



Qualifications Exemptions Policy

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AAT Qualifications Exemptions Policy

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1. Introduction

AAT is the UK's leading professional body offering skills-based accountancy and finance qualifications. Our accountancy qualifications teach practical skills for the workplace. We work across the globe with around 130,000 members in more than 100 countries. Our members are represented at every level of the finance and accounting world, including learners, people already working in accountancy and self-employed business owners.

AAT qualifications are assessed primarily through externally set and marked assessments, which are administered by approved centres under controlled conditions. However, students who have already achieved comparable qualifications may be exempt from completing one or more AAT assessments.

This document sets out the policy and process for centres and for students who are intending to claim exemption for any AAT assessment.

This document is not applicable to centres who are planning to use the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process for their students. For information about RPL please refer to: <https://www.aat.org.uk/prod/s3fs-public/assets/aat-recognition-prior-learning-policy.pdf>

2. Definition of an exemption

An exemption is where a learner who has successfully completed an external qualification containing a module or unit with at least 70% of the content of an equivalent AAT unit, may be regarded as 'exempt' from completing that unit as part of their AAT qualification.

3. Current exemptions for AAT qualifications

The current list of exemptions for AAT qualifications, along with criteria and guidance on the process are available on the AAT website: [aat.org.uk/aat-qualifications-and-courses/exemptions-for-aat-qualifications](https://www.aat.org.uk/aat-qualifications-and-courses/exemptions-for-aat-qualifications)

The list of exemptions has been based on the units/qualifications offered by other Awarding Organisations (AOs) that provide a direct like for like comparison, or at least a 70% match with AAT unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

The list includes units from other regulated qualifications though it should be noted that some awards/units previously accepted have been removed as they are either no longer regulated or no longer eligible. The list also includes, where appropriate, qualifications from AAT approved professional organisations and other AAT quality assured unregulated qualifications.

Exemptions take account of the transfer/exemption arrangements between AQ2013 and AQ2016. There are several exemptions for learners who achieved units from AQ2013 and who subsequently transferred to AQ2016.

All synoptic assessments are compulsory and cannot be achieved through exemptions.

The list is subject to ongoing review taking account of further discussions with other AOs, and requests from centres and prospective learners. AAT is open to receiving applications from students and/or their centres suggesting alternative exemptions, subject to the general principles set out below.

4. General principles for applying exemptions

The following are general principles that will be applied when considering exemption applications.

- a) Students can claim exemptions for some AAT units using evidence of certified achievement. Previous AAT achievements gained within the last six years will automatically be credited to AAT students but certificated achievements from other AOs must be claimed directly from AAT.
- b) Applications for all exemptions should be sent to AAT directly by the student or their centre.
- c) All relevant documentation including copies of certificates and, if required, letters of confirmation must be provided in order to claim an exemption. AAT reserves the right to contact AOs that awarded certificates to verify students' awards.
- d) If a unit/qualification is not already on the exemptions list the centre will need to apply for that qualification to be included before an exemption can be considered. They will need to provide the mapping of the unit applied for against the relevant AAT unit. AAT will review the application and provide a decision to the centre within 10 working days of receipt.
- e) Where a student is seeking exemption from qualifications/units not originally issued in English, clear mapping documents and a certified translation to English of these documents will be required, along with copies of the original language documents.
- f) Where AAT believes that a qualification or unit does not contain sufficient relevant coverage, no exemption will be awarded, and the applicant will be notified and advised on how to proceed.
- g) AAT will not award an exemption for an exemption already given by another AO.
- h) Qualifications that are more than six years old cannot be considered for exemptions. The six-year period commences from the award date on the certificate issued by the AO.
- i) If a student has failed an AAT assessment, AAT will not accept an exemption application for that unit for a period of two years from the date of the failed assessment.
- j) Where individuals want recognition for previously achieved pre AQ2013 AAT units the student, with the support of their centre, will need to map their past achievement and supporting evidence against the assessment criteria for the new unit, to demonstrate that their prior learning is valid, authentic, current and sufficient, and submit this via the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route.

- k) Entitlement to exemptions is entirely at the discretion of AAT based on a review and comparison of the qualifications/units in question. AAT's decision on any exemption applications is final.
- l) Percentage scores for exempted units will be capped at 70%. This includes exemptions from AAT AQ2013 units. This ensures a level playing field for all learners, though they can of course improve upon this grade by sitting the AAT unit assessment. Achievements of more than 70% will then be used to calculate the overall grade.
- m) Students may achieve up to 50% of a qualification's units using exemptions but must achieve at least one unit using the assessment method required by that unit. It is not possible for a student to be certified for any level of the AAT's qualifications using exemptions alone. For the avoidance of doubt, the following table shows the maximum number of permitted exemptions, depending on the total number of units required to achieve a qualification:

Number of units required to achieve an AAT qualification	Number of permitted unit exemptions
1	None
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	4
9	4
10 or more	No more than 50%

5. Fees for exemptions

Where exemptions are awarded, a fee equivalent to the assessment fee will be charged per exemption. Centres and students will be advised how to pay this fee. The exemption will be recorded by AAT, directly on to the student's record on receipt of the payment.

Exemption fees only apply to eligible learners with a completed qualification or units from external AOs. The exemption charges do not apply to transitional arrangements between AQ2013 and AQ2016 units.

Where a student starts and does not complete an AAT qualification but has already applied and been charged for exemptions, AAT will not refund the fee amount.

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