

Certa Awards

Internal Quality Assurance of Qualifications

Thank you for choosing to work with Skills and Education Group Awards¹. You are one of over 500 Centres offering qualifications from our portfolio of over 400 regulated qualifications across a wide range of industry sectors. All our qualifications have been designed with the support of relevant stakeholders to ensure that they meet the needs of both learners and industries across the UK.

This means that the qualifications are designed to give learners the skills needed to find employment, progress within education or enhance their skills in their current employment and for life.

We recognise the importance of continuing to offer not only a wide range and breadth of qualifications, but just as significantly, excellent customer support.

Our friendly and responsive approach means that all our Centres have access to a dedicated Centre Support Officer and Business Development Manager to help manage and expand their portfolios. Our Moderators are all subject specialists, chosen for their experience, knowledge and passion for further education.

1 Qualifications

1.1 Each qualification will have:

- clear Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria;
- a level from Entry Level to Level 8 indicating the difficulty of the qualification and, where credit is applied, also showing the level of each unit/component;
- Total Qualification Time (TQT): 'the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required, in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.'² The size of a qualification is determined by the TQT.
- We use the terms award, certificate and diploma to offer a general indication in the qualification title of the size of the qualification.

An award has a TQT value of 120 or less.

A certificate has a TQT value in the range of 121-369.

A diploma has a TQT value of 370 or more.

¹ Certa Awards is a brand of Skills and Education Group Awards, a recognised awarding organisation and part of the Skills and Education Group. Any reference to Certa Awards, its registered address, company or charity number should be deemed to mean the Skills and Education Group Awards.

² Interpretation and Definitions – Conditions of Recognition

1.2 TQT is made up of two elements:

- The number of Guided Learning hours (GL)
- An estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which take place as directed by (but not under immediate guidance or supervision of a tutor (or other appropriate provider of education or training)). An estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which take place as directed by (but not under immediate guidance or supervision of a tutor (or other appropriate provider of education or training).

1.2.1 Examples of Guided Learning include:

- Classroom based learning supervised by an Assessor: e.g. classroom teaching; supervised practical sessions; practical or theory examination with invigilation i.e. any direct supervision of an assessment which does not involve teaching or any other guidance other than to direct or give instructions for carrying out/effective management of the assessment;
- Work-based learning supervised by an Assessor: e.g. safety in the workplace; other supervised work; observation of competence;
- Tutorial with an Assessor in real time: e.g. 1:1 teaching session face to face or otherwise;
- E-learning supervised by an Assessor in real time.

1.2.2 Examples of other time spent include:

- Research project;
- Portfolio assessment;
- E-assessments: e.g. those that are not supervised/invigilated;
- Reflective activities;
- Practical sessions which are unsupervised: e.g. unsupervised work in placement or workplace.

Our regulated qualifications are published on the current registers for regulated qualifications.

2 Quality Assurance Processes

2.1 What is Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)?

The purpose of internal quality assurance (internal moderation) is:

- to assure that the assessment decisions made by assessors are accurate and reliable when interpreting the standards set in unit/s by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- to assure the consistency of assessment decisions across assessors;
- to address the key principles of consistency, transparency, validity and reliability.

2.2 Why is it important for your Centre to have an IQA System?

As an Awarding Organisation recognised by the Regulators³, we have to ensure consistency of assessment decisions within and across Centres.

Irrespective of the size or type of your Centre, we require you to have your own Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system in place as an integral part of your overall Quality Assurance process.

You will need to make sure that you have a person(s) in your Centre responsible for implementing your Centre's IQA systems. This person is a vital link between you the Centre, and our External Quality Assurance Process.

2.3 What makes good IQA Practice?

2.3.1 The person(s) responsible for the internal quality assurance process in your Centre will usually be an Internal Quality Assurer/Internal Moderator. They need to approve and sign off assessment activities and sample assessment decisions made by assessors. Within your Centre, their role would usually involve:

- supporting programme planning
by delivery teams by sampling proposed assessment activities to check that they are meeting the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria they are designed to and that the activities are appropriate for the target learners;
- supporting assessors on a regular basis
through sampling, giving feedback on assessment setting and assessment decisions. This is useful in supporting future continuing professional development (CPD);

³ Ofqual in England; Qualifications Wales; CCEA in NI

- ensuring assessments are conducted and assessed both accurately and consistently across units and assessors;
- planning
in consultation with assessors, the sampling process to include all assessors and a full range of assessment decisions e.g. assessment of performance, assessment of knowledge and understanding;
- ensuring effective recording of learner achievement – maintaining up to date records;
- ensuring security of assessment materials and evidence during the IQA process;
- sampling of final portfolios prior to external moderation and claiming certification;
- ensuring that any actions required by us are carried out to agreed timescales.

2.3.2 Internal Quality Assurance activity should be an ongoing activity, and not just at the end of a programme of learning and assessment. Assessors need to be provided with support regarding their assessment practice throughout to ensure accuracy and consistency.

2.3.3 Your Internal Quality Assurer/Moderator must also observe an assessor carrying out assessments from time to time. This is particularly appropriate where learners are required to demonstrate performance of skills to the standard required in the unit. Where there are new or less experienced assessors, it is beneficial to observe them carrying out assessments on a number of occasions in order to ensure they are fully supported in their new role.

2.3.4 It is important to bring assessors from a Centre together to confirm that the assessor team has a common understanding of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and what is required from learners in order to meet them. This is called 'standardisation', and is at the heart of the quality assurance process.

2.5 Support for the IQA Process

According to the size and type of Centre, Internal Quality Assurers/Internal Moderators must be supported by someone who leads on Internal Quality Assurance, for example a Lead Internal Moderator/Senior Manager /Head of Centre /Proprietor.

2.5.1 Their role is to:

- ensure internal moderators receive an appropriate induction to the Centre's IQA requirements and all necessary documentation. This is particularly important when new members join the delivery and assessment teams;
- ensure that appropriate resources are available to carry out assessments and internal quality assurance activities in a safe, secure environment. This includes providing time for these activities to be undertaken;
- facilitate structured meetings to ensure quality and consistency of practice within the Centre and across delivery locations, encouraging discussion and contribution to the assessment process;
- advise on the provision of special arrangements for learners with special assessment requirements to ensure that all learners have access to assessment without diminishing the rigour or validity of the assessment process;
- carry out observations, as appropriate, using feedback to inform future continuing professional development (CPD);
- ensure appropriate induction and learner support is available;
- deal with complaints and appeals from learners, assessors and internal quality assurers / internal moderators.

2.6 Tracking and Recording Documents

It is important that the Internal Quality Assurance process is tracked and recorded, so that the External Moderator (sometimes referred to as an EQA – External Quality Assurer) can see evidence of the process. Your Centre may have its own tracking and recording documents which you use. We have produced templates to support your planning and recording of IQA activities. These are available under Information for Tutors and Assessors on the website. You can use and adapt these as you wish.

We are here to help ensure that you have quality systems and processes in place, if you have any queries, please don't put your learners achievement at risk by leaving these until the end of the learning programme. Call your Centre support team on 0115 853 1620.

2.7 Do Internal Quality Assurers / Moderator need specific qualifications?

We require those involved in the Internal Quality Assurance process to be suitably experienced and/or qualified. In general terms, this usually means:

- they are knowledgeable of the subject/occupational area to a level above that which they are internally quality assuring;
- they are vocationally competent, where required, for the specific qualification and any published Assessment Strategy;
- they have experience and expertise in internally assessing different types of evidence;
- they have an understanding of consistency, transparency, validity and reliability;
- they are familiar with their centre's internal quality assurance policy and the qualification and assessment requirements as published in the Qualification Guide.

It is best practice for Internal Quality Assurers/Internal Moderators to have one of the following Internal Quality Assurance Qualifications e.g.

- D34 Internally Verifying the Assessment Process
- V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process

or have/be working towards the current Internal Quality Assurance qualifications.

- Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice

For further details about the current qualifications look on the website and/or contact us directly by calling 0115 854 1620 or email enquiries to centresupport@skillsedugroup.co.uk

2.8 Malpractice and Maladministration

We expect that Internal Quality Assurers/Internal Moderators take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice by learners, assessors or others involved in the provision and assessment of a qualification, or maladministration on the part of your Centre or any other party involved in the assessment process.

If you, as an Internal Quality Assurer/Internal Moderator have reasonable grounds for suspicion of either of the above you must report it immediately to the staff responsible for investigating such an allegation and reporting it in your Centre. Where necessary, you and/or your Centre may need to report to complianceandregulation@skillsedugroup.co.uk using the form [Notification of Suspected Malpractice](#).

We will provide, if required, guidance to your Centre on how best to prevent such occurrences from happening in the future.

2.9 Outsourcing IQA activities

2.9.1 We require that you carry out Internal Quality Assurance activities to ensure that the assessment tasks set and the assessment decisions that you make are reliable, consistent and appropriate. If you are the only person who delivers programmes of learning and assesses learners, you will need to ensure that another appropriate person carries out Internal Quality Assurance activities. This may mean that you externally source the services of colleagues or consultants to carry out the IQA activities in your Centre.

2.9.2 In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to support your Centre with Internal Quality Assurance activities. Contact our Centre Support Team if you require support on 0115 854 1620 or via centresupport@skillsedugroup.co.uk

3 External Quality Assurance

3.1 The External Quality Assurance process is managed by us to ensure that Centres have provided learners with access to fair and reliable assessment opportunities, and that our qualifications are delivered in accordance with the standards stated in the Qualification Guide and approval documents.

3.2 It is a flexible system which may be applied at any time of the year, usually when learners have finished their learning programmes and have completed all assessment requirements.

3.3 We appoint External Moderators who will be allocated to your Centre to undertake the External Moderation. They are subject specialists and have detailed knowledge of the sub-sector and our processes and procedures.

3.3.1 They liaise with Centres to sample and confirm assessment decisions, review evidence of the Internal Quality Assurance process and confirm the evidence of achievement for the awarding of a qualification/unit. In addition they offer advice and guidance to Centres in order to support continuous improvement.

- 3.3.2 Your allocated External Moderator will make contact with you and will be available for advice relating to delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance to support you in providing the most appropriate modes of evidence collection for your learners.
- 3.4 Our annual moderation is included in the enrolment fee. Any additional External Moderation will incur a charge.
- 3.5 Centres must ensure that the External Moderator has access to all the assessed evidence, records of the assessment process and internal quality assurance process for all learners included in the External Moderation. Evidence may include digital media such as video, audio and picture files or e-Portfolios.
- 3.6 Standardisation: the External Moderator may ask for copies of evidence to assist with the standardisation activities across Centres. They may also request your permission to use some of the evidence produced by your learners as exemplars to support other Centres. Your External Moderator will discuss this with you.

And finally...

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the assessment process, contact our Centre Support Team on 0115 854 1620, or email centresupport@skillsedugroup.co.uk or your allocated external moderator.

If you are a new Centre, you are delivering a new qualification, or have new members of staff, it may be beneficial to ensure that your learners are going to produce the evidence required to meet the standards set in the qualification you are delivering and that your IQA process will provide the checks on consistency within your Centre that we expect. For more information on how we can help and support please contact us on 0115 854 1620 or email centresupport@skillsedugroup.co.uk

Please remember to check our website for information and guidance on the full range of qualifications, advice, guidance, products and services we offer.

We hope we have provided you with the information to support you in the development of your Internal Quality Assurance Processes.