

# LASER Access to HE Centre Approval Policy and Procedures

## Policy Statement

Any centre wishing to offer Laser Learning Awards (LASER) provision must first be approved by LASER.

LASER is fully committed to doing everything it reasonably can to maintain its own compliance with regulatory authorities' requirements and takes a risk-based approach to decision-making in relation to approval of centres. As a result, application for approval does not guarantee that approval will be given.

This policy sets out key factors which will be taken into consideration when an application for approval is received by LASER.

## Policy Relevance

This policy outlines the key considerations which will be given to applications for approval by LASER and gives some of the reasons why an application may be refused.

## Policy Responsibility and Review

This policy is the responsibility of the Head of Access and will be reviewed by April 2028 at the latest.

## Applications for Centre Approval

Applications for approval of a centre to deliver LASER provision are made via the LASER website ([www.laser-awards.org.uk](http://www.laser-awards.org.uk)) initially, and then by following the procedure you will be given.

The following considerations will be considered when reviewing an application for centre approval:

- Centre's resources including physical, professional and financial, relevant to provision to be offered.
- Knowledge, understanding, qualifications and experience of centre staff relevant to provision to be offered.
- Centre staff's understanding of the issues and requirements around general qualification regulation and delivery, assessment and awarding of qualifications.
- Any specific regulatory requirements relevant to the provision being offered, and the centre's ability to meet these requirements (eg QAA Licensing Regulations).
- Completeness and accuracy of application, including all required supplementary information.
- Ease of communication at an appropriate level with, and responsiveness of, centre staff.
- Any previous history of LASER working with the centre, any centre staff, or any associated centre.
- Ability of a centre and/or individuals connected with it to comply with actions set as part of any previous approval application.
- Any previous suspension or withdrawal of approval of the centre making the application or any associated centres, or any centre with which the head of centre or other contact has been associated, by any Awarding Organisation.
- Ability of the centre and individuals connected with it to represent the LASER name and uphold its reputation.

Approval may be deferred subject to certain conditions being met within given timescales, eg development of appropriate policies, or staff training. Any number of conditions may be set, as appropriate and necessary. Where this involves any extra visits to the centre by LASER, the centre will be charged at the rates set out in the current LASER Pricing Policy and published on the LASER website. LASER staff may be able to provide development support, at the rates set out in the current LASER Pricing Policy and published on the LASER website. All fees are non-refundable.

Approval may be refused, at LASER's discretion, at any stage of the application process, including but not limited to any of the following reasons, which may rely upon information received in confidence (but which shall not be shared with the relevant centre) for example from regulatory authorities or other Awarding Organisations:

- Centre's failure to meet the stated requirements (regulatory or otherwise) for the provision to be offered, eg insufficient resources such as staff with relevant qualifications and experience.
- Centre staff's lack of understanding of the issues and requirements around general qualification regulation and delivery, assessment and awarding of qualifications, as relevant to the provision to be offered.

- Failure to disclose all relevant information at the time of application or at any time during the application process, eg information about withdrawal or suspension of approval of centre and/or associated individuals, by any Awarding Organisation.
- Difficulty in establishing positive and responsive communication at an appropriate level with centre staff.
- Previous suspension or withdrawal of approval of centre and/or any individuals connected with it, by any Awarding Organisation.
- Failure to comply with actions or conditions set within set timescales.
- Failure to pay invoices within the given timeframe.
- Where, acting reasonably, LASER has doubts that the centre and/or any individuals connected with it is able or willing to comply with any regulatory and/or other requirements placed upon it.
- Where, acting reasonably, LASER believes that the integrity of its awards and/or its reputation may be at risk by association with the centre and/or any individuals connected with it.
- Where, acting reasonably, LASER believes the centre and/or any individuals connected with it may compromise the ability of LASER to comply with any legal and/or regulatory requirements upon LASER.

Notwithstanding that LASER will endeavour to comply with any relevant legal requirements or regulatory requirements, whether any approval is given or refused by LASER is ultimately at LASER's discretion and the factors listed above are not exhaustive. The reputation of LASER (and the merit of any LASER provision(s) awarded) depends in part on the centres and individuals involved.

When considering any application, the factors listed above are not exhaustive and LASER shall have the sole right to determine if there are any other relevant factors to be considered and the extent to which any centre has met them. This could include factors that only become apparent to LASER during the application process. If there are such other relevant factors, then LASER will not be obliged to provide the relevant centre with prior notice before making its determination.

In addition, if a centre is applying in circumstances where LASER's approval had previously been withdrawn or refused for any reason, then there may be further steps or criteria to be met, as determined by LASER.

Where an application is refused, the reason for refusal may be given but no further details are required to be supplied.

Where an application is refused before the application fee is payable, no fee will be charged. Where an application is refused after the application fee has been paid, no refund will be given.

Any information which comes to light after an application has been made, or after approval has been granted, which shows the original application to have included false, incomplete or misleading information, may result in the immediate withdrawal of approval of the centre and any individuals who have submitted the false or incomplete information, and/or other sanctions.

### Appeals

LASER Access to HE operates an Appeals Policy and Procedure, available on its website, which may be invoked under certain circumstances, subject to the appeal being within the scope of the policy. Please refer to the LASER Access Appeals Policy and Procedure for further details.

### Policy Approval

Approved internally by CEO, 8 June 2023

Approved externally by AQDC, 8 June 2023

Latest review date: April 2028 for approval at AQDC in June 2028

#### **Please note:**

*This policy is specifically relating to delivery of Access to HE qualifications, for corresponding policies relevant for all other LASER and Trident Awards (security industry qualifications) please click here: <https://laser-awards.org.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/>*