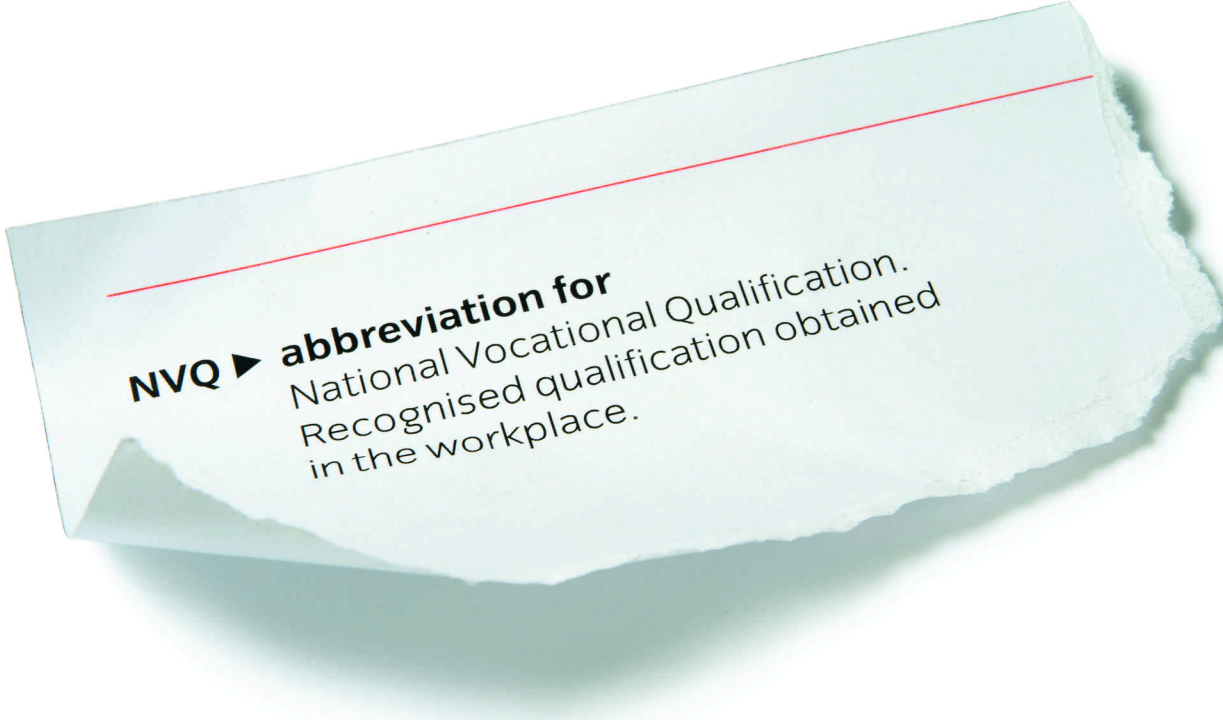


A learner's guide to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)



NVQ ► **abbreviation for**
National Vocational Qualification.
Recognised qualification obtained
in the workplace.

A learner's guide to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

Have you ever tried to prove to someone, say a potential employer, exactly what you are capable of? Without physically demonstrating, this can be a difficult task. However, there are qualifications which help you to prove your abilities, skills and competencies to employers, and what's more, you can do these qualifications whilst you work.

Welcome to the world of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

What is an NVQ?

An NVQ is an award that gives you credit for what you do in your job role on a day to day basis. Unlike traditional qualifications which rely on teaching and exams, NVQs use your performance of your job as the basis for assessment. If you are competent in your job, you pass. If you are not, you fail.

There is an NVQ for almost every occupational area: everything from engineering and construction to health and social care; business to hairdressing and travel to telecommunications.

It doesn't matter how experienced you are either. NVQs are available at five levels, making them suitable for everyone from school leavers to senior managers.

To find out if we've got an NVQ in your area, log on to our website www.city-and-guilds.co.uk or call Customer Relations on the number below.

How will I benefit?

An NVQ proves that you can do your job - not just talk about it. To achieve an NVQ you may have to perform tasks that you don't usually need to, so you will be confident that you are equipped to handle anything your profession has to throw at you. You don't even need to leave your regular workplace, and there is no set time limit for completion.

NVQs are recognised by employers nationwide, and they provide you with a clear route for improving your skills and progressing up the careers ladder.

How are NVQs structured?

NVQs are made up of units. These are made up of a list of requirements, each of which you must fulfil in order to pass the unit. You will need to pass a certain number of units to complete the award.

Units come in two types: mandatory and optional. Mandatory units cover the key areas of the profession and must be taken to pass the award, whereas optional units can be chosen by you to suit your particular responsibilities or job role.

Who is involved?

This is where it can get a little confusing. Some of the commonplace jargon of NVQs is explained below.

- **Candidates** are those taking the qualification - you.
- **Centres** are approved by us to offer NVQs. This might be your employer, or it might be a local college or training provider. Regardless, you do the qualification in the workplace, the centre only administers it.

- **Assessors** are appointed by approved centres, and must themselves be qualified. These are the people who observe you at work and rate your abilities and competence.

- **Internal verifiers** are appointed by centres to ensure that the assessors carry out their work consistently and properly, and ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly.

- **External verifiers** are appointed by us to carry out periodic inspections of centres.

Can I get any help while I'm doing an NVQ?

Yes. Your assessor is also your advisor and can help you with assembling a portfolio of evidence if you need to do one. You can also get help from your employer, as they will probably be sponsoring you and will want you to pass.

In addition to this, we have developed www.smartscreen.co.uk a website dedicated to providing online learning and support to help you achieve your award.

How do I find out more?

You can find out more by contacting your nearest City & Guilds approved centre. Please call our Customer Relations team to find your nearest one.

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Key points

- Qualify by doing your job - no need to attend classes
- Obtain proof of your skills and abilities
- Recognised by employers across the UK and beyond
- Available in most vocational areas