

Nationally Accredited Programme for Registration Officers (NAP)

Background

The Registrar General's nationally accredited programme for registration officers was launched in April 2013 and has seen 8 cohorts join the programme. The qualification, which is accredited by City and Guilds, has been jointly developed by GRO and a sub group of the National Panel for Registration and sponsored by the Local Registration Services Association (LRSA).

To date, some 120 candidates have successfully qualified from the programme. Feedback suggests that both the candidates and their local authorities have found the process beneficial.

The qualification is an NVQ-style modular programme of learning, which candidates are expected to complete within two years of enrolling on the programme. An electronic portfolio system has been introduced for the latest cohort, which has enabled candidates and their assessors to communicate more efficiently as the programme has progressed, particularly where the candidates do not work in the same office as their Assessor.

Next cohort

The next cohort, cohort 9, will be launched in May 2020 and registration officers are now invited to submit applications to be part of this cohort. The closing date for applications is **Friday 28 February 2020**.

Assessors and Internal Verifiers

During the qualification each candidate will need an Assessor, and an Internal Verifier (IV) who helps to ensure consistency of standards.

The programme is also now looking for new **Assessors and Internal Verifiers** to support candidates throughout the qualification. An Assessor can work with more than one candidate, and whilst ideally would be from the same local authority as the candidate this is not essential: in many current instances candidates are assessed by officers from a different local authority. It is not necessary for an Assessor or IV to have previously been a candidate for the qualification – although since they will have access to “model” workbook answers it would not be appropriate for them to subsequently apply to be a candidate.

A training event for new Assessors and IVs, will take place on Wednesday 1st April 2020 at GRO, Southport. There is no fee for this training event; however, travel and subsistence expenses should be met by the Local Authority.

Fees

The enrolment fee is **£400 per candidate**, if you already have an identified Assessor and Internal Verifier available to support them (if need be subject to training, as above). LRSA

will provide a subsidy of £100 for a single candidate from a member authority. The fee to undertake the qualification would not be required until May 2020.

Where a candidate is applying *without* an identified Assessor or Internal Verifier, the National Qualification support team will attempt to find and allocate an Assessor and / or Internal Verifier. This can usually be done but cannot be guaranteed. In instances where an Assessor or IV cannot be found, a candidate would be unable to commence in the proposed cohort. However, where an Assessor or IV can be found from another local authority the National Panel for Registration has agreed that there should be a standard charge to cover the costs involved and which should be applied consistently across the country. These costs are:

Assessor: £1,000

Internal Verifier: £600

Please note that this is based on communications between the candidate and Assessor / IV being via the e-portfolio / email / Skype rather than face to face visit (although the candidate could visit the Assessor's location if they wished).

This would mean that the financial cost to a local authority supporting a candidate through the qualification – provided that this is completed within the usual 2-year timescale -would be

£400 where officers from within the same authority as the candidate can act as Assessor and IV.

£1,400 where the authority could supply an IV but needed an Assessor from another local authority;

£2,000 where the authority needed both an Assessor and IV from another local authority.

The enrolment fee of £400 is due when the candidate begins the qualification. Any additional payment to another local authority for Assessor or Internal Verifier support would be likely to be due on a quarterly basis as the candidate progresses through the qualification.

Further information

Further details of the qualification, including information on the workload and role of the candidate, assessor and internal verifier, and how to apply for each of these, can be found on the LRSA website.

<http://www.lrsa.org.uk/LearningLink.cfm>

If you have any further questions, please email;

GROTrainingandBusinessImprovement@gro.gov.uk

NAP Testimonials

This is what some of our candidates, assessors and IVs have had to say about their experiences of NAP.

“Tell me I’ll forget, show me I’ll remember, involve me I’ll understand”. National Accredited Programme or NAP, makes you think lucky when a colleague says, “I am just going for a nap session.”

Undertaking the NAP qualification demonstrates commitment, it provides for one to one training, support and advice rather than just performing routine work. It prepares and paves the way for advancement into more senior positions within the registration service.

The combination of research and knowing where to look in the handbook. The need to check legislation combined with practical work, enhances individual capability and adds flexibility within the team.

You take responsibility for your own professional development. You can time manage, prioritise and study at your pace, knowing that your assessor will help keep you on track to complete the course within the two-year time frame.

It provides insight into all aspects of the registration service, the unusual or the unforeseen events and their consequences.

The ‘Customer Service in a Registration Environment’ module covers a wide range of diverse subjects from the Coroner to Wedding Fayres. How we engage with internal and external customers, stakeholders, and colleagues in other divisions of local government who provide vital support.

It’s a way to champion excellence, enhance current skills and builds confidence. Nap offers more self-assurance when dealing with customers, fellow colleagues and those from other districts.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” (Benjamin Franklin)

Christine Ditchfield, Halton Assessor

I have recently completed the NAP Qualification as an Apprentice at Halton Registration Service. I was completely new to the Registration Service when I began my apprenticeship back in January 2018, however, I was enrolled onto Cohort 7 in May later that same year.

When I first looked at the questions in the written modules workbooks my heart sank, and I thought I would never begin to understand all the legislation and legal requirements. But with hard work, research and lots of support from my colleagues, especially my mentor Christine, I managed it. The e-learning requirement was long and frustrating, but I found it to be a very useful learning tool and got a genuine buzz when the 100% achievement certificate came out of the printer following each online assessment. The technical

assessments helped me to complete accurate and competent registrations, ensuring that the prescribed information was gathered where and when required.

The learning journey has been an emotional rollercoaster, but I can honestly say with my hand on my heart that I have loved every minute of it. The satisfaction I get from all aspects of the job is so rewarding. Less than two years into my apprenticeship and I feel that I am competent in all aspects relating to the registration service. I wholeheartedly believe that has been helped and supported by the learning and research within the NAP.

I was so excited and proud when I completed and achieved the NAP qualification just 10 months later. Proof that my hard and dedication had really paid off.

I now hope I can pass on the skills and knowledge I have gained during the course to help the next apprentice in line at Halton Registration Service, whilst in a best-case scenario, also furthering my own career within the registration service.

Anita Naughton, Halton Candidate



When I first went on the training course to be an assessor, I was relieved to find that there are answer books provided which contain model answers. How hard could it be? Now that I have been an assessor for a couple of years, I would love to attend that training again and ask all the questions that I didn't need to ask until I was going through the process of marking colleagues' work.

It's often vague in the answer book as to whether the candidates need to cover everything, or just x number of points from the answer.

Also, some of the questions specify that the answer should be no more than, for example, 400 words, but the answer book answer is about 1000 words! It's unclear what should be included and what is not required.

I generally err on the side of caution and I am very strict with the candidates... but I worry that I am perhaps too strict sometimes!

If candidates have answered everything or most questions correctly, marking is a relatively fast process. If candidates have the wrong end of the stick, I do my best to guide them to the correct area of the Handbook, without giving them the answer. This can be time-consuming, as, alas, I still don't know the Handbooks off by heart!

It's really satisfying when one of the candidates completes a workbook and it's a pass. It's also great when you can mark everything as complete on the NAP website and it's ready for the IV. Seeing everything go green is brilliant!

So far, I've been the assessor for two candidates who have completed the qualification. Both have now had promotions, so I would encourage any potential candidate to complete the NAP on that basis alone.

**Mary Horan, Oxfordshire
Assessor**

Looking back, what did I wish I had known before embarking on NAP in cohort 6? I wish I had not underestimated the volume of work or time involved! Having said that, it has given me invaluable experience in navigating handbooks and various government websites, strengthening my registration and local government knowledge, and ultimately enabling me to secure a new role within the service doing a job which I love.

My useful tips for new or aspiring candidates would be:

- Set yourself manageable timescales for each workbook...and stick to them!
- Keep the summary of your e-learning questions/answers if you don't reach the pass % first time
- Get the technical assessments booked in as you go through each workbook
- Make time for yourself, so that you have a life outside of work and NAP!
- Have regular progress conversations with your assessor – you both want to celebrate your successful completion of NAP!

**Siobhan O'Brien, Oxfordshire
Candidate**

Having not undertaken any kind of study for many years, I started the NAP in June 2017 with a mixture of trepidation and excitement. After four years as a full-time deputy registrar and deputy superintendent registrar in a busy city register office, I felt that I had encountered many different types of registrations and sets of circumstances, but always with a more experienced member of registration staff available to advise me. I'd reached the point where I wanted to be able to underpin my day-to-day work with a sound knowledge base. This is what that NAP gave me, and although I will never know all the answers, I do now have a very comfortable familiarity with the Handbook and can generally navigate my way around it with relative ease. I learnt many interesting things (including finally understanding the difference between void and voidable marriage!) which I have successfully applied to my work in the Oxfordshire Registration Service since. There were times when I stayed up until midnight, determined to finally obtain the elusive 100% in a module of e-learning, and other times when I would quite happily have thrown the computer out of the window, but I have never regretted doing the NAP and would highly recommend it to others who may wish to secure or broaden their registration knowledge.

**Lorna Hind, Oxfordshire
Candidate**

I did not know what to expect of the IV role but after having attended an Assessor course (no dedicated IV training available) in Birmingham it was all systems go! I started off with 2 candidates in Oxfordshire to support and now have 7. It is not unusual for an IV to support several candidates in different areas.

I always enjoy meeting the candidates at the initial meeting and they are all so different – some quite new into Registration, others who have much more experience but all sharing that same thirst for completing the NQ and, in some cases, as quickly as possible.

Compared to the Assessor role the IV is more remote. I will usually receive an e-mail informing me that a candidate has completed a module which I will then verify. I must admit I do review what I am being asked to verify and have occasionally picked up pieces of evidence that may be missing so it is worth doing.

When I first became an IV the NAP was all paper based which involved more travelling. With the introduction of the NQ database, verifying and assessing work has become easier, but I know the system is clunky but compared to how it was before it is brilliant!

The people who have passed the qualification have gone on to become trainers within our Service and we ask them to train technical topics at team meetings as well as providing expertise in other areas to the team.

Do consider being an IV as it is really rewarding and to attend the LRSA conference and see candidates receiving their certificates makes all the work worthwhile.

**Alicja Gilroy, Oxfordshire
IV**

The NAP exam is a fantastic tool for improving and consolidating registration knowledge. I have been both a candidate and some years later an assessor and there is always something new to learn. I assessed for the first cohort using the online learning Assist, and whilst this did have some teething problems more from unfamiliarity with the system than any technical glitches the system seemed relatively straightforward. As a candidate the linking of evidence seemed much easier.

Individually it is great to see the legislation in its original format, explaining where our specific legislation sections sit within the various Acts, and helps to give a broader understanding of the whys and wherefores. It has also enabled me to build links with other areas outside of our county neighbours, something that is near impossible in the day to day operation of our roles. It is been of benefit to me in my role but also given me a greater understanding of wider implications.

**Nadia Wistow, Hertfordshire
Assessor**
