



**RHS Distance Learning Provider
Approval Scheme**

February 2019



Inspiring everyone to grow

RHS Registered Charity Number No. 222879/SC038262

RHS Distance Learning Provider Approval Scheme

About RHS Qualifications

RHS Qualifications is a nationally recognised awarding organisation offering a range of horticultural qualifications since 1893. Our qualifications have been developed to enable individuals of all ages to develop or enhance their horticultural skills and knowledge.

Introduction

Our distance learning provider approval scheme recognises organisations for outstanding delivery and tuition of RHS programmes via distance learning. Becoming an approved provider offers organisations to advertise their RHS programmes on the RHS website and a number of other benefits to boost enrolment numbers.

This scheme only applies to our theory qualifications suitable for study via distance learning, these include:

- Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth, Propagation and Development
- Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Establishment and Maintenance
- Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture
- Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth, Health and Applied Propagation
- Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Construction and Planting





Benefits of becoming an approved RHS provider

- Competitive edge with a benchmarked quality standard that will add further value to your RHS Programmes.
- Demonstrate your commitment to quality to potential learners
- Exclusive use of the RHS Approved Provider logo for use on your website, literature and marketing materials.
- Free advertising through the RHS website on the 'find a centre' tab - our qualification pages alone receive over 200,000 unique visits per year so a great opportunity to promote your programmes.
- Keep up to date and be the first to know about RHS Qualification news and developments
- Offer your learners the opportunity to sit RHS exams at a venue hosted by RHS Qualifications

How to become an approved RHS provider

To gain and maintain approval to offer RHS programmes providers need to meet and sustain the following criteria.

Examples of how the criteria can be evidenced are provided, these examples are provided to help providers gain a better understanding of acceptable sources of evidence and by no means exhaustive.

Leadership, Management Systems and Administrative Arrangements

Criteria	Guidance and possible sources of evidence
The provider's aims, policies and procedures in relation to the qualification are supported by senior management and understood by the team involved in delivery of the qualification	<p>The provider must demonstrate senior management and those involved in the qualification clearly understand and support aims, policies and procedures in relation to the qualification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational chart • Named person(s) with overall responsibility
There are procedures in place to ensure effective communication systems between all levels of staff and in all directions (including staff who work remotely or satellite sites)	<p>The provider can describe what methods of communication are in place to ensure effective communication channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal intranet • Email circulation • 1:1 meetings • Team meetings – Agenda/Minutes • Standardisation meetings – Agenda/Minutes
<p>There are documented policies including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaints procedure - Diversity and Equality - Conflicts of interest 	<p>The provider can demonstrate documents are reviewed and updated regularly and available to learners.</p> <p>Policies to be reviewed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints procedure • Diversity and Equality
Learners' personal data is collected and held in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, including Data Protection Act 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data protection policy • Database security arrangements
There's a process in place to notify RHS Qualifications of any changes in relation to the delivery of the learning resources which may affect the provider's ability to meet RHS distance learning provider approval criteria	<p>The provider can demonstrate process in place to notify RHS Qualifications and all staff involved are aware of this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented processes • Record of communication with RHS
Suitable arrangements are in place if the provider resells any RHS programmes through another provider	<p>The provider must demonstrate the arrangements in place with the provider reselling RHS programmes to ensure learners are not disadvantaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of resellers • Contracts/Memorandum of Understanding • Evidence of monitoring and reviewing activity of reseller in line with providers policies

Resources	
Criteria	Guidance and possible sources of evidence*
There are appropriately qualified and competent staff with the necessary knowledge and skills involved in the delivery of the programme	<p>All those involved in the delivery or development of programme materials to hold horticultural qualification or relevant industry experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff CVs and CPD records • Copies of relevant certificates • A list of those staff involved in delivery of the programme
There are arrangements in place with those involved in delivery or development of programme material who are sub-contacted	<p>The provider must demonstrate what arrangements are in place with those who are involved in programme delivery or development of materials but not employed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of sub-contracted staff and role • Sub-contractor agreements/contracts
A staff induction programme is established	<p>The provider must demonstrate the induction process of new staff to ensure they are introduced to their role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction policy • Induction documents/checklist • Staff handbook
Staff performance is regularly reviewed	<p>The provider must demonstrate effective review of staff performance (including sub-contractors and volunteers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training/CPD plans • Copies of appropriate meetings
Staff have sufficient time and appropriate resources to carry out their role effectively	<p>All those involved in the delivery of the programme must have sufficient time to carry out their role in comparison to the number of learners studying the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of staff:learner ratio
Suitable accommodation used for the purposes of RHS exams (if applicable)	<p>The provider must provide details of the venue where RHS Examinations will be held</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images of venue • Examination procedure • Secure storage facilities for examination papers

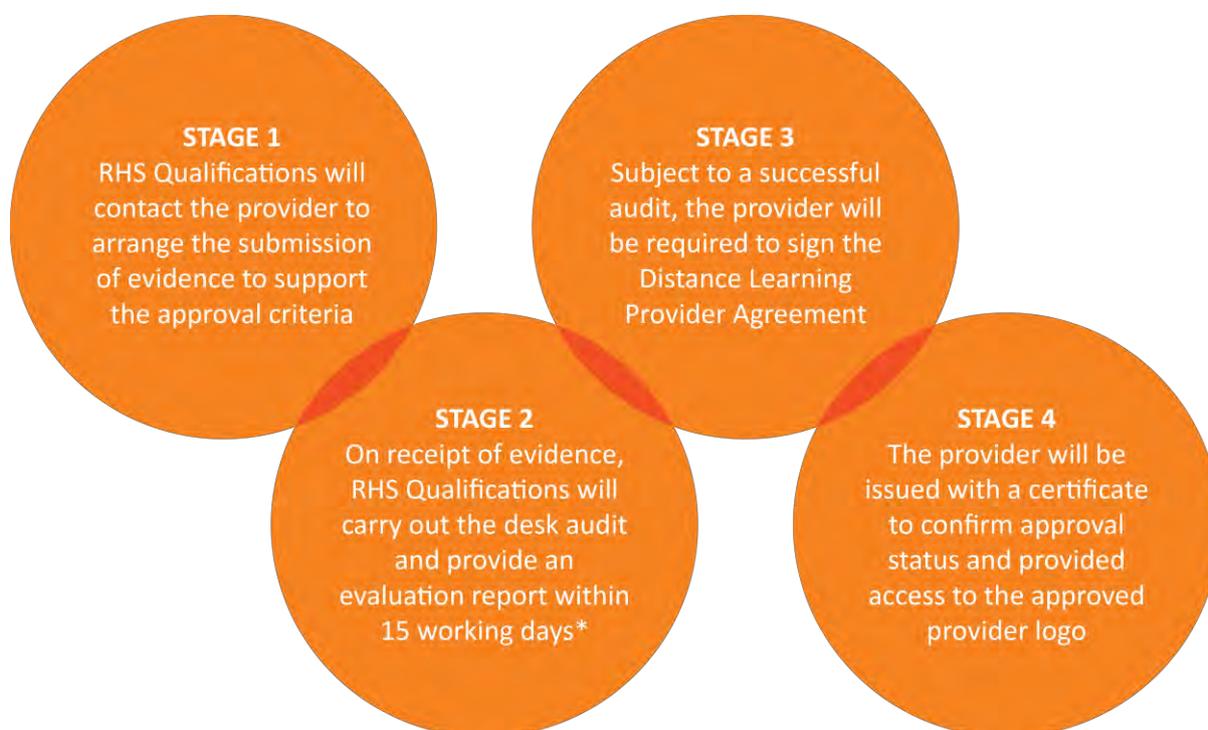
Programme content and Quality Assurance

Criteria	Guidance and possible sources of evidence*
Information, advice and guidance about the qualification is provided to potential learners and learners registered throughout the programme	<p>The provider can demonstrate learners are provided with necessary advice and guidance about the qualification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction materials • Learner Handbook • Support services available • Methods of communication between learner, tutor and provider
Programmes are supported by appropriate learning resources which are accessible to registered learners	<p>The provider to provide evidence of resources that are available to learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual learning environment • Webinars • Videos • Learner/qualification handbooks • Hand-outs
All learning resources meet qualification assessment criteria	<p>The provider can demonstrate that all programme materials contain clear, suitable and relevant content in line with the current qualification syllabus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification handbooks • Online materials
Learning resources are reviewed and updated accordingly	<p>The provider can demonstrate resources are reviewed and an identified procedure in place if changes to the syllabus occur.</p>
Ensure promotion of the programme provides clear and accurate information and does not mislead learners	<p>The provider can demonstrate and provide examples of marketing and promotional material to ensure clear and accurate information is displayed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Flyers • Publication material • Social media/blogs
Information on how to undertake RHS Qualification exams are clearly stated and promoted by the provider	<p>The provider can demonstrate that learners are provided with clear and accurate information regarding RHS exams and necessary support is provided to the learner.</p>
Programmes are reviewed, analysed and any improvements are implemented	<p>The provider can demonstrate programme delivery and its materials are regularly reviewed and analysed. If necessary any improvements are made in a timely manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner survey/feedback • Quality/continuous improvement plans • Monitoring and review records • Other feedback

*Possible sources of evidence are given as examples and not intended to be exhaustive.

Approval Process

Approval will take place in the form of a desk audit, however RHS Qualifications may decide to carry out a visit to the provider's location if necessary. Providers seeking approval should complete and submit an application form to RHS Qualifications, on receipt of the form the following will take place:



*The desk audit will not commence until all evidence has been submitted by the provider. Once the audit has commenced we aim to respond within 15 working days.

Insufficient evidence to meet approval criteria

As part of the desk audit, RHS Qualifications will review all evidence to ensure the provider satisfactorily meets the approval criteria. Where a provider doesn't meet the approval criteria, the provider will be issued with an action plan which will be clearly documented in the evaluation report.

Approval will not be granted until the auditor is happy all actions and approval criteria have been satisfactorily met. During this time the provider must not offer any tuition or learning resources to learners which make reference to RHS or that they lead to the achievement of an RHS Qualification.

Where an approved provider doesn't comply with the approval criteria, RHS Qualifications will issue to the provider an action plan for immediate completion to ensure they sustain the approval criteria. Depending up on the severity and likely impact on learners, RHS Qualifications may withdraw the provider's approval status.

Annual Review and Monitoring

On an annual basis, the provider will be required to submit a sample of evidence to RHS Qualifications for review to ensure the provider remains compliant with the approval criteria. In addition, RHS Qualifications will carry out other monitoring activities throughout the year.

Distance Learning Provider Agreement

Any approved provider offering programmes leading to RHS Qualifications will need to sign a Distance Learning Provider Agreement. This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of the provider and their dealings with RHS Qualifications. The agreement must be signed by an authoritative individual and will remain in place until terminated by either party.

Third parties/Sub-contractors

Providers must declare details of any third parties/sub-contractors that market, re-sell or use learning resources produced by the provider seeking approval. There is no requirement for each third party/sub-contractor to submit an application as the provider obtaining the approval must assume responsibility and ensure that any third parties and sub-contractors fully comply with the approval criteria and conditions set out in the Distance Learning Provider Agreement.

If it is found that one of the third parties/sub-contractors fail to comply with the criteria or conditions in the agreement, the approved provider as a whole may be affected.

Approval fees

Initial approval:

The DLP approval fee applies to those providers seeking approval to offer RHS Qualifications via distance learning. This fee covers the cost of one desk based review.

Initial desk-based audit:

To offer one RHS Qualification Level:	£550 (one review of materials)
To offer two RHS Qualification Levels:	£750 (one review of materials)
Additional desk based audits:	£350 per review

If the desk-based audit requires the review of additional evidence, RHS Qualifications may decide to visit the provider, where this is the case the following fee will apply:

Provider visit fee:	£350 (plus expenses* up to a max of £200)
---------------------	---

DLP Annual fee:

The annual fee is payable on the anniversary of the provider's approval date to retain RHS approved DLP status. RHS Qualifications invoice providers before the anniversary of the approval date.

Annual fee:	£450
-------------	------

DLP Qualification extension:

The following approval fee applies to any RHS approved DLP wishing to extend their offer:

Additional level approval for existing DLP:	£350 (one review of materials)
---	--------------------------------

For further information

Please do not hesitate in contacting us if you have any questions or would like us to talk through the criteria or scheme in more detail.

E: qualifications@rhs.org.uk

T: 01483 226500