



QA Level 2 Award in  
**Principles of  
Safe Handling  
and Administration  
of Medication (RQF)**  
Qualification Specification

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## Key qualification information

Qualification number	603/5169/X
Operational start date	31 Oct 2019
Guided Learning Hours (GLH):	6
Total Qualification Time (TQT):	7
Number of units:	1
Assessment methods:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory assessment/multiple choice question paper: 1 x 20 question paper (minimum score 14)</li> </ul>



## Quallsafe Awards

Not only is Quallsafe Awards (QA) one of the largest Awarding Organisations (AO) in the UK, we are also the biggest AO for First Aid qualifications, making us an extremely trusted and recognisable name that employers look for when selecting a training provider.

We are recognised and regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Qualifications Wales and the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). This means we can offer Centres an extensive range of qualification suites including First Aid; Prehospital Care; Health and Safety; Mental Health First Aid; Food Safety; Fire Safety; Education and Training; Manual Handling; Health and Social Care.

With a specialist team of subject matter experts on hand to support our Centres, including A&E Consultants, doctors, paramedics, nurses, psychology professionals and specialists in the other sectors such as mental health, you can be confident that you are truly working with the industry experts.

## Qualification overview

This qualification forms part of the QA Health and Social Care suite of qualifications. The qualification and learning outcomes are based on the recommendations of:

- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
- Skills for Health
- National Occupational Standards

This qualification should develop Learners' knowledge and understanding of different types of medication and their use, relevant legislation and record keeping requirements.

This qualification specification provides information for Centres about the delivery of the QA Level 2 Award in Principles of Safe Handling and Administration of Medication (RQF) and includes the unit information, assessment methods and quality assurance arrangements.

### Objective

The objective of the qualification is to give Learners an introduction into the safe handling and administration of medication, to recognise current legislation and guidance, the different types of medication and the storage and disposal of medication.

### Purpose

The purpose of this qualification is for anyone working in, aiming to start work or looking to refresh their knowledge of the safe administration of medication in a health and social care setting.

### Intended audience

This qualification is for all Learners working in, or wanting to work in a health and social care environment such as support workers and care workers.



## Structure

This qualification contains 1 mandatory unit with a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 7 hours. Full details of this unit are in *Appendix 1*.

Learners must complete all assessments in the unit successfully within the registration period to achieve the qualification. The maximum period to achieve this qualification, including any referrals is 4 weeks.

TQT is the total number of hours required for a Learner to achieve this qualification. It has 2 elements:

- Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is the time a Learner is being taught and assessed under the immediate guidance of a Trainer/Assessor, which for this qualification is 6 GLH (minimum), and
- The number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation and study, including assessment, as directed by, but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of a Trainer, e.g. pre-course reading, which for this qualification is 1 hour

## Other units

No other units can be combined to count towards the QA Level 2 Award in Principles of Safe Handling and Administration of Medication (RQF).

## Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL is not allowed for this qualification.

## Entry requirements

Learners must be at least 16 years old on the first day of the training.

There are no other formal entry requirements but to benefit from the learning we advise that Learners have a minimum of Level 1 in literacy.

## Progression

Some possible routes of progression are:

- Level 2 Certificate in Health and Social Care (RQF)
- Level 3 Certificate in Health and Social Care (RQF)

## Requalification requirements

We recommend you refresh your training every 3 years.

# Qualification approval requirements

Quallsafe Awards requires the Centre:

- To have appropriate policies, systems and procedures in place
- To appoint suitable individuals from their personnel team to train, assess and quality assure their QA qualifications
- To have suitable and adequate venues, equipment and learning resources



In order to secure and maintain approval from QA, Centres need a minimum staffing requirement for each qualification suite they deliver, which for this qualification is:

<b>One Trainer/Assessor</b>	Responsible for the delivery and assessment of qualifications
<b>One Internal Quality Assurer</b>	Responsible for quality assuring the delivery, assessment and awarding of this qualification

Qualsafe Awards requires the Centre staff to read and understand QA's key policies and procedures, and to abide by their contents.

## Trainers

All Trainers should have the skills, knowledge and experience to be able to teach and demonstrate the subject. Each Trainer must be approved by Qualsafe Awards and provide evidence of:

1. A relevant vocational qualification (see *Vocational qualifications* table)
2. A formal teaching/training qualification (see *Teaching qualifications* table)

Vocational qualifications	
Registered Pharmacist, Nurse, Paramedic or Doctor	Assistant/Associate Practitioner in health and social care settings (Skills for Health career framework level 4)
Ofqual regulated Level 3 Award in the Safe Administration of Lifesaving Medication	Level 3 or above Certificate or Diploma in a related subject such as Health and Social Care. Learners must have attained a minimum of a Level 3 Unit in the Safe administration of Medication.
Degree or Dip HE in a relevant subject	Ofqual regulated Level 3 Award in the Safe Handling of Medication
Teaching qualifications	
B.Ed, M.Ed	City and Guilds Teacher's Certificate or equivalent
PGCE, PCET, Cert Ed	Ofqual Regulated Level 3 Award and Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training
NVQ Level 3 in Learning and Development	PTTLS, CTTLS, DTTLs
NVQ Level 4 in Learning and Development	Further Education Teacher's Certificate

(If relevant qualifications or experience do not appear on this list, please provide us with details as these alternatives could be acceptable.)

Trainers are expected to keep up to date with the subject area and provide evidence of continuing professional development (CPD).

## Assessors

There is no requirement for a separate Assessor when delivering this qualification. Once Trainers have been approved to deliver the qualification, they can assess Learners.

It is best practice for Trainers to hold a formal (regulated) assessing qualification or attend relevant Assessor CPD training with an Awarding Organisation (AO). However, as a minimum, Trainers must follow the principles outlined in the current *National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development: Standard 9 – Assess learner achievement*. Centres must be able to prove this.



## Internal Quality Assurers

Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) must be vocationally competent and have a relevant vocational qualification (see *Vocational qualifications* table) **and**:

- Hold (or be working towards) a quality assurance qualification **or**
- Have attended QA approved IQA training relevant to this qualification **or**
- Hold an assessing qualification and follow the principles outlined in the current *National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development: Standard 11 – Internally monitor and maintain the quality of assessment* (Centres must be able to prove this)

It is best practice for IQAs to hold a formal (regulated) IQA qualification and to hold, or be working towards, a formal (regulated) teaching qualification

Full details of the Centre's requirements for internal quality assurance are in the *QA Centre Quality Assurance Guidance*.

Note: IQAs cannot quality assure a course for which they were the Trainer and/or Assessor.

## Venue and equipment

Quality training involves using premises conducive to learning and it is a Centre's responsibility to make sure all venues used for training and assessment purposes are suitable and adequate – whether these are hired or in-house training rooms. They must also comply with all current legislation.

In addition, it is important to use a wide range of equipment and learning resources to support delivery.

As a minimum, Centres must make sure their venues, equipment and other resources include:

Area:	Requirements:
<b>Training venue</b>	The training venue must meet acceptable health and safety standards and be conducive to learning, with sufficient: Size, floor surfaces, seating, writing surfaces, toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting, heating, access, exits, cleanliness, absence of distracting noise. The theory assessment space should allow Learners to sit at least 1 metre apart to prevent collusion.
<b>Audio visual (AV) equipment and training aids</b>	Sufficient AV equipment and training aids to facilitate learning using varying teaching methods.
<b>Learning materials</b>	Provide Learners with clear and accurate reference books/handouts covering the topics included in the qualification.
<b>Medications and documentation</b>	Examples of inhalers (trainhaler), tablets, capsules, liquid medication, Medicine Administration Record (MAR)

Note: Learners should sit at least 1 metre apart to prevent collusion during the theory/multiple choice question paper assessment.





## Course/Centre administration

### Registering Learners

Register Learners with Qualsafe Awards in accordance with the guidance in the *QA Centre Handbook*.

### Certification

After a Learner has completed an assessment, unit or qualification, whether they have passed or not, Centres must enter the details and assessment results on the Customer Portal at: [www.qualsafeawards.org](http://www.qualsafeawards.org)

Centres will be given login details and guidance on using the Customer Portal when they are approved to deliver a QA qualification.

The Learner receives a certificate on achieving this qualification.

QA have developed a verification tool that means the validity of every certificate can be verified online. This verification tool can be found on the QA website.

The certificate date is the date the Learner achieves the unit.

## Delivery and support

### Learner to Trainer ratio

To maintain the quality of training and assessment, make sure the class ratio is no more than 16 Learners to 1 Trainer. The assessment space should allow Learners to sit at least 1 metre apart to prevent collusion during the theory/multiple choice question paper assessment. Never allow more Learners on the course than you can cater for during the assessment.

Note: While this ratio of 16 Learners to 1 Trainer is strongly recommended for the QA Level 2 Award in Principles of Safe Handling and Administration of Medication (RQF) qualification, Centres may apply to QA to extend this ratio to 24 Learners to 1 Trainer if there are no practical assessments/skills tests. You must demonstrate that:

- Learners will not be disadvantaged
- The Trainer is experienced in this subject area with a low Trainer risk rating
- The venue has sufficient assessment space to allow Learners to sit at least 1 metre apart (to prevent collusion during the multiple choice question paper assessment)

All requests **must be approved** by Qualsafe Awards **before** any increase in Trainer/Learner ratio.

Note: You should never allow more Learners on the course than you can cater for during the assessment.

### Delivery plan

Qualsafe Awards provides Centres with a complimentary course programme and detailed lesson plans, which are carefully designed to meet the objective of this qualification and the needs of Learners, making sure Learners are adequately prepared for the assessments.

Centres not using QA lesson plans, which are created and provided free, must submit their own delivery plan and have it approved by us **before** delivering this qualification. Note: Charges may apply. The delivery plan should:

- Include a course timetable and detailed lesson plans, clearly showing the required subjects and criteria/ learning outcomes are covered and the 6 guided learning hours are met
- Be carefully designed to meet the objective of this qualification and the needs of Learners, making sure Learners are adequately prepared for the assessments
- Be emailed to: [info@qualsafeawards.org](mailto:info@qualsafeawards.org)



## Learning materials

Centres must provide each Learner with suitable reference materials that cover the lesson plans and learning outcomes for this qualification.

## Ongoing support

Qualsafe Awards Centres should provide appropriate levels of support to Learners throughout the qualification. The purpose of the support is to:

- Assess knowledge and competence in relation to learning outcomes and the detailed assessment criteria of the unit within the qualification, see *Appendix 1*
- Give Learners feedback on their progress and how they might be able to improve

# Assessment

## Methods

Qualsafe Awards has devised assessment tools to make sure Learners are assessed against the required knowledge, skills and understanding, as detailed in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria shown in the *Appendix 1*. Centres should download all assessment papers from the Customer Portal in advance of the course. For each unit there are:

- Theory assessment/multiple choice question papers – there is 1 paper per unit for each Learner and Learners should answer all the questions under ‘examination’ conditions, see *QA Multiple Choice Question Paper Guidelines*:
  - Maximum time allowed is 30 minutes Minimum mark is 14 out of 20 to be considered for an overall ‘Pass’.

Note: Centres should download all assessment papers from the Customer Portal in advance of the course.

## Access to assessment

Qualsafe Awards is committed to equality when designing the assessments for this qualification. Centres can make sure they do not unfairly exclude the assessment needs of a particular Learner by following the *QA Access to Assessment Policy* to determine whether it is appropriate to make a:

- Reasonable adjustment or
- Special consideration

When a reasonable adjustment is made or requested, e.g. written or theory assessment delivered verbally, Centres must complete a Reasonable Adjustment Form and send it to QA with any relevant supporting evidence. Centres should retain a copy of this form for their own records.

Learners may be eligible for special consideration if they have been affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. A Special Consideration Request Form should be completed and sent to QA for consideration along with supporting evidence prior to implementation. Centres should retain a copy of this form for their own records.

Note: If you have any suggestions for improvements, please let us know.

Learners should be informed about Centre’s and QA’s appeals procedures and how they can access these.





## Quality assurance

### Centre internal quality assurance

The Centre is required to sample a reasonable amount of assessments as part of the quality assurance of the qualification. This standardisation of assessment across Learners and Trainers is to make sure there is fairness and consistency in assessment practices. The arrangements for this should be included in the Centre's approved internal quality assurance policy.

Centres must retain all Learner documents and records for a period of 3 years and make sure these are available for review by Qualsafe Awards or our representatives, e.g. External Quality Assurers (EQAs), on request.

### Qualsafe Awards external quality assurance

Qualsafe Awards operates a system of ongoing monitoring, support and feedback for approved Centres across the United Kingdom.

QA employs a risk based model to decide the frequency of EQA activity.

Further details of the Qualsafe Awards' external quality assurance programme are available in the *QA Centre Quality Assurance Guidance*.

## Further information

### Contact us

If you have any queries or comments we would be happy to help you, contact us:

Email: [info@qualsafeawards.org](mailto:info@qualsafeawards.org)

Tel: 0845 644 3305

### Useful addresses and websites

- Qualsafe Awards, City View, 3 Wapping Road, Bradford, BD3 0ED  
[www.qualsafeawards.org/home](http://www.qualsafeawards.org/home)
- Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual):  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual)
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Accreditation:  
<http://accreditation.sqa.org.uk>
- Qualifications Wales:  
[www.qualificationswales.org](http://www.qualificationswales.org)
- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS):  
<https://www.rpharms.com>
- Skills for Care:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)
- Skills for Health:  
[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE):  
<https://www.nice.org.uk>



## Appendix 1 – Qualification Unit

The QA Level 2 Award in Principles of Safe Handling and Administration of Medication has 1 unit that Learners are required to complete in order to achieve the qualification.

Title:	The Principles of Safe Handling and Administration of Medication	
GLH:	6	
Level:	2	
Learning outcomes <i>The Learner will:</i>	Assessment criteria <i>The Learner can:</i>	Indicative content
<b>1. Understand the benefits and risks of taking and/or not taking medication</b>	1.1 Define the term 'medication'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of the term medication</li> </ul>
	1.2 State the benefits of medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of medication, e.g. treatment of medical conditions, relief of symptoms</li> </ul>
	1.3 Identify the risks of taking medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks associated with taking medication, e.g. side effects, risk of drug dependency</li> </ul>
	1.4 Identify the risks of not taking medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks associated with not taking medication, e.g. deterioration of health</li> </ul>
<b>2. Know legislation and guidance for the safe handling and administration of medication</b>	2.1 Identify current legislation and guidance requirements for the safe handling and administration of medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation relating to the safe handling and administration of medication, e.g. Misuse of Drugs Regulations (2001), Health and Social Care Act (2012), Health Act (2006), NICE guidance.</li> </ul>
	2.2 Outline the requirements for patient confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current legislation, e.g. Data Protection Act (2018)</li> <li>• Following workplace policies and procedures</li> <li>• Information sharing and disclosure</li> </ul>
<b>3. Know about common types of medication</b>	3.1 Identify the different legal classifications of medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categories of medication, e.g. Prescription only Medicine (POM), Controlled Drug (CD)</li> </ul>
	3.2 State the types of medication used in health and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medication types, e.g. analgesics, diuretics, laxatives</li> </ul>
	3.3 State the different routes for the administration of medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different routes for the administration of medicines, e.g. oral, injection, topically</li> </ul>



<b>4. Understand the roles and responsibilities in the use of medication</b>	4.1 Recognise roles and responsibilities in the use of medications in health and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role and responsibilities of those supporting the use of medication, e.g. record keeping, reporting, taking part in training.</li> <li>• Role and responsibilities of the workplace, e.g. risk assessment, policies and procedures</li> </ul>
	4.2 Identify the process for gaining consent before administering medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of consent</li> <li>• Right to refuse</li> <li>• Covert administration</li> <li>• Recording</li> <li>• Follow policies and procedures</li> </ul>
<b>5. Know how to prepare, store and safely dispose of medication</b>	5.1 State the preparation for the administration of medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow procedures</li> <li>• Checks to be undertaken-‘rights’</li> </ul>
	5.2 Identify the requirements for recording the use of medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace policies and procedures</li> <li>• Medicine Administration Record (MAR)</li> <li>• Good record keeping, e.g. accurate, clearly written, factual</li> </ul>
	5.3 Outline the actions to take in the event of an adverse reaction following the administration of medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse drug reaction (ADR)</li> <li>• Recording</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• Common reactions</li> </ul>
	5.4 Identify the safe storage of medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe storage of medications, e.g. accessible to appropriate individual, secured, temperature</li> </ul>
	5.5 State the procedure for the safe disposal of medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow workplace policies and procedures</li> <li>• Why medicines need to be disposed of, e.g. expiry, change in prescription</li> <li>• Recording</li> <li>• Destruction</li> <li>• Medicines return book</li> </ul>

Note: Full and detailed qualification content is available to approved Centres in the form of lesson plans and a training presentation which are provided free of charge.



**[www.qualsafeawards.org](http://www.qualsafeawards.org)**

Tel: 0845 644 3305

Email: [info@qualsafeawards.org](mailto:info@qualsafeawards.org)