



**CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE
GUIDANCE**
2022/23

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Please note that throughout this guidance document the terms customer and product has been used:

When we refer to customer this also includes:

- Students
- Learners
- Stakeholders
- Funders

When we refer to product this could include:

- Curriculum
- Learning programmes
- Learning platforms
- Learning materials and resources
- Qualifications



It's not just about ideas. It's about making ideas happen."

Scott Belsky

Becoming an IOEE Centre of Excellence:

- Encourages the development of an enterprise and entrepreneurial culture;
- Recognises leading edge enterprise education and learning; and
- Supports continuous enterprise development, improvement and growth.

Benefits to the organisation on becoming approved include:

- being seen as a leading edge, premier league organisation;
- promotion and recognition by IOEE and its partners;
- providing an added benefit in the recruitment of high quality students and learners;
- being able to demonstrate and publicise your achievement;
- being able to benchmark your centre against international standards;

- being able to demonstrate to your customers that you are part of a quality assured system;
- being able to review and continuously improve how you do things;
- credibility of linking to external standards;
- having access to best practice research and standards covering enterprise and enterprise support;
- helping all stakeholders to recognise your commitment to developing an enterprise and entrepreneurial culture;
- providing the opportunity to publish research papers/reports within the IOEE
- providing your staff, students and learners with access to IOEE membership;
- providing access to international awards and qualifications; and
- providing assistance in developing enterprise and entrepreneurial led curriculum and learning programmes.

The Criteria

IOEE Centres of Excellence anticipate and understand the needs of their customers

- Criteria 1** They identify market changes and trends, changes in customer need and predict what their customers will want in the future.
- Criteria 2** They identify customer needs and priorities at all stages of their relationship with them.
- Criteria 3** They direct customers to other organisation's services when they cannot help them themselves.

IOEE Centres of Excellence deliver what businesses and learners want

- Criteria 4** They update their products and services to reflect changes in market and customer need.
- Criteria 5** Their products and services:
 - have been developed with customers' needs in mind;
 - have been developed by people with the appropriate competence;
 - contain up-to-date and correct information;
 - reflect enterprise and entrepreneurial standards; and
 - draw on best enterprise practice.
- Criteria 6** They adapt and improve their services to meet individual customers individual or learning objectives.
- Criteria 7** Their staff who deliver their service are competent to do so, remain so in a changing market, learn continually and keep abreast of new enterprise related developments.

The Criteria

IOEE Centres of Excellence are learning organisations

- Criteria 8** They follow best enterprise practice in their own planning and management.
- Criteria 9** They embrace appropriate e-commerce and new technologies.
- Criteria 10** They ensure quality in the activities that support delivery to their customers and approach this in an enterprising way.

IOEE Centres of Excellence have an enterprise culture

- Criteria 11** They encourage their staff to be imaginative and creative.
- Criteria 12** They encourage their staff make decisions for themselves.

Please note that throughout this application form the terms customer and product have been used:

When we refer to customer this also includes:

- Students
- Learners
- Stakeholders
- Funders

When we refer to products this could include:

- Curriculum
- Learning programmes
- Learning platforms
- Learning materials and resources
- Qualifications

The Application and Assessment Process

Initial Assessment

Your completed application will be passed to an assessor.

Your assessor will carry out a desk-top evaluation of your application. During the desk-top evaluation they will:

- Evaluate your statements and make judgements about whether they meet each criteria.
- Decide whether the supporting documents you have provided adequately support your statements.
- Decide which areas they wish to explore further during their site visit.
- Decide which people, staff and clients they would like to consult.

Your assessor will carry out a site visit (if required). During the site visit they will:

- Interview you and other key members of staff or subcontractors
- Consult with customers and stakeholders, either face to face or by telephone.
- Explore some aspects of your application further.
- Make notes of their findings.

If your assessor feels that you do not yet meet all the criteria in full they will complete an action plan. This:

- Clearly identifies actions to be carried out prior to centre approval;
- Includes timescales for achievement; and
- Gives specific examples to help you meet your action plan.

At an agreed date, your assessor will review how you have met the action plan. They may do this remotely, by telephone or email, or they may visit you on site.

When your assessor feels you have met the Centre of Excellence criteria, they will complete a development plan with you. This will show how you can develop your centre further so that you continue to meet the criteria in the future. Your achievement against this development plan will be used as the major part of your re-evaluation.

If you did not yet meet the criteria at the end of your site visit and failed to meet the actions and times stated on the action plan, your application will have been unsuccessful. It will be possible for you to reapply to become an IOEE Centre of Excellence upon agreement of an additional fee. This fee will be calculated by evaluating the amount of further input required to successfully assess you as an IOEE Centre of Excellence.

Annual Review

After your assessment, you will work towards the development plan – as agreed with your assessor. This will form a substantial part of your annual review.

At the beginning of each year, you will be asked to complete a short report which shows:

- What progress you have made against your development plan;
- Any changes to direction, staff or products and services; and
- How you continue to meet the IOEE Centre of Excellence criteria.

Your assessor will visit your centre (if required) to make sure that you continue to meet the Centre of Excellence criteria.

If your assessor feels that you do not meet all the criteria in full they will complete an action plan. This:

- Clearly identifies actions to be carried out prior to centre approval;
- Includes timescales for achievement; and

After your assessment, you will work towards the development plan – as agreed with your assessor. At an agreed date, your assessor will review how you have met the action plan. They may do this remotely, by telephone or email, or they may visit you on site.

When your assessor feels you have met the Centre of Excellence criteria, they will complete a development plan with you. This will show how you can develop your centre further so that you continue to meet the criteria in the future. Your achievement against this development plan will be used during future re-evaluation.

If you did not yet meet the criteria at the end of your site visit and failed to meet the actions and times stated on the action plan, your re-evaluation will have been unsuccessful and your Centre of Excellence status will cease.

It will be possible for you to reapply to become an IOEE Centre of Excellence upon agreement of an additional fee. This fee will be calculated by evaluating the amount of further input required to successfully assess you as an IOEE Centre of Excellence.

The Timescales

The amount of time it takes is up to you. Most centres find that it takes about three months from completing the application to achieving recognition as an IOEE Centre of Excellence. During those three months they spent about three days completing their application and a day for the assessor's site visit. These figures do depend on how much development your centre needs before it meets the IOEE Centre of Excellence criteria.

Centres who have been through the process reported that it took an average of 20 hours to complete the application. The speed with which you complete your application will probably depend on three things:

- how near the centre is to meeting the criteria;
- how well-documented the organisation's processes and procedures are; and
- how experienced the centre is in completing applications of this nature; and
- how much the person completing the application:
 - knows about how the organisation works
 - has access to all the relevant documents;

3 days

Once your application has been through an initial assessment, the assessor will come and visit your organisation. They will want to:

- Interview you and other key members of staff or subcontractors
- Consult with clients and stakeholders, either face to face or by telephone.

1 day

If, the assessor feels you have not yet met the criteria, they will give you an action plan. This will need to be carried out within an agreed timescale before the assessor can review whether you now meet the criteria.

As necessary

Once the assessor feels you fully meet the criteria, they will agree a development plan with you. You will need to work towards this over the following year until your reassessment. All items on your development plan will improve how your centre operates.

As necessary

Interpreting the Criteria

The table below shows the Centre of Excellence, some possible activities that a centre might be carrying out in order to meet the criteria and some supporting documents that they might provide to prove it.

	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Good practice activities</i>	<i>Possible supporting documents</i>
1	They identify market changes and trends, changes in customer need and predict what their customers will want in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market research, forecasts and trends are regularly collected and reviewed. Market changes, trends and changes in legislation are identified. Customer feedback is collected. Customer surveys and customer feedback are used to predict changing customer needs. 	Local Economic Assessment Press Articles Customer Survey In depth research Labour Market Information Customer feedback
2	They identify customer needs and priorities at all stages of their relationship with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are trained on how to identify customer needs, from first enquiry through to delivery and follow up. Needs of new and ongoing customers are identified. There is a method to differentiate wants from needs. There is an approach to make sure needs and priorities are driven by customer needs and not by available products and services. There is a system for handling enquiries when staff are absent. 	Initial assessment Diagnostic tools Client relationship management process Information service management and enquiry monitoring system Induction programme

Interpreting the Criteria

3	They direct customers to other organisation's services when they cannot help them themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a central list of the services offered by others, which is accessible to all.• There is a process to update information on other organisations' services.• Staff are trained how to direct customers to other organisations.	Information service – use of resources Product and programme reviews Reference Library Staff Meeting minutes Referral letters and messages
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4	They update their products and services to reflect changes in market and customer need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes are analysed and their impact on products and services is explored.• Product and service content and delivery mechanisms are regularly reviewed.• Products and services are updated when necessary.	
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5	<p>Their products and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have been developed with customers' needs in mind;• have been developed by people with the appropriate competence;• contain up-to-date and correct information;• reflect enterprise and entrepreneurial standards; and• draw on best enterprise practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a central list of the products and services offered by the organisation, which is accessible to all• Learning products, programmes, qualifications and websites are developed using the 5 points above.• The main portfolio of products and services include enterprise and entrepreneurial standards.	Control of products and services Product and service specialists Pricing information Access for disadvantaged groups Website Materials and publications Curriculum Development Staff Role Profiles, job descriptions and cv's.
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6	They adapt and improve their services to meet individual customer's business or learning objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for identifying customer needs. • Customer diagnostics. • Customer feedback. • Different solutions that have been suggested to different customers. 	<p>Tailored solutions Focus Groups Diagnostic Tools Independent Customer Survey Event Evaluation Customer Survey Client Records Diagnostic report Satisfaction forms LMI report Student handbook Student feedback Tracking of graduates data</p>
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7	Their staff who deliver their service are competent to do so, remain so in a changing market, learn continually and keep abreast of new enterprise related developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required skills, competence and knowledge are identified. • Individuals are reviewed or assessed against job requirements. • There is a system to update job requirements to take account of changing products, delivery methods, market trends and legislation. • Personal development is encouraged. • The organisation has Investors in People recognition. 	<p>Job descriptions Job adverts Personal Training and Development plans Training Investors in People Recognition Staff CV's Staff Appraisal Induction Programme Training plans Personnel file Line Manager Feedback</p>
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8	They follow best practice in their own planning and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have and use a business plan. • They use financial management systems. • They research markets. • They monitor competitors' activity. • They run a staff appraisal system. • They collect and use feedback from their customers. 	<p>Local Economic Assessment Customer Needs Survey In Depth Research Focus Groups Independent Customer Survey Business Plan Peer Review Positive about disability Management Information Systems Institutional plan Departmental plan</p>
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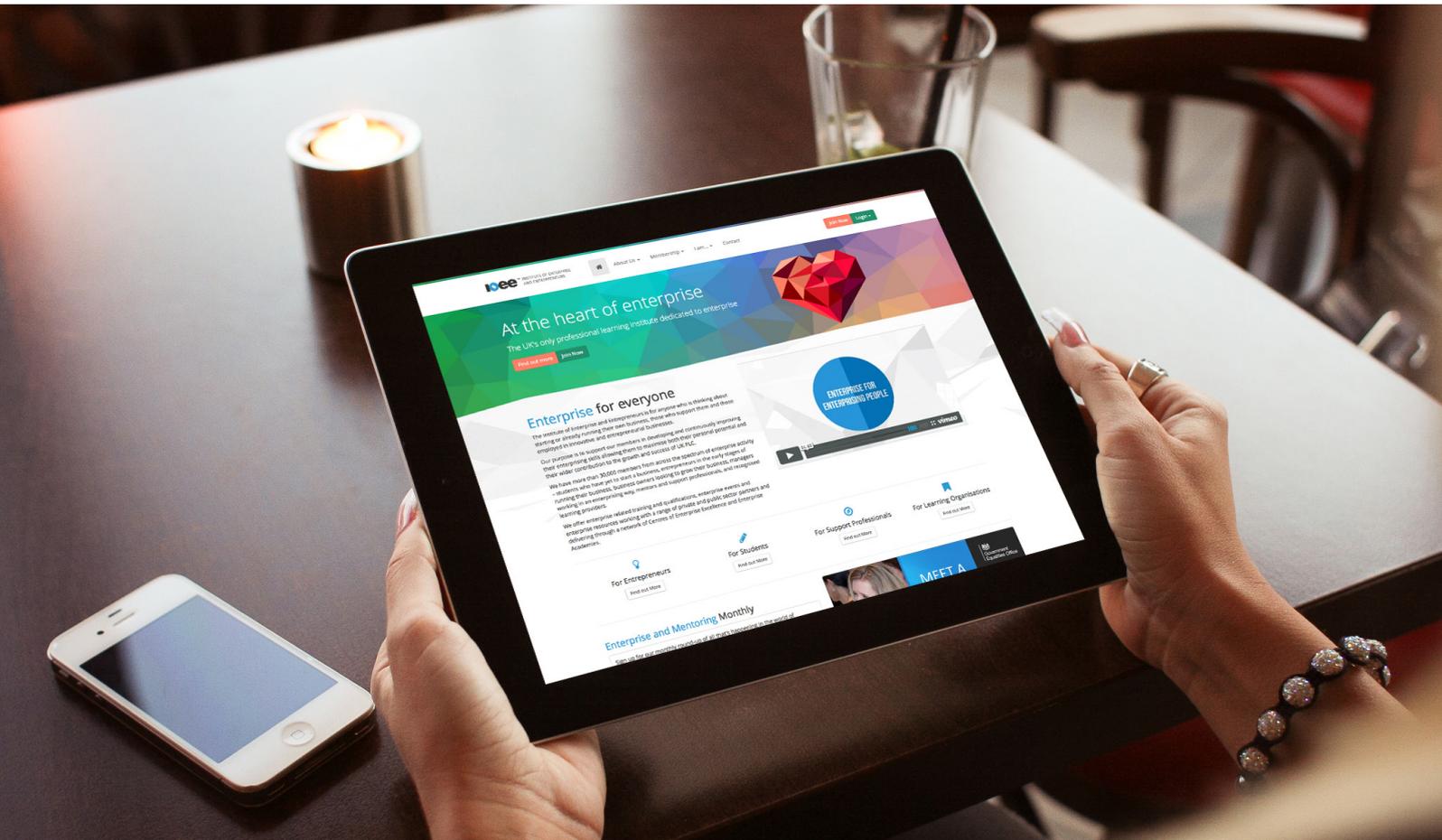
9	They embrace appropriate e-commerce and new technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments in e-commerce and technology are regularly sought out and examined for their use to organisation. • Useful new technologies are incorporated into the organisation's products, services and processes. • Staff are informed of changes and trained when necessary. 	IT Steering Group minutes Screenshots Mailback message Blackboards
10	They ensure quality in the activities that support delivery to their customers and approach this in an enterprising way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They review and evaluate delivery and the processes and systems that support it. • They use the Business Excellence Model, ASIC Accreditation, the EQFM Excellence Model or other quality systems such as ISO9000. • There is a mechanism for suggested improvements from staff to be considered and acted upon. 	Quality System IIP Certificate ISO Certificate ASIC Certificate Pre and post activity feedback Notes from awayday review
11	They encourage staff to be imaginative and creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagination and creativity is reflected in recruitment policies and procedures • Staff are encouraged to work together in teams and adopt a can do attitude • Staff are given the opportunity to challenge existing ways of doing things and suggest new ideas and solutions 	Job descriptions Person specifications Recruitment/engagement policies and processes Minutes of team meetings Team briefings Team development activities and events

12

They encourage staff to make decisions for themselves

- Staff are prepared to, and allowed to, take calculated risks within defined boundaries and constraints
- The organisation reviews the outcomes of decisions made to ensure that it continues to learn from successes and mistakes
- The organization celebrates personal and organisational successes

Minutes of team meetings
Staff appraisals
Business reviews
Awards events



How to Use Other Quality Systems and Kitemarks to Support Your Application

There are many different quality systems and kitemarks in the market that your organisation may already have achieved. These include Investors in People, ISO 9001, the Business Excellence Model or European Quality Foundation Model, ASIC Accreditation, Customer First and matrix.

Recognition against these schemes may help you in your case to prove that you meet some of the IOEE Centre of Excellence criteria.

As part of our partnership arrangement with ASIC we have shown in the following tables the links between the IOEE Centre of Excellence criteria and those for ASIC Accreditation. (If an existing ASIC Centre or undertaking ASIC Accreditation these should be read in conjunction with the ASIC Areas of Operation).

IOEE Centres of Excellence anticipate and understand the needs of businesses and learners.

<i>IOEE Centre of Excellence</i>	<i>ASIC</i>
1. They identify market changes and trends, changes in customer need and predict what their customers will want in the future.	D1, D3, G4
2. They identify customer needs and priorities at all stages of their relationship with them.	Throughout the ASIC Accreditation Process

IOEE Centres of Excellence deliver what businesses and learners want.

<i>IOEE Centre of Excellence</i>	<i>ASIC</i>
4. They update their products and services to reflect changes in market and customer needs.	D1, D2, D3, G3

5. Their products and services:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have been developed with customers' needs in mind; - have been developed by people with the appropriate competence; - contain up-to-date and correct information; - reflect enterprise and entrepreneurial standards; and - draw on best enterprise practice 	C3, C4, D1, D3, F1, F2

6. They adapt and improve their services to meet individual customers business or learning objectives.	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, E3
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7. Their staff who deliver their service are competent to do so, remain so in a changing market, learn continually and keep abreast of new enterprise related developments.	B2, B4, B7, B8, C3, D4
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IOEE Centres of Excellence are learning organisations.

IOEE Centre of Excellence

ASIC

8. They follow best practice in their own planning and management.	B3, D1, D2, D3
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9. They embrace appropriate e-commerce and new technologies.	G1
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10. They ensure quality in the activities that support delivery to their customers and approach this in an enterprising way.	Throughout the ASIC Accreditation Process
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IOEE Centres of Excellence are learning organisations.

IOEE Centre of Excellence

ASIC

11. They encourage their staff to be imaginative and creative	B2, B7, B8, C4, D4, H8
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12. They encourage their staff to make decisions for themselves.	B2, B7, B8
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Completing the Application Form

1. Read each criteria and think how your organisation has met this.
2. Look at the 'Good Practice Guidance' for suggestions of how other centres have met this criteria in the past.
3. Describe how you have met this criteria in the 'How you meet this criteria' box.
4. Think what documents you can provide that will help to prove what you have told us.
5. Give each document a clear title if it does not have one.
6. Write a number on each document.
7. Write the number and title of each document in the column to the right of the example it supports. It is highly likely that one document will support your claims against more than one criteria.
8. Enter the title of each document in the second column of the 'Document Matrix' at the back of this document.
9. Tick the columns on the right hand side of the 'Document Matrix' to show which criteria each document supports.

This is the criteria that you must meet.

This shows you how many examples you must provide.

These are examples of how other centres have met this criteria in the past. They are provided as guidance only and do not dictate how you must meet the criteria.

IOEE Centres of Excellence anticipate and understand the needs of businesses and learners

Criteria 1 They identify market changes and trends, changes in customer need and predict what their customers will want in the future.

Good Practice Guidance:

- Market research, forecasts and trends are regularly collected and reviewed.
- Market changes and trends are identified.
- Customer feedback is collected.
- Customer surveys and customer feedback are used to predict changing customer needs.

How you meet this criteria	Document number and title

This is where you tell us how you meet this criteria. In this instance we would expect to see three examples of how you have met this in the past and how you plan to meet it in the future.

Write the number and title of each supporting document here.

Document Matrix

Document Number	Document Title	CRITERIA NUMBERS									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Customer survey						✓		✓		
2	Diagnostic tool		✓				✓				
3	Press article	✓									

The number you have given the document.

The title you have given the document.

The criteria the document supports.

Notes

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