

Information for Learners: Qualifications Explained

What's a 'Regulated' Qualification?

A Regulated qualification is a qualification proven to have the highest level of quality and is approved by a government body – Ofqual (England), QIW (Wales), SQA (Scotland) or CCEA (Northern Ireland). The certificate you receive will display the logo of one of these UK government official Regulators. Regulated qualifications in England appear on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (<https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>)

What's the difference between Regulated and Non-Regulated Qualifications?

Non-regulated qualifications can offer valuable learning opportunities and are often labelled 'CPD' courses or may be promoted as 'Endorsed' by one or more organisations.

They are often short courses and focus on updating skills or knowledge and, unlike regulated qualifications, often do not involve formal assessment, and/or can lack independent scrutiny and quality standards.

Regulated qualifications use established standards which the provider must meet in order to be able to offer the qualification and related training, and there are strict requirements for how the qualification is delivered and assessed.

How do I know if a course is 'CPD-style' or leads to a regulated qualification?

Do your research before committing! Most providers will be honest and transparent about their credentials and whether the course leads to a regulated qualification or a CPD-style non-regulated certificate.

When choosing between regulated qualifications and CPD courses, you might want to consider the following:

- Your goals - Regulated qualifications are better for gaining credentials, while CPD is better for sharpening skills.
- Time commitment - Regulated qualifications often require more time, often spanning months or years. CPD courses can often be completed in days or a few weeks.
- Cost - Regulated qualifications tend to be more expensive due to their length, formality and the costs of quality assurance. CPD courses are typically cheaper or
- Assessment - Regulated qualifications have formal assessments where you demonstrate your knowledge and competency. CPD courses may have more informal assessments or no assessment at all (e.g. 'attendance' at a course).
- Recognition - The certificate for regulated qualifications are widely recognised and bear the Regulator's name and logo, while CPD courses do not.
- Relevance - You should choose the option that provides training most relevant to their career goals and skill needs.

In summary, regulated qualifications are ideal for gaining credentials and in-depth training, while CPD courses are better for short, targeted skill development. You should weigh up your personal needs, resources, and goals when deciding. The key is choosing training and certification that supports your long-term career objectives.