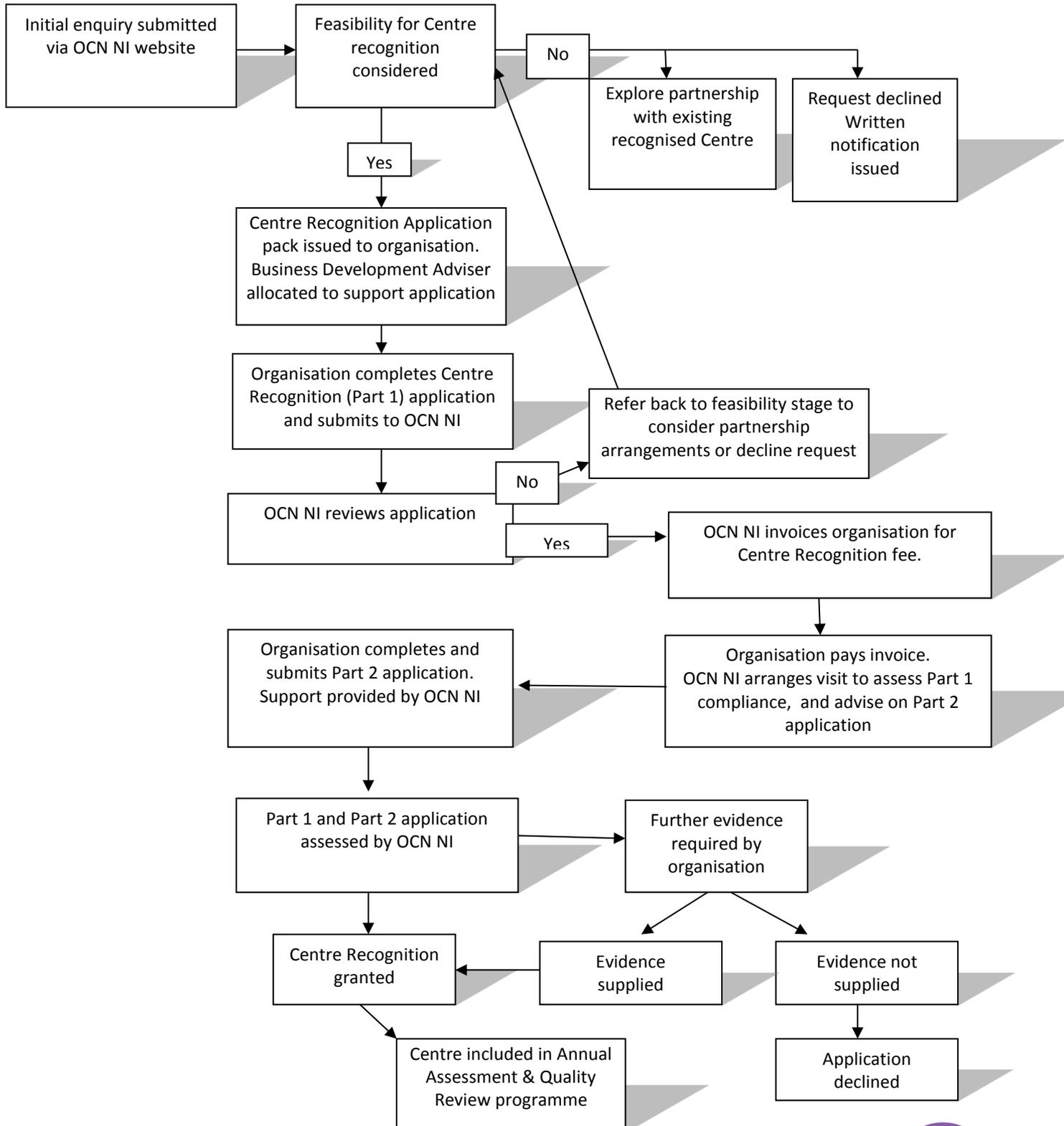
\*If you are interested in finding out about establishing an organisation you might find helpful information at these websites

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/#1>

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/>

<http://www.citizensinformation.ie/>

## 2. Centre Recognition process diagram



### 3. OCN NI – a regulated awarding organisation

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OCN NI is a recognised awarding organisation offering qualifications within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). We are recognised and regulated by the Ofqual (the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland). OCN NI is subject to Ofqual’s regulatory conditions. You will find information about Ofqual and the regulatory conditions we must meet on the Ofqual website. If you are considering making an application for OCN NI Centre Recognition you should review the regulatory context in which we operate. For further information see <http://ofqual.gov.uk/how-we-regulate/regulatory-requirements/qcf-nvq/>

### 4. OCN NI Centre Recognition Process

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#### Step 1

Complete and submit the Prospective Centre Enquiry Form which can be found on our website <http://www.ocnni.org.uk> under New Centre Enquiry.

We will review your initial query and respond to you within 5 working days. If we consider we can offer our services to your organization we will issue the OCN NI Centre Recognition application pack in electronic format. This includes:

- Covering letter with contact details for the Business Development Adviser who will liaise with you regarding your application
- Application for Centre Recognition Part 1: Organisational Capacity (CA1)
- Application for Centre Recognition Part 2: Qualification/Endorsed Course approval (CA2)
- Centre Recognition application Guidance Notes
- OCN NI Assessment Requirements
- OCN NI Internal Verification Requirements

If we are unable to offer your organization our services we will discuss with you the possibility of your organisation working in partnership with an experienced OCN NI Recognised Centre. If we decline your request we will provide an explanation for the decision.

#### Step 2

When you receive your Centre Recognition pack you should read through all the documents supplied before completing the application. You are asked to pay particular attention to the Guidance Notes, Assessment Requirements and Internal Verification Requirements. In the first instance you should complete and submit Application for Centre Recognition Part 1 (CA1). Part 1 asks you to confirm that your organization has the necessary resources, policies, systems and procedures required to offer OCN NI qualifications and/or endorsed courses.

This constitutes the terms and conditions of being an OCN NI Recognised Centre and forms the contract between your organization and OCN NI.

When we receive your Part 1 (CA1) application we will invoice your organisation for the Initial Centre Recognition Fee. When we have received payment we will arrange for your organization to be visited to:

- Undertake the Centre Compliance assessment
- Confirm with you the qualification/endorsed course you will be applying for approval to deliver
- Assist you with the completion of Application for Centre Recognition Part 2: Qualification/Endorsed Course Approval (CA2)

You will be informed on the day of the visit if you have demonstrated that your organisation has met the standards required. If the assessor is not satisfied that you have provided sufficient evidence they will discuss what additional evidence will be required and the timeframe for submitting this.

### Step 3

Having successfully completed Step 2 you will be asked to complete and submit the Part 2 (CA2) application: Qualification/Endorsed Course Approval. Part 2 asks for details of the qualification/s or endorsed course/s which you would like approval to deliver.

When we receive this part of your application we will review it. If we are satisfied with your overall application we will grant approval for the qualification/s or endorsed course/s in your application. If we are not satisfied with the overall application we will state our reasons and explain what amendments you would need to make to be granted approval.

*Please note that the timeframe for completing Step 3 is dependent upon what you are seeking approval to deliver. Approval to deliver existing OCN NI qualifications/endorsed courses may be completed within 3-4 weeks. Approval to deliver a new endorsed course has to incorporate the development time for the endorsed course units which may be several weeks depending upon the structure of the endorsed course. Approval to deliver a new OCN NI qualification follows a protocol that may take a number of weeks or even months to complete, depending on the complexity of the application.*

Where we approve your application we will issue your Centre with the following:

- Written notification of OCN NI Recognised Centre Status
- OCN NI Recognised Centre Certificate
- OCN NI Centre Handbook
- Details of OCN NI's support for Centres

Having been granted Centre Recognition your Centre's performance in delivering the qualifications/endorsed courses will be monitored through OCN NI's programme of Annual Assessment and Quality Review.

## 5. Required policies and procedures

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To become an OCN NI Recognised Centre you must have a number of key policies in place. We would expect all organisations to have some of these policies in place already but some organisations, particularly those that are new to delivering regulated qualifications, may have to adopt additional policies. As part of the OCN NI support for your application we can provide examples of some policy documents/statements for guidance purposes. Where you have to adopt new policies within your organisation you should factor in the time needed to do this and include this in any internal planning process or schedule.

Your Centre will need to have the following in place:

- Access to fair assessment statement
- Appeals policy for learners
- Complaints policy
- Disability discrimination policy
- Equal opportunities and diversity policy
- Health and safety policy
- Internal verification policy
- Malpractice, maladministration and plagiarism policy
- Reasonable adjustments and special consideration policy
- A contingency plan to safeguard the interests of learners should the Centre experience difficulties

## 6. Quality assurance

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The integrity of qualifications and endorsed courses hinges on the robustness of the assessment and quality assurance processes. Your organisation must be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of its arrangements for assessment and quality assurance with a particular emphasis on assessment and internal verification. The Centre Recognition process, throughout, stresses the need for your organisation to implement rigorous quality assurance processes and procedures. Please refer to the OCN NI Assessment Requirements and Internal Verification Requirements publications. If you have any queries about the requirements placed on Centres in respect of quality assurance, the OCN NI staff will be happy to answer your questions.

## 7. Professional development opportunities

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OCN NI offers a range of support for its Recognised Centres. OCN NI training, which is mandatory for new Centres is provided free of charge. Further professional development

opportunities are delivered throughout the year and these are available at very modest rates. Centres can also request bespoke training delivered in house to their staff. Information about fees and online booking can be found on the website.

## 8. Fees and Charges

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We publish a full list of our fees and charges annually. The current charges can be found on the OCN NI website under the Centre Support tab. Please read this information carefully before making an application. If you have any queries contact our Customer Service team.

## 9. OCN NI Customer Service Standards

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OCN NI is committed to providing a prompt, high quality and responsive service to our Centres and learners. To support this we have developed Customer Service Standards that illustrate this commitment and set out the levels of service your Centre can expect from OCN NI. You will find a copy of the OCN NI Customer Service Standards on our website.

## What next

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This outlines our processes and what we expect from our Centres. If you are satisfied that you have the necessary resources, systems and evidence to meet our requirements you should go to Step 1 and complete and submit the online Prospective Centre Enquiry form. If you are unsure about whether or not you would meet the standards necessary call one of our Customer Service team and we will try to answer your questions and help you make the right decision for you and your learners.

Nature of query	Who to contact	email address & tel no
General queries Qualification/course Recognition enquiries Course administration	Customer services	<a href="mailto:customerservices@ocni.org.uk">customerservices@ocni.org.uk</a> Tel: 028 90463990