

Avoid the “Qualifications’ Trap” ... How to make sure your course and qualification is nationally recognised

Fire sprinkler installers face a myriad of courses, with many titles, which often presents confusion and on occasions leads to choosing and obtaining a qualification they later discover isn't nationally recognised. So how can this be avoided?

A qualification is intended to show employers, clients, contractors, insurers and the general public what someone has learned and can do as a result of that achievement. In the sprinkler sector current and future Regulators may require a nationally recognised qualification. Here Ruth Oliver, BAFSA's own skills and qualifications expert, explains the key facts about recognised qualifications to help guide you.

Training providers can and do deliver their own training and award their own personal 'qualification' and it is important for a potential student to understand the difference between a qualification a training provider awards themselves and one delivered by an accredited training provider.

There are two types of qualifications.

- A personal qualification e.g. a provider who does not deliver an awarding organisation qualification.
- A qualification that has been delivered by a provider who is accredited by an awarding body and whose qualification is nationally recognised i.e. IQ Level 2 Certificate in Fire Sprinkler Installation

So what is the difference?

Number one above means that while the training may be excellent and recognised by the provider if it is NOT on the Qualifications & Credit Framework then it may not be recognised by key stakeholders in the industry.

A qualification as number two describes is definitely recognised and in some cases recognised in Europe and often in other countries worldwide.

If your provider's qualification is NOT on the Qualifications & Credit Framework it will not be nationally recognised.

Awarding Organisation; Nationally recognised qualifications – what does this mean?

An Awarding Organisation is an 'Organisation' that has complied with a criteria laid down by Government to deliver qualifications. The 'Organisation' develops a qualification that goes through a process and if successful is placed on the Educational Framework. This means that a student who enrolls on such as course can be confident that their qualification will be recognised.

How can you make sure that you access a nationally recognised qualification?

Very simply – you undertake research and ask questions of the potential training provider and follow the steps below:

- If you wish to undertake a course go to <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification>. You will be able to undertake a search on the subject you wish to study.
- If you have seen a course advertised check to see:
 - full title of the course
 - name of the awarding organisation e.g. IQ, Agored
 - provider is a current provider with Ofqual.
- If after looking at the information you are still unclear, contact the provider and ask for clarification.
- If you seek further information contact BAFSA : qualifications@bafsa.org.uk