

UKBA definition of “approved qualification”

Paragraph 235 and 236 of the UKBA’s document “Guidance for sponsor applications - Tiers 2, 4 and 5” are as follows:

Courses must also lead to an approved qualification. An approved qualification for UKBA purposes is one which is:

- *validated by Royal Charter; or*
- *awarded by a recognised body on the recognised bodies list operated by DIUS (see link <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/recognisedukdegrees/index.cfm?fuseaction=institutes.list>); or*
- *recognised by one or more recognised bodies via a formal articulation agreement with the awarding body; or*
- *approved at level 3 or above in the National Qualifications Framework operated by the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority; or*
- *approved at an equivalent level in the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework; or*
- *approved at an equivalent level by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales; or*
- *approved at an equivalent level by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland; or*
- *an overseas qualification, on which UK NARIC is able to advise on its validity, with a level equivalent to level 3 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.*

Please note that pre-sessional courses must meet the full requirements of the relevant Tier 4 category in respect of the level of the course, but it is not necessary for the course to lead to a recognised qualification.

In exceptional cases, and without prejudice to the above Frameworks, we will also accept qualifications outside this definition where they have been assessed to offer an educational experience at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 3 or above by our own approved accreditation bodies. Education providers offering such programmes will nonetheless need to get independent validation for their programmes within the following 12 months so that we can get to a position where all international students coming to the United Kingdom for their studies can be guaranteed to be studying for a formally recognised qualification.

The 12 month period mentioned in paragraph 236 refers to the period 31 March 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Document retrieved from <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pbsguidance/> on 17 Aug 2009.