



EngTech Approval Guidance

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Introduction

The Welding Institute aims to promote professionalism and the advancement of knowledge in welding, joining and allied technologies, as well as emphasise the importance of education and training in welding, joining and allied technologies, for both initial and continuing professional development; and to endorse education and training programmes that meet the standards set by the Institute.

One of the ways in which the institute approaches this is to approve qualifications and apprenticeships for Engineering Technician (EngTech) registration with the UK Engineering Council. Approval of qualifications and apprenticeships assesses programmes against defined criteria set out in the Engineering Councils' Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA) standard available from <https://www.engc.org.uk/aaqa>.

The Welding Institute has been granted a licence by the Engineering Council to support and undertake approval activity with interested parties. This guidance note is intended for:

- Programme providers/awarding organisations that are responsible for the development and delivery of qualifications, training programmes and apprenticeships, including educational institutions and employers looking to exploring gaining EngTech approval and recognition of their programmes,
- Approval assessors who undertake the process of peer review and assessment of programmes submitted for EngTech approval.

For further guidance or support, please contact us at:

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What is approval?

Approval of qualifications and apprenticeships aims to encourage and recognise high standards of engineering education and development. The process of approval is one of peer review, and it ensures that engineering education and development meets the needs of students, and delivers industry relevant skills. By undergoing the approvals process, providers can ensure that excellence in the delivery and content of their programmes.

The definition of approval as outlined by the Engineering Council is below.

Approval of a programme of learning or apprenticeship attests to its content. This means the overall design, depth and range of coverage, and validity and reliability of the assessment of the learner. Approval is used to recognise the underpinning knowledge and understanding covered by a programme, and can also be used to recognise the development of competence.

What is the difference between approval and accreditation?

For a programme to be considered for approval, The Welding Institute and our assessors must have quality assured the resources, delivery and assessment *in all delivery locations*. For example, approval of a programme which runs on a national basis with parallel training and assessment around the country.

Accreditation by The Welding Institute involves an assessment of a programme and a visit to review the quality of resources, delivery and assessment of a qualification or apprenticeship delivered *in a specified location*. A programme can be accredited without being subject to other External Quality Assurance processes.

The circumstances of when approval or accreditation can be sought are outlined in the Engineering Council's Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA) Standard.

Why approve qualifications and/or apprenticeships?

Approval of programmes by The Welding Institute provides a mark of assurance that they meet the standards set out by the UK Engineering Council, and therefore the wider engineering profession.

Approval is aligned with international accords such as the Dublin Accord, meaning programmes also obtain international recognition of their excellence.

As a result, approval can be used as a tool in promoting the approved qualification or apprenticeship to attract prospective students/apprentices.

Link to Engineering Council Professional Registration as EngTech

Students or apprentices who complete an approved qualification or apprenticeship will be able to apply for Engineering Technician (EngTech) registration with the UK Engineering Council.

Registration has both competency and academic requirements that need to be met in order to be eligible. Students or apprentices who have completed an approved qualification will be able to demonstrate the academic requirement for EngTech registration, and therefore they can apply via what is referred to as the 'standard route' to professional registration.

The benefits of holding EngTech registration include:

- Being able to use the EngTech post-nominal letters
- EngTech is an internationally recognised professional title facilitating international mobility
- Improved career prospects and earning potential
- Demonstration to employers, customers and peers of your expertise, competence and commitment to the engineering industry

Approval & Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA) Standard

The Welding Institute approves qualifications and apprenticeships against the Engineering Council Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA) Standard. The standard is used by the UK engineering profession to assess the competence and commitment of individual engineers and technicians. It was developed collaboratively in consultation with engineers representing the breadth of the profession, from industry, academia and many different disciplines and specialisms.

The standard is used by Professional Engineering Institutes such as The Welding Institute in order to undertake approval of qualifications and apprenticeships. Awarding organisations responsible for the development and/or delivery of programmes should consult the standard in order to ensure programmes cover the **learning outcomes and/or competence that must be demonstrated for approval.**

What is the approvals process?

The Welding Institute can approve the following:

1. Qualifications that are considered to provide the full academic knowledge and understanding that underpins eventual registration as EngTech.
2. Apprenticeships that contain qualifications that in their own right can be considered to provide the full academic knowledge and understanding that underpins eventual registration as EngTech.
3. Apprenticeships that deliver some, or all, of the competence required as set out in UK-SPEC to become an EngTech may be considered for approval.

As a minimum, a qualification being considered for approval should be one of the following:

1. level 3 (or above) in the Regulated Qualifications Framework or National Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland
2. level 6 (or above) in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
3. level 3 (or above) in the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

New programmes

Organisations who are new to the approval process should first make contact with The Welding Institute to talk through the Approvals process and the qualification/apprenticeship being considered for approval. The Welding Institute will then offer guidance throughout the approval submission and assessment process to ensure the approval submission meets the approval requirements.

Programmes seeking re-approval

Approval is normally given for up to five years. In the penultimate year of the approval, The Welding Institute will get in touch to commence the re-approval process to ensure continuity. The re-approval process usually follows the same process as the original approval, although it is possible may have been adapted if the Engineering Council standards or regulations have been changed in the intervening time.

A shorter period of approval may be granted for new programmes or where necessary if it is a requirement to monitor programme outputs.

Approval submission

After an initial discussion and review to ensure that the programme in question is suitable for approval, the programme provider should allocate a member of staff to oversee the approval submission. All the necessary documentation, guidance and submission deadlines will be shared with the staff member to facilitate a timely submission.

Guidance on the required submission documentation and evidence is outline below.

Application Form

An application form will need to be completed outlining details of the course being considered for approval.

EngTech Mapping Document

The Welding Institute will share with the programme provider an EngTech Mapping document. The document contains all of the learning outcomes that should be covered by an approved qualification. The programme provider will need to provide evidence concerning how the course in question addresses the specified learning outcomes ensuring all trainees complete the course with the same knowledge and understanding.

Some of the areas of learning are described in more detail below, in order to support programme providers in their understanding of what is expected.

Learning Outcome	What does this mean?
Ethics	Learning outcome D2 sets out the requirement for trainees to operate in a responsible and ethical manner. The Engineering Council and Royal Academy of Engineering have produced a statement of ethical principles to guide engineering practice and behaviour and support professional engineers and technicians in meeting their professional obligations. More information can be found on the Engineering Council website here: https://www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/statement-of-ethical-principles/
Risk	Learning outcome D3 sets out a trainee's requirement in dealing with risk, and their responsibilities to society. The Engineering Council has produced guidance comprising six principles to guide and motivate professional engineers and technicians in identifying, assessing, managing and communicating about risk. More information can be found on the Engineering Council website here: https://www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/guidance-on-risk/
Security	Learning outcome D4 sets out the requirement for trainees to 'a holistic and proportionate approach to the mitigation of security risks.' The Engineering Council has produced guidance setting out six key principles to guide engineers and technicians in identifying, assessing, managing and communicating issues about security. More information can be found on the Engineering Council website here: https://www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/guidance-on-security/

Supporting evidence

As part of the approval submission, various supporting documents will need to be submitted alongside the Learning Outcome mapping. Supporting documents will include:

- Syllabuses and module descriptors
- Project list and project handbook (if applicable)
- Programme logbook (if applicable)
- Reports from regulatory agencies ensuring quality assurance including copies of Ofqual, Ofsted, UKAS certificates or equivalent
- Reports and related responses from external examiners or verifiers (if applicable)
- Internal programme review reports (if applicable)

Approval assessment

When an approval submission is received by The Welding Institute, an informal review will be conducted by staff to ensure the submission stands the best chance of success at assessment, ultimately ensuring that all documents have been completed and the required supporting evidence has been supplied.

Approval assessment process

An assessor panel will be convened to review the approval submission. All assessors are trained volunteers who are either academics or industrialists with a current knowledge of the approvals process and Engineering Council learning outcome requirements. Organisations will be informed who the appointed assessors are, and should there be any concerns i.e. perceived conflicts of interest then concerns should be communicated in writing to The Welding Institute as the earliest opportunity.

When assessing an approval submission, the assessors will consider evidence from a range of indicators. These will include:

- the learning outcomes of the programme
- the teaching and learning processes
- the assessment strategies employed
- the human, physical and material resources involved
- quality assurance arrangements
- feedback from meetings with students
- how previous accreditation or approval recommendations and requirements have been dealt with, and
- entry to the programme and how the cohort entry extremes will be supported.

As part of this review, the assessors may identify areas requiring additional information. The Welding Institute will act as a liaison between the organisation and the approvals panel to coordinate requests for additional information. The assessors will then complete an EngTech Approval Report.

EngTech Approval Report

The assessor panel will prepare an EngTech Approval Report based on the application form, mapping form and supporting evidence submitted. When completed, the EngTech Approval Report will be submitted to The Welding Institute's Qualifications and Training Regulatory Group (QTRG) to ratify the outcome that the assessment panel is recommending. This process ensures that the assessors have conducted their assessment thoroughly and in accordance with regulations.

Approval Outcome

There are several possible recommendations that the assessors can submit to the Qualifications and Training Regulatory Group (QTRG) as outlined in the table below.

Outcome	What does this mean?
The qualification is approved as fully meeting the learning outcomes.	A Professional Review Interview (PRI) typically lasts approximately between 60 to 90 minutes assessing against the criteria in UKSPEC. You will be sent our PRI guidance document in order to help you prepare.
The qualification is approved as partially meeting the learning outcomes	An Extended Professional Review Interview, typically lasts between approximately 90 to 120 minutes assessing against the criteria in UKSPEC. There may also have been some minor gaps in your LOR submission, and the assessors recommended some additional time at interview to explore these further. You will be sent our PRI guidance document in order to help you prepare.
Resubmit	If you are asked to resubmit, you will be informed which of the learning outcomes were considered to fall short of the requirements. You should highlight clearly the changes that you make as part of your resubmission. Please note that your reflective statements must still remain in the word count.
Reject	The qualification apprenticeship is not approved as meeting the competencies and/or learning outcomes.

Additionally an apprenticeship may fully or partially meets the competence requirement for EngTech registration.

Approval is normally given for up to five years. Very often The Welding Institute will make recommendations as part of the approval. The recommendations are put forward as guidance and a way of promoting best practice. An approval can be made conditionally, and The Welding Institute will work with the organisation to ensure any conditions are addressed to ensure approval can be maintained.

If a programme is rejected, The Welding Institute will advise the organisation as to the reasons why, and offer assistance to support a resubmission where possible.

An approval decision and, if applicable, a certificate will be sent to the organisation confirming the approval outcome.

The Welding Institute will be in contact with the organisation throughout the period of approval regarding any updates to policy/regulation, and to share updates from The Welding Institute regarding membership and membership benefits.