



# Quality Assurance and Internal Verification Policy

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# Quality Assurance and Internal Verification Policy

## The role of the IQA/IV

There are three main areas identified as key to the role of the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)/Internal Verifier (IV):

- Verifying assessment.
- Developing and supporting Assessors.
- Managing quality of BTEC, FS and IAG delivery.

It is seen in the policy that a focus on the first of these is to be considered poor practice as is:

- No sampling strategy or rationale in place.
- Second assessing.
- Unsatisfactory or inadequate reports/records.
- Lack of feedback to Assessors.
- No monitoring of Assessors in action.
- Not using internal verification as a monitoring tool.
- Failure to standardise between Assessors and across programmes.

## Sampling Assessments

### Interim Sampling

Interim sampling has previously been difficult due to the "tail end" logging of evidence, particularly on BTECs, when assessment decisions are not made until late in the process. It is important for the IQA/IV to ensure that assessment decisions are available to review from the earliest possible stage, to achieve this chase tutors to upload evidence in a timely manner. Maintaining the introduction of the standards/portfolio following initial assessment.

The correct time to sample a portfolio is when some assessment decisions have been made. In this way, the IQA/IV can:

- Review learner work before an assessment decision has been made.
- Check the progress review reports given to candidates by Assessors.
- Identify both learning needs of the Assessors and Good Practice.
- Ensure that the "Rules of Evidence" have been followed without reliance upon personal knowledge of the Assessor.
- Ensure that the Assessor has validated the evidence presented (including signatories and product evidence).

## Summative Assessment

It is worth reiterating the rules of evidence at this stage, as there will be an audit trail to show that the Assessor has ensured that the evidence is:

- Valid - relevant to the standards for which competence is claimed.
- Authentic - produced by the candidate.
- Reliable - accurately reflects the level of performance which has been consistently demonstrated by the candidate.
- Current - sufficiently recent to be confident the same level of skill/understanding/knowledge exists at the time of claim.
- Sufficient - meets in full **all** the requirements of the standards.

**The IQA/IV role must not be seen as a second assessment or a "signing off of units" process.**

**Assessment reports must refer to the standards, and not just contain bland comments such as "working well" or "met the standards".**

Whilst learners will not be disadvantaged by poor evidence referencing, it is implicit within the standards for Administration, Customer Service and Management that they will be able to do so. It is therefore reasonable to expect that an Assessor will have offered more support with referencing to candidates following other awards.

**It is not acceptable that the IQA (and then the EQA) should have to search extensively to find evidence which supports the Assessor's decision.**

### **Sampling Strategy**

The sampling strategy must be agreed with the relevant External Quality Assurer. It will vary from award to award, as different awards require a different mix of assessment methods. It must, however, take into account the following:

- Size of sample needed to ensure reliability.
- Assessment methods used by the Centre.

Assessors:

- Number - if more than one Assessor has been involved in a particular portfolio, a greater level of assessment is needed.
- Experience - the less experienced an Assessor, the greater the sample needed.
- Workload - an Assessor with an unduly large caseload, or one covering several qualifications, will need a larger sample. An "occasional" Assessor would similarly require a larger sample, as they may not be up to speed with the assessment process. In considering workload, the Assessor's workload other than pure assessment must be considered, as this limits the amount of time available for assessment.

- Location - as we are assessing candidates in a diverse range of environments, there is a need for a larger sample to ensure that there is consistency applied across different work environments.
- Range of assessment locations.
- Nature of the learner groups.
- The Portfolio - especially when new standards have been introduced and Assessors are getting to grips with the new standards while continuing to work with the old ones.
- Whilst all units should be sampled, there should be a concentration on known common problem units. This includes units where the evidence is difficult to obtain, where the Assessor may be under pressure to sign the unit off to complete a qualification. This includes confidentiality issues, unlikely/infrequent events, etc.

### **Monitoring Assessment Practice**

It is an essential part of Quality Assurance that Assessors are observed on a regular basis in the process of conducting assessments, not just observations. This could include discussing a learner portfolio with a learner.

Each experienced Assessor will be observed twice a year, one observation being of the Assessor observing a learner, the other being of the Assessor assessing by other methods.

Inexperienced Assessors (in their first six months after gaining A1/AET) will be observed on at least three occasions during this initial period. It is for the IQA and Assessor to agree the frequency of observations after this period in line with the feedback given to the Assessor in the initial observations.

The quality and accuracy of the assessment plan will form part of the process.

The observation will be followed by feedback from the IQA on both the good and bad points of the observed practice. This will be provided in written form on an OTLA Report on Assessor Performance and a copy retained in the Centre IQA File.

Part of this process is to speak to the learner who will know:

- The Portfolio they are working towards (and will have a set of standards).
- How the assessment process works.
- How much progress they have made towards the achievement of their qualification.
- What they have to do in terms of gathering logging and cross-referencing evidence.
- That they can trust their Assessor.
- The Appeals Procedure.
- That all their learning needs are being met.

## **Standardisation**

Where more than one assessor is involved with a particular qualification, standardisation will be seen as a formal activity, and time will be allocated within assessor meetings to incorporate some element of standardisation. A unit will be selected by the IQA, and each Assessor will be asked to bring along the evidence from one or two completed portfolios. These will be passed around and other Assessors will be invited to comment on the evidence presented. This will identify where a particular assessor is requiring too much or too little from their learner. This would be particularly useful where a particular unit has proven to be contentious in the past.

Similar standardisation meetings will take place at least twice yearly between IQA's from different centres (regardless of occupational areas) to ensure the effective standardisation of the IQA process across centres.

## **Developing and supporting Assessors**

### **Assessor resource pack**

The IQA must ensure that all assessors within their sphere of responsibility possess the following:

- Copies of all standards they assess.
- QCA NVQ Code of Practice.
- QCA Guidance on Assessing (NVQ's).
- A set of all available assessment tools (sample documentation, centre policies - Appeals Procedure, Equal Opportunities Policy, Health and Safety Policy, pre-set questions, location of manuals).
- Details of Awarding Bodies and relevant External Quality Assurer.
- Details of Internal Quality Assurer.

In addition, they will be provided with details of their learners including progress to date, special needs, workplace contact details and end/target dates.

### **Newly appointed Qualified Assessors**

The IQA must ensure that they undertake observations on the new Assessor within a month of them first assessing on their own, to identify issues and concerns. This will be seen as a supportive, not a policing role.

The new Assessor must provide the IQA with validated copies of their A1/AET certificates along with a CV demonstrating recent occupational competence.

### **Assessors working towards A1/A2**

New Assessors will be allocated an experienced Assessor as a 'buddy' Assessor by the IQA as soon as they are appointed. The role of this Assessor is initially to allow the new assessor to shadow them, and subsequently to be shadowed by them.

All unqualified Assessors will have a personal action plan identifying a target date for completion. Where this has been completed by a Centre Manager, the IQA will be provided with a copy for their IQA file.

All assessment decisions will be validated by their 'buddy' assessor, and an appropriately increased sample will be internally verified - up to 100% if felt necessary.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

The IQA will direct assessors to keep their occupational skills up to date by regular work experience placements in the occupational areas they assess.

Where such placements or other relevant training has taken place, this will be recorded in the internal verification file.

### **Assessor workload planning**

IQA's will be made aware by management of the amount of non-assessment related work required of Assessors. In this way, it will be possible to more effectively allocate resource in an effective and balanced way. The IQA will maintain records of learners and their associated Assessor, together with start dates, end dates and target dates. In addition to effective allocation of learners, this will help to inform the Internal Verification sampling process.

### **Liaison with Awarding Bodies**

To be effective in their role as link with the Awarding Bodies, the IQA will have the following information to hand:

- Names of learners and FS/BTEC/Level registered for.
- Registration lists.
- Assessor details (in IQA file).
- Learner progress reviews and achievements to date.
- Assessment records and plans.
- Locations of learners.

- IQA sampling strategy.
- IQA records, including IQA's completed, feedback to Assessors, observation reports and learners discussion records.
- Record of claims made.
- Portfolios for all learners claimed since the last EV visit, and in-process portfolios as requested for sampling by the EV.
- All records will be kept for a minimum of 3 years following certification.

