



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}



JCQ^{CIC} A2C Data Standards Specification

Section 2

Business Processes

Centre Setup

2022 Version

28th February 2022

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1 Process Summary

The Centre Setup Notification (CSN) has been designed as a one-off transaction type to alert an awarding organisation that a centre is now using an A2C compliant Management Information System (MIS) and wishes to migrate to A2C format for transactions with that awarding organisation.

Awarding organisations will not know when an individual centre's MIS software has been upgraded to be A2C compliant: the centre will already have an A2C transport access key for that awarding organisation for the A2C Migration Application, so from a polling perspective there should be a seamless transition.

It would be impractical for centres to contact each awarding organisation that they work with separately, and for each awarding organisation to handle that volume of requests manually. This notification enables this work to be minimised.

Once an awarding organisation has received a notification from a centre, they will be able to trigger generation of product catalogue data for that centre (see Section 3: *Product Catalogue*). This will allow centres to start submitting orders, etc to awarding organisations.

If the centre requires product catalogue information but does not intend to commence A2C compliant operation immediately, they should use the Request Product Catalogue (RPC) transaction type. This will provide them with a product catalogue but will not initiate any further A2C transactions; the centre will not become A2C compliant at this point and awarding organisations will not make future updates to product catalogue information available.

If the centre requires an up-to-date version of the product catalogue and they are ready to commence A2C compliant operation they should submit a Centre Setup Notification transaction. If the centre requires an up-to-date version of the product catalogue and they are still not ready for A2C operations they should re-submit a Request Product Catalogue transaction; this process can be repeated until they are ready to commence A2C compliant operation.

It is also acceptable to use the Request Product Catalogue transaction type after the centre is A2C compliant. It could be used in circumstances where the product catalogue data has been deleted in error, or where a centre is switching MIS supplier while retaining the existing message sequence. RPC can also be used as a means of notifying awarding organisations that centre MIS software, specifically the XSD version, has been updated; the resulting provision of a complete product catalogue will also ensure that the centre is up to date with any product catalogue related data model changes. Refer to Section 11: *Solutions Architecture*, heading 10: *Centre Setup Notification and Request Product Catalogue* for further guidance on sequencing relating to these transaction types.

A list of awarding organisation identifiers to be used will be maintained and published by JCQ^{CIC}; see Appendix 2, *Awarding Organisations* for the awarding organisation identifiers to be used for A2C. It should be noted that awarding organisations with multiple identifiers for EDI are intending to move to a single identifier for A2C. Note, however, that the identifiers currently used for EDI must be supported until EDI orders are completed and centres are entirely on A2C.

2 Centre Setup Process Diagrams

2.1 Centre Setup Notification Process Diagram

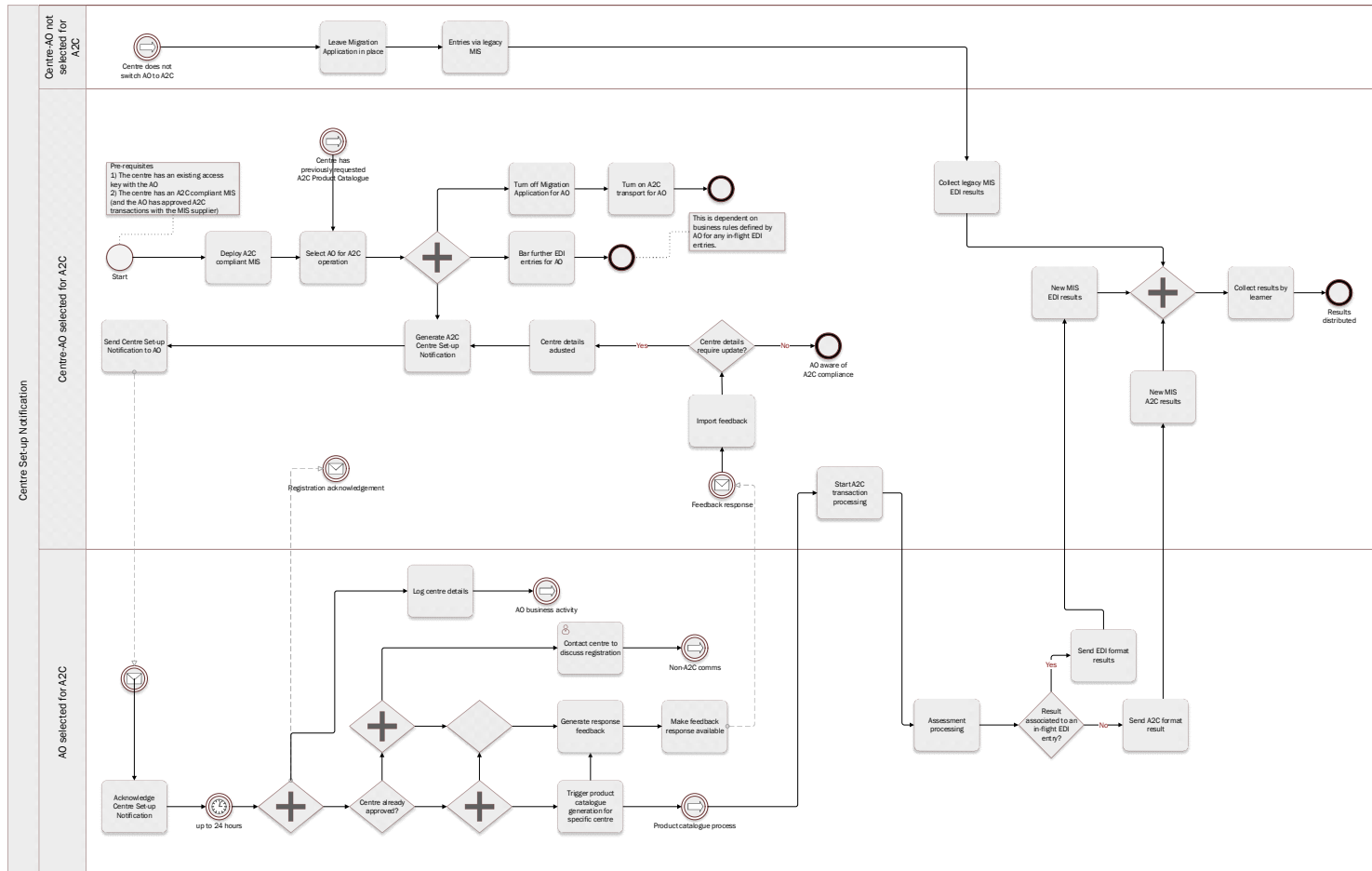


Figure 1 Centre Setup Notification Process Diagram

2.2 Request Product Catalogue Process Diagram

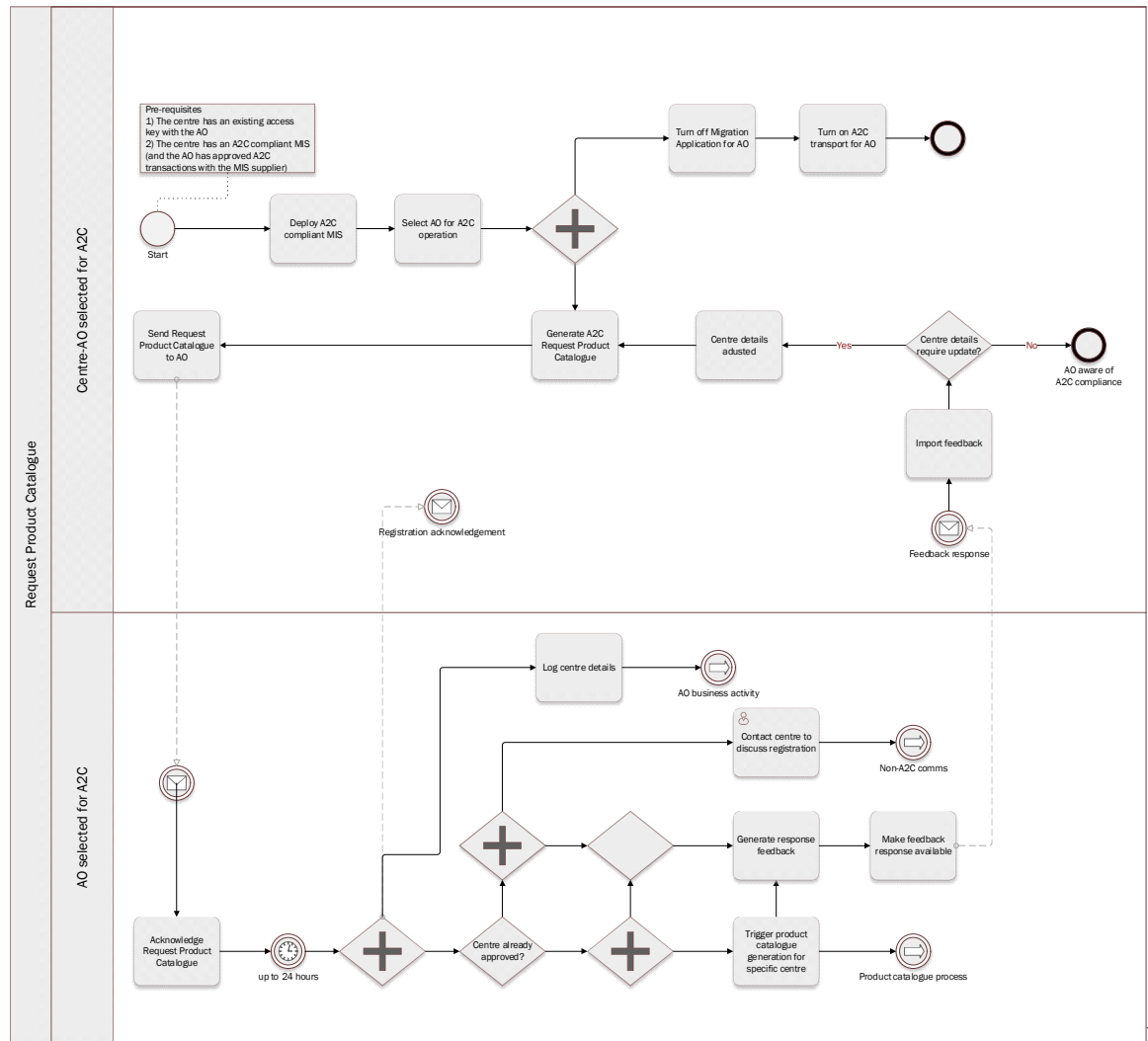


Figure 2 Request Product Catalogue Process Diagram

EDI to A2C Cutover Guidance

CG1	Centres may choose to migrate to A2C on an awarding organisation basis. This one-by-one route is most appropriate for centres involved in the initial software pilot processes being undertaken by MIS providers. Once the software has been proven, due to the internal management/reporting requirements for centres, it is recommended that centres migrate for all awarding organisations at the same time.
CG2	Centres may be able to use the certificate/access key that was previously used for the A2C migration application. Some awarding organisations may wish to issue new certificates during cutover. See Section 12: <i>A2C Transport Specification</i> , heading 10: <i>Key Exchange</i> for details on obtaining certificates.
CG3	At the time of switchover, it is possible that a centre may have made orders to the selected awarding organisation via EDI which have not yet produced results. The results for these 'in flight' EDI orders will be sent to the centre in EDI file format. This approach is referred to as 'I've started, so I'll finish'.
CG4	Although it will be possible to switchover at a point in time where there are 'in flight' EDI orders, order submission periods should be avoided. The switch to A2C should be planned during a period where very limited order processing will be required.
CG5	For General Qualifications, submission of an EDI entry file for a specific series will require that series to be completed in EDI. Any subsequent A2C submissions for that 'in flight' series will be rejected. Any changed orders for the 'in flight' series must be made using an EDI amendment file. The switch to A2C should be planned so that all orders for a series are made via A2C or via the legacy EDI mechanism, but not a mix.
CG6	The final cut-off date for EDI will be advised by individual awarding organisations.
CG7	For General Qualifications no orders for 'new series' will be accepted via EDI after the date advised by the individual awarding organisations.
CG8	For General Qualifications a 'new series' will be defined as one for which no entry or amendment files have been submitted via EDI.
CG9	An awarding organisation will not accept EDI entry files for 'new series' from a centre that has started using A2C to place orders with them.
CG10	In the cut-off year for an awarding organisation, all outstanding processes including results will operate via EDI for any exams entered in EDI.
CG11	For General Qualifications following the cut-off year for an awarding organisation, the Spring and Summer General Qualifications exam series will be fully A2C. The awarding organisation will not be issuing basedata for these series.
CG12	For Vocational Qualifications any submission via EDI after the end of December 2021 will be rejected unless the order was submitted within the 2020/21 academic year. Transactions for any learners completing Vocational Qualification assessments and awards after December 2021 should be via A2C.
CG13	It is anticipated that all new Vocational Qualification orders for the 2021/22 academic year will be via A2C. Orders for any learners completing a two-year Vocational Qualification in the 2022/23 academic year should be submitted via A2C.

EDI to A2C Cutover Guidance

CG14	The EDI and EDIFACT formats will not be supported for any 'in-flight' Vocational Qualification transactions after the 2021/22 academic year. This would require transition of those learners to A2C compliant systems and will be supported by the appropriate awarding organisations.
CG15	<p>A2C compliant commercial MIS packages must provide integrated transport of data. This means that once centres are using an A2C compliant commercial MIS package they will no longer use the Migration Application. MIS providers should support centres in this transition and ensure that any EDI files to be transported during the EDI to A2C cutover period can be transported using the A2C compliant MIS package.</p> <p>Please note that although integrated transport is recommended for centres operating non-commercial A2C compliant MIS systems (described as 'homegrown' systems) integrated transport is not mandatory. Those centres may continue to use the A2C Transport Application (which is an upgraded Migration Application to support A2C messages), which will be provided and maintained by JCQ^{CIC}.</p>

3 User Stories

The user stories listed here provide contextual information about how the business process has been designed.

User stories for Centre Setup Notification

User story 1 / Centre now has A2C compliant MIS	
As an:	examinations officer/MIS manager
I want to:	tell the selected awarding organisations my centre works with that my MIS is now A2C compliant
So that:	I can receive a product catalogue from them.

User story 2 / Receive notification from a centre	
As an:	awarding organisation
I want to:	be notified by a centre that they are A2C compliant
So that:	a product catalogue can be issued to them.

User stories for Request Product Catalogue

User story 3 / Centre now has A2C compliant MIS	
As an:	examinations officer/MIS manager
I want to:	request a full product catalogue (static and instance data combined)
So that:	I can plan and prepare for using the A2C data standards or to support a data migration/loss issue.

User story 4 / Receive request from a centre	
As an:	awarding organisation
I want to:	be notified by a centre of their request
So that:	I can issue a product catalogue to them.

4 Assumptions

Centre Setup Notification and Request Product Catalogue	
CSNA1	Rather than a centre user filling out all mandatory and available optional values manually, it is assumed that the MIS will provide all this data automatically where it is already stored in the system.
CSNA2	If/when multiple centres merge and a new centre number is created, a new Centre Setup Notification is expected to be generated.
CSNA3	Hosted MIS will send individual Centre Setup Notifications for each of their centres. It is expected that hosted MIS will do these in one go; otherwise Centre Setup Notifications are expected to be sent as and when.
CSNA4	The centre has already been validated with the A2C transport and been given an A2C access key from the awarding organisation(s) to which they wish to send a notification. Each centre will have their own access key even if there are sub-sites (but it may be the same access key).
CSNA5	Centre users need to see which awarding organisations they have sent Centre Setup Notifications to, and subsequently to be able to view with which awarding organisations they have an A2C activation.
CSNA6 and 7	These assumptions have been removed since all guidance on sequencing is now incorporated in Section 11: <i>Solutions Architecture</i> .
CSNA8	Completion of the centre approval process, for centres new to an awarding organisation, and subsequent Centre Setup Notification should trigger a product catalogue transaction before any other transaction can be made.
CSNA9 to 11	These assumptions have been removed since all guidance on sequencing is now incorporated in Section 11: <i>Solutions Architecture</i> .
CSNA12	This assumption has been removed since all awarding organisations are implementing single identifiers for A2C.
CSNA13	When presenting a list of AO names to centres to select from, it is assumed that MIS suppliers will take names from the JCQ ^{CIC} published list of awarding organisation identifiers.
CSNA14	When validating centre identifiers upon receipt of a Centre Setup Notification, awarding organisations should use their own back office reference database for verification.

5 Business Rules

The business rules listed here outline key features and behaviours which must be adhered to by awarding organisations and MIS software suppliers when developing systems and designing in-house business processes. Some of these rules will feature in the compatibility testing of the data and messaging standards.

5.1 Common Business Rules

There are no common business rules applicable to this process.

5.2 Process-Specific Business Rules

The following rules have been identified specifically in relation to this process for Centre Setup Notifications:

Rule ID	Process Flow Reference	Party affected	Rule title and description
CSN1	All	All	Pre-requisites This process is dependent on two key pre-requisites: 1) The centre already has an A2C access key from the awarding organisation(s) to which they wish to send a notification. 2) The centre has an A2C compliant MIS.
CSN2	All	MIS	Centre Identifiers The MIS must allow a centre to set up identifiers for the separate awarding organisations that they work with prior to this notification being sent. The correct identifiers must then be sent to the appropriate awarding organisation.
CSN3	All	MIS	AO Identifiers Centre users should be presented with the name of the awarding organisation rather than the board code identifier eg WJEC rather than 41. The name of the awarding organisation to display in the MIS is included on the list of published AO identifiers which can be found in Appendix 2.

Rule ID	Process Flow Reference	Party affected	Rule title and description
CSN4	All	MIS	A2C activation status with individual awarding organisations Centre users need to see to which awarding organisations they have sent Centre Setup Notifications, and subsequently to be able to view with which awarding organisations they have an A2C activation.
CSN5	<i>Make feedback response available</i>	AO	Awarding organisation will make feedback available to centre The awarding organisation will make feedback available to the centre relating to the transaction received. The feedback message will include any error/warning messages to advise the centre of issues that must be resolved.

6 Service Level Recommendations

These Service Level Recommendations (SLRs) reflect realistic end target dates for all awarding organisations migrating to A2C messages. Awarding organisations aspire to process messages within a shorter time frame. They are subject to UK public holidays and UK standard working days (Monday to Friday).

These SLRs will remain under review by the JCQ^{CIC} during the early years of A2C adoption.

The following SLRs are applicable to this business process:

Service	Description
Delivery of acknowledgement messages to centre	A2C Transport Mechanism will transmit an acknowledgement message immediately to the appropriate centre.
Return of feedback response for Centre Setup Notification	Awarding organisations will expect to return feedback within one working day of acknowledgement of the notification by the transport mechanism.

7 Transaction Types

This section provides business descriptions and contextual information for each of the transaction types that support this business process.

7.1 Centre-to-Awarding Organisation transaction types

Centre Setup Notification: A transaction type to submit a Centre Setup Notification to an awarding organisation.

Request Product Catalogue: A transaction type to submit a product catalogue request to an awarding organisation.

7.2 Awarding Organisation-to-Centre transaction types

Publish Feedback – Centre Setup Notification: The provision of feedback on a Centre Setup Notification received by an awarding organisation in a corresponding Centre Setup Notification transaction. This transaction will include data item level feedback.

Publish Feedback – Request Product Catalogue: The provision of feedback on a product catalogue request received by an awarding organisation in a corresponding Request Product Catalogue transaction. This transaction will include data item level feedback.