Skills 365

Moderation and assessment Policy

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out the assessment, testing and sampling plan strategy for the Company (see section 2 for definition of terms).

2. Roles and glossary

The Company - The Company refers to **Skills 365.**

Learner - There are different terms to refer to the people in the learning process: students, learners, candidates. Although there is a subtle difference between the terms, for this paper, the generic term "learner" will be used to refer to any person doing any type of learning and completing any assessment tasks, be it formative or summative.

Tutor / Assessor - This paper uses the term "assessor" mostly when its focus is on the quality of assessment. The role of the assessor is to:

- arrange a summative assessment* that is fair, reliable and valid for relevant learning outcomes,
- mark the learners' summative assessment work,
- make a judgement on the work of a learner, as a pass, a fail or meeting the criteria, and ensure that it is authentic, current, valid and sufficient,
- give constructive feedback to the learner,
- record assessment decisions and relevant paperwork to evidence achievement of learning outcomes or qualification, and
- follow the Company's and the awarding body's internal quality procedures and guidelines.

For an explanation of the terms "fair, reliable, valid, authentic, current and sufficient," please refer to the **Access to Fair Assessment, Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations** policy.

The term **tutor** is used when assessing is not part of the role of the member of staff, but rather on teaching or training. The tutor's role is then on supporting the learners and developing their knowledge on a specific subject.

Invigilator – the person invigilating live assessments, i.e. ensuring that learners adhere to the exam conditions as set by the awarding bodies.

Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) / External Quality Assurer (EQA) - The IQA is the preferred term to internal verifier or IV. The IQA role is to ensure that:

- all assessors interpret the standards or mark a live paper in the same consistent manner through moderation and standardisation meetings,
- all assessment methods are valid, fair and reliable,
- all evidence resulting in claiming an outcome is authentic, current, sufficient and valid and that it meets all the relevant criteria,
- all moderation activities and feedback to assessors are recorded, and
- internal quality procedures are in place and respected.

The IQA also liaises with the EQA, which is the preferred term for external verifier or EV, and arranges visits and meeting with the EQA, who is sent by the awarding body. The EQA's role is to ensure that:

- the Company has an internal quality assurance procedures and policies in place and that it is followed,
- the IQAs carry out sampling activities and fulfil their roles as described above, and
- support the Company and the IQAs.

Centre Manager – as defined by the awarding bodies, it is the person who is responsible for the oversight of the qualifications offered by the Company. This role is taken up by the Company's Head of Administration.

Awarding bodies

The awarding bodies are the organisations that set out the standards for a particular qualification, send EQAs to training providers for quality measures and release certificates upon successful completion of the relevant summative assessments. There are different awarding bodies in England. The Company uses:

- Ascentis
- NCFE

Summative assessments

Summative assessments are the methods used to evidence that the learners have the knowledge and competence for the qualification. For vocational qualifications where learners have to meet different sets of criteria, the summative assessment is anything that shows that the learners have met the criteria – answers to questions, observations that the assessor has carried out, statements written by the learners etc.

Any pieces of evidence that form part of the summative assessments and that assessors mark are subject to being moderated by the IQA. Any summative assessments that are marked externally, for example by the awarding body, are not moderated by the Company's IQAs and are not subject to this procedure.

3. Test / Assessment Regulations

We confirm that we will adhere to all awarding body test regulations as laid out in their Operational Requirements Manual. The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring the most up-to-date version of this manual is available and followed at all times.

3.1 Test / Assessment Security

The specific content of any test / assessment must remain confidential. It is the responsibility of the Company's centre staff to ensure that this is always the case.

The general principles that must be adhered to, to ensure the above, are:

- Locations used for storing remain secure
- Content will remain secure when in transit
- Only staff that need access to fulfil their role should have access to the relevant content
- Staff who have knowledge of the assessment content must not share this information
- Procedures for issuing passwords to staff and learners that provide access to systems that hold the test questions must be secure. All users, invigilators and learners of the automated system must have individual logins with passwords only known to them.

Any breaches in the security of the tests must be reported to the Centre Manager who will in turn immediately report to the relevant awarding body.

3.2 Proof of Identity

All Learners will be asked to provide valid proof of ID, according to the awarding body's acceptable evidence list(s), prior to the registration of their qualification. This evidence will be recorded on our central recording system and made available for compliance and audit checks.

A learner's identity will again be checked prior to the start of any live assessments and appropriately recorded. Any learners not able to provide this evidence will be stopped from taking the live assessments.

3.3 Recognised prior learning (RPL)

The Company recognises that some learners may come to our centre with knowledge, skills and competence that they have acquired through different life activities, such as community and volunteering activities, family activities, work activities etc., but these are not formally recognised through a qualification.

All learners must go through an information, advice and guidance (IAG) session with one of our trained IAG advisors. Some learners may not need to complete the full training sessions due to their prior knowledge. This must be ascertained at the onset so that the tutors are aware of the sessions that these learners do not have to attend.

RPL can also be claimed when the learner shows that the knowledge, understanding or skills they already have means that they do not need to repeat units or complete additional assessment activity for a qualification. However, for the learners to achieve a qualification, they must evidence that they meet the criteria, as given in the qualification specifications. The evidence may be in the form of witness statements, work produced while on a voluntary position etc.

The RPL evidence must be assessed to the same standard as any other pieces of evidence – this evidence must be current, valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable (For an explanation of these terms, please refer to the **Access to Fair Assessment, Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations** policy) – and mapped to the appropriate criteria. It should then be submitted, along the mapping, to the lead IQA <u>no later than 4 weeks from the learner's start</u>

date. The IQA will then moderate the evidence before submitting an RPL form to the relevant awarding body.

In many instances, though, RPL alone will not be sufficient to cover all the criteria of a unit. If a qualification is achieved through a live assessment (an exam to sit), then there is no alternative for the learners but to complete the live assessment.

3.4 Exemptions

The Company also recognises that some learners may have already achieved some elements or units of a qualification through a recognised qualification. The IAG advisors must ascertain this and liaise with the lead IQA to gauge what elements or units of the qualification can be claimed through exemption – the lead IQA will check rules of combination and the qualification accredited number (QAN) of the unit to be exempted. The learners must supply evidence, usually in the form of a certificate with details of the units achieved, to claim exemption. Any evidence of exemption must be submitted to the lead IQA for approval.

To be noted, exemptions do not attract credit, as the knowledge, skills and competences as detailed in the unit standards have already been recognised through achievement of a certificated qualification that includes the unit(s) to be exempted.

3.5 Credit transfer

The Company acknowledges that some learners may have accumulated credits over a period of time. Credit transfer is relevant where a unit in a qualification is the same (same unit/qualification assessment number) as a unit in another qualification. A practical example of credit transfer would be a learner who achieves an award which is comprised of units 'A, B & C' transferring their credits to progress towards a certificate comprised of 'A, B, C, D and E'. In this case the units in the award have been nested in the certificate enabling the recognition of the previously achieved units.

If on the other hand a learner registered for the Certificate containing units 'A, B, C, D and E' without having done the award, but then withdrew from their programme of learning after completing only 'A, B & C', they could transfer their credits and consequently obtain the Award.

Potential credit transfer must be identified at the IAG stage. Evidence will be required and must be submitted to the lead IQA.

4. Conflict of Interest

The Company has strict requirements in place in order to avoid and remove any potential conflict of interest. This ensures regulatory requirements are met and protects our centre staff.

The following are examples of potential conflicts of interest:

- For all awarding bodies, an Invigilator invigilating a Learner personally known to them. However, for the Reformed Functional Skills, for any awarding body, a tutor must not invigilate any exams of his/her subject, even though the learners being invigilated are not known to him/her.

- For all awarding bodies, an observer carrying out an observation of invigilation on an Invigilator personally known to them.
- A member of staff doing a qualification with the Company. The relevant awarding body must be notified (stated in the quality documentation for NCFE). The IQA will carry out a 100% sampling for members of staff, whichever colour code is allocated to the assessor (Green, Amber or Red).

The following requirements MUST be adhered to:

Qualification	Tutors/assessors CAN	Tutors/assessors MUST NOT
Vocational qualifications	- Deliver a workshop and support their learners - Assess their learner's assignments	- Assess assignments of learners known personally to them - Internally verify their own assessments or assessments carried out by assessors personally known to them
Qualifications taken by staff	- Deliver a workshop and support the staff member - Assess the staff member's assignment	- Be working in the same centre as the staff member, unless there is no other alternative – to be approved by the Head of Operations - Be invigilated by one person – we require 2 Invigilators, one of them being from a different centre to the staff member

The Invigilator is responsible for ensuring the above procedure is followed during assessments. For remote invigilation, the Invigilator is required to consult the **Remote Invigilation Policy**.

The Centre Manager will ensure any conflict of interest in the Approved Centre is identified and recorded on the Conflict of Interest Record.

5. Awarding body registration

All learners are registered with the awarding body prior to a summative assessment being carried out. Head Office registers learners onto the relevant awarding body system for all qualifications and informs the assessors of the learners' registration number.

6. Sampling strategy

6.1 Colour rating system

The RAG rating system is used for three purposes:

- *Progression*. Each assessor is graded Red, Amber or Green. All new assessors to the Company are Red to start with. The promotion or demotion from one rating to another depends on the number of referred portfolios. The IQAs record this in their sampling

plans (for English and Maths, there is a separate *Tutor AG Rating Record* spreadsheet) to evidence promotion or demotion. Promoting or demoting an assessor is decided during the IQA standardisation meetings, which occur every 3 months. This system gives an indication on the performance of the assessors in that if they stay Red for a longer period of time than expected in relation to the number of portfolios submitted, the IQAs would question this and would investigate as to the reason for this.

● *Sampling strategy*. The number of units sampled depends on the assessors' rating. Full details in section 6.3 below.

● *Performance*. The IQAs use the RAG rating system when moderating units. For each unit referred, they apply a Red colour to the unit if there are major issues (more than 10% of criteria referred for a given unit); if the unit is referred for a minor reason (10% or less of criteria referred for a given unit), they apply an Amber colour to the unit; if the unit meets the standard, meaning the assessment was accurate, they apply a Green colour to the unit. The IQAs keep a *Sampling Plan* spreadsheet to record this.

6.2 Sampling procedure

The IQAs keep a *Sampling Plan* spreadsheet in which they plan their moderation by selecting which units to sample and in which they record the outcome of their moderation by applying a red, amber or green colour as indicated in section 6.1 above (in "Performance"). The IQAs endeavour to sample all units across a range of learners' portfolios for all assessors. To facilitate this task, they keep a record of units they have sampled for each assessor in a sampling plan.

6.3 Sampling strategy

The Company has set up a process regarding the number of units to sample for each qualification. However, additional random sampling will also be instigated to ensure the standard of assessing is consistent. In summary, the IQAs will increase the number of units to sample depending on the quality of the first units sampled. For English and Maths, for each referred unit, another one is sampled.

 The below tables summarise the Company's sampling strategy:

NVQ/QCF/RQF qualifications

The Company will carry out two different sampling strategies:

 Learners may not be part of a cohort if the number of portfolios to moderate is low. In this case, we will apply the same sampling strategy as in sub-section 6.3.2, Staff Development qualifications.

7. Portfolios and feedback

There are 2 types of portfolios that the Company use: either electronic or paper based. The preferred type is the electronic portfolio as it allows the IQAs to moderate the portfolios remotely at any time and place.

7.1 Electronic portfolios

Electronic portfolios may be used for any qualifications that the Company offers. However, we recognise that it is not appropriate for some learners and we accept that these learners complete a paper-based portfolio.

Process – assessing and moderating other qualifications

The assessor and IQA need to refer to the relevant procedure document for the process of electronic portfolios. The lead IQA will be able to direct them to the relevant document.

8. Tracking, completions and achievements

A tracker is used to record the learner's portfolio status – if assessed, sent for moderation, if satisfactorily moderated or referred etc. Assessors and IQAs must update this tracker at each activity.

The IQAs submit an achievement request on the Company's LMS for the administration team to process the achievements, including claiming certificates.

9. Standardisation

There are two types of standardisation meetings: the IQA standardisation meeting gathers all the IQAs only and the common standardisation meeting gathers the assessors and the IQAs.

9.1 IQA standardisation meeting

The IQA standardisation meeting's aim is to:

- discuss the quality of portfolios
- raise concerns and discuss them to find a solution
- share good practice
- discuss the criteria of qualifications and agree on a standardised approach to moderating them, through a joint moderation activity
- review the assessors' performance and, when appropriate, agree on an action plan for the assessor

These meetings are held every 12 months.

9.2 Common standardisation meetings

Due to the disparate nature of all the qualifications offered, the standardisation meetings do not gather all the assessors for all the qualifications together. For best practice, the Company welcomes other relevant third parties (such as quality teams of other providers) to attend the standardisation meetings.

The purpose of the standardisation meetings is to:

- share good practice and highlight areas of improvement
- ensure that all assessors interpret the criteria of different qualifications in the same manner

- ensure that all assessors understand and follow the relevant procedures in relation to assessing
- alleviate any concerns and discuss solutions to problems

Standardisation meetings may happen remotely (through an online platform) or onsite, depending on the availability of the assessors/IQAs, practicality and as part of our **Sustainability & Environmental Policy**.

All assessors and IQAs involved in a given qualification are required to attend the standardisation meeting.

9.2 Frequency

Standardisation meetings occur at least once a year with all the relevant assessors. More meetings are set up depending on the assessors' needs - either when the assessors request it, or when needs are identified through moderation and quality process.

Internal qualifications are not delivered on a regular basis due to different factors, mainly staff already holding the relevant equivalent qualifications or issues with staff coverage. Due to this, there are, at times, long periods of time when there are no learners undertaking a qualification. For this reason, standardisation meetings are held when required and when appropriate between the relevant assessor and the relevant IQA.

9.3 Minute taking

All minutes for all standardisation meetings are taken, shared with the relevant parties and uploaded to the Company's shared drive. At each meeting, the actions of the previous meeting are checked to ensure that they are achieved or to discuss the reasons as to why they are not achieved.

10. Observation

Please refer to the **Observation Policy**.

11. Review of the procedure

A Senior Manager will review this procedure annually or more frequently where there are significant changes in circumstances.

To be disseminated to: All Staff		Policy version: 001
Authorised by: Lucy Pitfield, Director	Issue Date: August 2023	Review Due: August 2024
Amendments:		