



# **INTERNAL STANDARDISATION GENERIC GUIDELINES**

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Version 1

**This document is relevant to all OCR vocational qualifications where internal standardisation is required, including (but not limited to):**

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## Introduction

This document is intended to provide centres with additional guidance on how internal standardisation may be approached. These guidelines **must** be used in conjunction with the appropriate centre handbook and administration guides for the relevant qualification and should not be used in isolation.

The appendices in this document refer to examples that centres could use during internal standardisation. These are not prescriptive and centres may already have forms and documents in use that are effective.



## The Purpose of Internal Standardisation

The purpose of internal standardisation is to monitor standards and to ensure consistent and reliable assessment decisions across all staff, ensuring that all assessment requirements of the qualification are met.

Internal standardisation provides a system for checking the quality of assessment to make sure that it is:

- valid – relevant to the standards for which competence / attainment is claimed
- authentic – produced by the learners
- current – sufficiently recent for assessors to be confident that the learner still has the same level of skills or knowledge
- reliable - genuinely representative of the learner's knowledge and skills
- sufficient – meets all the requirements of the standards in full.

There are three stages of assessment where internal standardisation plays a vital role:

- The setting of assessments – including devising and/or modifying by centres
- The production of evidence and expectations
- Standardising centre staff assessment decisions.

Internal standardisation should be an ongoing process; however, an internal standardisation process should include the following formal stages in the process:

- Review of centre devised / modified assignments if relevant
- Standardisation of assessment decisions
- Sampling of assessment evidence
- Review of assessment practices.

## Staff Roles

In order to complete internal standardisation, a nominated member of staff at the centre needs to take responsibility for the process. For the purposes of these guidelines we will use the term 'internal quality assurer' (IQA). The role of the IQA is to:

- advise on interpretation of the standards, including feedback from previous assessment series (where relevant)
- co-ordinate assessment practice
- provide advice and support to centre assessors (staff who are assessing the qualification)
- monitor and observe assessment practice to ensure that all assessments are in line with the required standards

- make sure all centre assessors are assessing to the required standard
- sample assessments to confirm assessors' judgements
- make sure that all assessment decisions are fair, valid and reliable
- make sure feedback is given to all centre assessors and documented e.g. records of feedback
- suggest ways in which assessment may be brought into line to meet the required standards
- check that all units have been included in internal standardisation
- maintain assessment documentation
- liaise with the EQA (External Quality Assurer)
- organise regular standardisation meetings / activities / events for the centre assessors (see Appendix 1 for an example of a meeting template)
- provide feedback to centre assessors and identify development needs
- act as arbitrator for any disagreements in outcomes of assessments, including appeals.



# THE PROCESS OF INTERNAL STANDARDISATION

## *The setting of assessments*

OCR provides tasks or assignments for some qualifications which cover the requirements of the specification / unit and these can be used by centre staff to assess learners within the centre. In some cases modifications can be made to the OCR task or assignment in order to tailor the content to the needs / requirements of the centre or learners. However, if the OCR task or assignment is not used, or it is amended, it is important that any centre modified / devised task or assignment is checked by another member of staff. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and allows the opportunity for the learner to meet all the requirements of the specification / unit being covered by the assignment.

The checking of the task or assignment should preferably be by the IQA personnel or by a member of staff with experience of the nature of the qualification. This check should ensure that the task or assignment is both appropriate for the level of the qualification and allows all of the learners to achieve the relevant assessment criteria. For example, does the task set allow access to all the intended pass, merit and distinction criteria or learning outcomes (if relevant). The check should be documented and a record of the check kept by the centre. There may be qualification-specific guidelines which should also be referred to.

If, on completion of the check, the task or assignment is not appropriate, it must be amended so that it is of an appropriate level and allows the learners to achieve all of the relevant criteria. If these checks are not completed and the task or assignment is not fit for purpose, this will have implications when it comes to moderation and may impact on learner results.



## ***Standardising the delivery of assessment***

Prior to delivery, it is essential for all of those engaged in the assessment of the material / evidence to have a common understanding of the interpretation of the assessment criteria within the qualification specification and / or unit. This should reduce the possibility of there being different interpretations of the assessment requirements between staff and also when the assessments are being externally quality assured by OCR.

It is recommended that all tutors meet, after a certain proportion of assessments have been completed, in order to come to a common understanding of the way in which the evidence is to be assessed. This should reduce any differences in interpretation at this stage rather than waiting until all of the learners have completed a particular unit. It is essential for centres to keep records of any standardisation activities such as this e.g. minutes of meetings.

An appropriate approach to take in a standardisation activity would be to collate some exemplar candidate work (a unit or an individual task) and get each assessor to independently assess the work. A discussion should follow where the mark / grade or feedback is agreed and any queries considered in detail. This type of approach would also enable assessors to explore particular units that they may struggle with or particular assessment methods used in units. These types of activities should be completed throughout the assessment process, not just as a one-off activity. It is important to ensure that accurate records are kept of these activities (see Appendix 1).

Prior to delivery, agreeing the type of evidence expected for criteria to be met is vital. A good example is the use of witness statements. It should be agreed before statements are used what level of detail is expected, will there be a question and answer section, will the statement be explicitly linked to assessment criteria, etc. This type of discussion avoids discrepancies in evidence provided from different assessors.

## **Assessment decisions / sampling assessments**

It is of vital importance that all members of staff who are involved in the assessment of a qualification (or of an individual unit within a qualification) meet in order to internally standardise the assessment of that qualification / unit. Such a meeting should be led by an IQA (or other suitably experienced person) who can provide guidance as to the process. Essentially, this should be to ensure that each member of staff will reach the same decision for assessments and will mark the material in exactly the same way (e.g. annotation). When a centre is confident that this is the case, it can be agreed that whichever tutor has been involved in the assessment, there is a consistent standard so students will not be at any advantage or disadvantage based on who marks their assessment / evidence.

Where only one member of staff is delivering a qualification, then it is advisable to identify someone else in the centre who has experience of the nature of the qualification (e.g. is delivering a similar qualification in another subject) or relevant subject knowledge and arrange to meet to discuss expectations and methods of assessment or complete the activities outlined above but on a smaller scale. A record of this meeting should also be kept.

## **Sampling**

There are two types of sampling:

- interim sampling
- summative sampling.

## **Interim Sampling**

Interim sampling takes place periodically during delivery. Formal assessments may not have been fully completed or a unit may have been completed. This type of sampling ensures any concerns are picked up as early as possible, addressed with the assessor and action taken. It also enables the IQA to identify any possible training needs and enables a flexible approach to supporting assessors. It can also be an ideal opportunity to share any good practice across all assessors.

## **Summative Sampling**

Summative sampling should review the assessment decisions taken through an evaluation of the approach the assessor took with learner's work. This sample should be a check that the assessor has clearly identified that the evidence presented meets the standards required for the qualification. It should also take into consideration anything that will be submitted for external moderation.

## Sampling Strategy

There is an expectation that the internal sampling process will sample from across the entire qualification and will include all assessors who are involved in the delivery of assessments. However, it would be unusual for an IQA to maintain a 100% sample on assessment decisions. This implies that there is not a considered sampling strategy in place and that there is little to no confidence in the assessors' decisions. The sampling strategy will vary considerably according to the centre's and assessors' needs and the overarching principle should be whether the sample provides a realistic overview of the assessment activity in the centre and whether there is confidence that the assessment decisions not sampled would also meet the required standards.

The internal sample should reflect the following:

- all possible ranges of assessment decisions, for example, top end and bottom end of marks or quality of work
- the experience of the assessor should be taken into account and be reflected in the sample plan; for example, if someone is new to the qualification or assessing, then there is an expectation that they would have more work sampled than an experienced assessor
- if it is the first time the centre has assessed the particular qualification, then there would be an expectation of a larger sample
- The amount of work sampled should be relative to the number of entries being made in the qualification for that cohort
- There should be coverage of all assessment methods used in the qualification
- Coverage of all candidate cohorts e.g. full-time or part-time, different locations, etc.

In order to ensure that the points above are met, it is wise to create a standardisation sample plan at the beginning of the assessment process. A suggested format is in Appendix 2.

When completing the sampling of assessments you will be focusing on the learner's work against the set assessment criteria. A judgement will be made on whether it has been accurately assessed against the criteria. It is also necessary to ensure that the feedback provided to the learner is appropriate.

## Records of Internal Standardisation

A sampling activity should always be documented - see suggested formats in Appendix 3.

If, during sampling or standardisation meetings, there is identification of an inconsistency in the standards applied, the assessment judgements made, or a mismatch between assessor expectations and marking, then remedial action must be taken. Any evidence affected should then be reassessed in order to ensure that it is aligned with the agreed standard expected within the qualification. That standard should, of course, reflect the national standard as determined by OCR criteria and moderation / verification processes. Feedback from previous assessment series should be discussed, where relevant, as part of internal standardisation meetings, to ensure clarity of expectations and address problems encountered before.

In addition to reassessing work, any inconsistency should be immediately fed back to the assessor in question. This will ensure that the standards are reinforced and that further problems are not experienced. Further monitoring should then take place.

## OCR's role

Moderation and verification are carried out by awarding organisations and there is an expectation that there is consistency in the internal assessments undertaken by the centre. If the process of internal standardisation is robust and followed effectively by a centre, then this should be the case. Where internal standardisation has not taken place, this can potentially lead to decisions which can adversely affect learners' outcomes or to the centre being required to re-mark / adjust the marks awarded across the entire cohort.

Typically, there are common factors that may lead to issues or concerns around a centre's approach to standardisation. This list is not exhaustive:

- 'End loaded' sampling or fixed date sampling that does not take into account the entire assessment process
- A flat rate % of sampling that does not change or adapt according to circumstances and does not take into account things such as assessor experience / training needs / size of cohort, etc.
- No sampling plan or strategy in place
- Record keeping is not satisfactory and inadequate reports / records
- Lack of feedback for assessors
- No standardisation activities planned.

**Appendix 1: Example standardisation meeting template**

Qualification title :			
Level:			
Date of meeting:		Location of Meeting:	

**Standard agenda items**

1 Welcome	
2 Qualification update	
3 Feedback from External QA	
4 Sampling update and issues identified	
5 Units to be standardised	
6 Sharing of good assessment practice	
7 AOB	

In attendance:	Apologies:

Minutes of meeting:	Actions:



**Appendix 3: Example internal standardisation feedback record**

Qualification title:			
Level:			
Assessor name:			
Unit:			
IQA name:			
Date:			
Learner name:	Grade:	Feedback to Assessor:	
Learner name:	Grade:	Feedback to Assessor:	
Learner name:	Grade:	Feedback to Assessor:	
Action Points to be addressed by (Date):			
IQA Signature:		Date:	
Assessor Signature:		Date:	
IQA Signature: (Confirming action points addressed)		Date:	



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