

Carrick Academy

SQA Internal Verification

Policy



May 2021

Rationale

Verification is a crucial element of quality assurance. It ensures that all candidates entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified standard. As an SQA accredited centre we are responsible for operating an effective and documented internal quality assurance system.

The Purpose of internal Verification

The majority of SQA qualifications are internally assessed by centres, which means that the centre's own assessors are responsible for deciding how candidates have performed in relation to the national standards for the qualification.

Internal assessment can be done using assessments that centres have developed, or using assessments provided by SQA. All assessments that contribute to an SQA qualification must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair — and assessors must apply the standards of assessment uniformly and consistently. The purpose of internal verification is to ensure that these principles are met, regardless of the particular system used by a centre.

The internal verifier's role is critical in ensuring that assessments are appropriately conducted and that any possibility of malpractice is minimised. An effective internal verification system will ensure that:

- valid assessments are used for each qualification
- all assessments are as accessible as possible while maintaining the national standards for the qualification.
- assessments are capable of generating sufficient evidence to allow candidates to show that they have met the national standard
- demonstrate that they have met the national standard for the qualification
- all assessors are familiar with the national standard
- assessors reach accurate and consistent decisions for the same qualification for all candidates in their centre in line with national standards

Effective internal verification is an ongoing process. Leaving internal verification to the end of the assessment process is poor practice and can jeopardise candidate's chances of gaining qualifications because there may not be sufficient time to carry out remediation or re-assessment.

Our responsibilities

As an SQA centre we must document our internal verification system. This must include information on all assessment sites, all qualifications offered, and all modes of delivery, including schedules and methodologies. This will allow all assessors and internal verifiers to understand the quality assurance process and their role within it. This document will be checked by SQA systems approvers and verifiers, and will also be used for reference by qualification approvers and verifiers.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all internal verifiers are competent in their role and that they understand and apply the internal quality assurance system consistently. There must be an effective selection and induction process for internal verifiers. Any training or development needs for internal verifiers should be identified and met.

Internal verifiers: qualifications and experience

Internal verifiers must have the required up to date subject knowledge and relevant qualifications and appropriate CLPL. The following qualifications are acceptable for internally verifying, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- Teaching Qualification Secondary Education
- Teaching Qualification Further Education

The Internal Verification Process

Internal Verification is divided into three stages – before, during and after the assessment process.

Before Assessment

- Internal verifiers should ensure assessors are familiar with the qualification standards.
- There should be an appropriate scheme to judge the candidates evidence.
- All assessments must be checked to ensure validity, practicality, equity and fairness.
- A meeting should take place between assessors and verifiers to discuss planned assessments.
- The strategy for sampling assessments should be agreed and explained. Sampling is the process whereby internal verifiers check that all assessors are making consistent and reliable judgements against the national standard.
- A standardisation meeting should take place between assessors and verifiers to agree assessment standards and ensure the reliability of judgements.

During Assessment

Standardisation activities are essential to ensure the reliability of our assessment judgements. They support us in making consistent and reliable judgements against the national standard. Standardisation activities allow any subjectivity and/or discrepancies between assessor's judgements to be identified and allow adjustments to remedy these.

Standardisation exercises could be:

Agreement trial: This standardisation exercise is appropriate for product evidence. Assessors consider examples of candidate work, together with the assessment scheme. Any discrepancies or differences in judgement should be discussed to reach a shared understanding.

Blind marking: This standardisation exercise is appropriate for written evidence and aims to reduce any bias by an assessor, however unintentional. There are two ways to carry out blind marking. In one form, the evidence is anonymous as the candidate's details are removed. In the other, more commonly used form, two or more assessors mark the same evidence but are unaware of the mark awarded by the other. Any discrepancies in marks, or application of the marking scheme, are discussed to reach a shared understanding.

Cross assessment: In this standardisation exercise, assessors exchange candidate evidence to review, discuss and agree on the interpretation of the standard. The assessors may have used a different assessment or followed different procedures, but they should be judging candidate

evidence against a common standard. Cross assessment can be particularly useful for centres with alternative or satellite centres, or who have a partnership arrangement for qualification delivery.

Double marking: This is similar to blind marking as it generally used with written evidence. In this exercise, assessors exchange the same candidate evidence to check each other's interpretation of the marking scheme and apply a common standard. It can be particularly useful to discuss any borderline decisions.

Dual assessment: In this standardisation exercise, also known as peer assessment, two assessors assess the same candidate. This type of standardisation is particularly appropriate for performance, practical activities and process skills. Each assessor should make an independent initial judgement, discuss any discrepancies and reach a consensus judgement.

Evidence review: In this exercise, the internal verifier collates a range of candidate evidence and asks a group of assessors to discuss any discrepancies between their individual judgements. This allows professional development as well as ensuring a shared understanding. It can be particularly useful for any new qualifications or awards.

Sampling

Sampling might be as simple as the internal verifier cross marking a number of candidate's assessments which another assessor has marked.

If, however, you have a number of different assessors and groups of candidates undertaking the same qualification departments need to have a sampling strategy which allows the internal verifier to check that each assessor is making consistent judgements in line with national standards.

The following factors should be taken into consideration when prioritising what to sample:

- Presentation/Class Numbers - The number of candidates included in the sample should be proportionate to the total number of candidates you have. You might choose to use a defined percentage or the square root of the total.
- New assessors – If you have an assessor who is newly qualified or new to delivering the qualification, you should sample a larger proportion of their candidate's evidence.
- The sample must include candidates from all assessors.

Please note – Internal verifiers should not be involved in the verification of their own assessment judgements.

A range of assessment methods should be included in the sample.

After Assessment

We should always carry out regular reviews of the internal verification system to ensure that it is working effectively. This could include:

- reflection on the assessment approach and judgements in relation to validity, reliability, practicality, equity and fairness
- reflection on the assessment process — identifying instances of good practice and where there had been challenges
- analysis of the internal verification process in terms of its impact
- discussion of the sampling process in terms of improving reliability and providing support

Internal Verification Records

Records of internal verification activity should include:

- The Schools documented internal verification policies and procedures.
- Reports of meetings with assessors to discuss assessment planning
- Reports of Standardisation exercises
- Records of observation of assessment
- Records of all sampling activity

These records should always be up to date and readily available to an external verifier from the SQA.

The following templates have been attached to support the internal verification process:

Approach to assessment checklist – Appendix A

Verification Sample Form – Appendix B

Department Internal Verification Report – Appendix C

*Appendix A***Approach to Assessment Checklist**

This document will ensure that the assessments you are using meet the requirements of validity, practicability, equity and fairness.

Course Name _____

Level _____

Unit/course component name _____

SQA Assessment

Yes/No

Department Devised Assessment

Yes/No

Point for Discussion	Yes /No	Comments
Does the assessment cover the skills and knowledge outlined in the course specification document?		
Is the assessment capable of generating sufficient evidence to allow candidates to show they are meeting the assessment standard?		
Is there an appropriate assessment scheme/marking instruction to check the candidate's evidence meets the requirements of the assessment standard?		
Does the assessment scheme/marking instruction provide clear and accurate guidance to assessors?		
Is the assessment accessible to all candidates?		
All assessors are familiar with the national standards outlined in specification and course assessment documents?		

Principal Teacher _____

Date _____

Appendix B

Verification Sample Form

Department _____

Subject _____

Assessor Name _____

Internal Verifier Name _____

Candidate Name	Unit/Course Component Title	Level	Assessor Mark	Verifier Mark	Agreed Mark	Action Required*

*Place a tick in this column if further action is required and record this on the department internal verification report.

Assessor Signature _____

Internal Verifier Signature _____

Date _____

Date _____

Appendix C

Department Internal Verification Report

Department _____

Date _____

Verification Group Name (*e.g. National 5 Physics*) _____

Unit/Course Component Title Verified _____

Assessor Names	Internal Verifier Names

Assessment Judgements

Comments/Feedback

Action Required

Candidate Responses

Strengths

Areas of development

Principal Teacher _____

Date _____

