



Sharing the best in Gardening

## **Application to become an RHS Approved Centre - Frequently Asked Questions**

Is it only colleges that you approve to offer the qualifications?

Any appropriate organisation can apply to become an approved centre providing that they meet the criteria. As well as land-based and further education colleges, we currently have approved centres in adult education centres, nurseries, private horticultural training companies and gardens open to the public.

How long does it take for the approval process?

Once we have received your application, we allocate a Centre Verifier who will visit the centre. The role of the Centre Verifier is to offer advice and guidance as well as to review the resources available. The time for the process depends upon how quickly a visit can be scheduled, and whether any actions need to be completed in order to meet the requirements.

Do I have to be approved if I want to teach the qualifications only?

Centres only need to be approved if they play a part in delivering the qualification. That includes acting as an examination centre for the theory qualifications or assessing practical skills. It is possible to just teach towards the qualifications without being an approved centre.

Why do I need to be approved?

The RHS awarding organisation is recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) in England and Northern Ireland, and by the Welsh Government in Wales. The regulators require that awarding organisations have a written agreement in place with any centre that undertakes any part of the delivery of a qualification.

Can I offer the qualifications as soon as I have been approved?

It is necessary to be approved before any assessments can be conducted for practical skills qualifications or before any examinations can be hosted. It is recommended that centres complete the approval process well before they wish to start conducting assessments to ensure that they have access to the appropriate guidance material.

Can I offer just the theory qualifications or do I need to offer all the qualifications in order that I can be an approved centre?

Centres can choose which qualifications they offer providing that they have been approved to offer them. Centres can offer courses for just theory qualifications, or just practical skills qualifications or for both.

Do I have to enter students for the February and June examinations?

There is no requirement to enter candidates for both examination sessions or for all qualifications or units. Centres may choose which examination sessions and units they register candidates for.

If I am an approved centre, do I have to accept external candidates for examinations?

There is no requirement for a centre to accept external candidates for examinations, but we encourage centres to do so if they are able to.

Are there a minimum number of students that I have to enter for the exams or for practical assessments?

We do not set minimum numbers of students for examination enrolments or practical assessments. We welcome all centres large and small, and realise that centres sometimes need to start in a small way and build up their courses and student numbers.

How much is the approval fee and how long does approval last?

There is a centre approval fee of £300 (increasing to £350 from 1 September 2013). Approval lasts for three years. After three years, centres must re-apply for approval and pay another approval fee.

Is there an annual administration fee or are any other fees payable?

There is no annual administration fee payable. Centres are invoiced for the unit registration fee for each candidate that they register for a unit.

Can I use the RHS logo on any marketing material once I have been approved?

RHS approved centres are entitled to use the 'RHS Qualifications Approved Centre' logo on their printed literature, signage or on their website. This logo must be used in accordance with the RHS guidelines. Approved centres are not allowed to use any other RHS logo.

Do you provide any other marketing support to approved centres?

All promotional activities for RHS qualifications direct potential students to the list of RHS approved centres on our website. This list is downloadable and includes contact details and links to the approved centre's website. Approved centres are able to request supplies of leaflets on RHS qualifications for use with their own promotional activities.