Internal Verification Requirements for Centres Policy

Abstract

This document outlines the mandatory internal verification requirements centres must implement to ensure consistent assessment standards and maintain qualifications integrity

Document Control

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AIQ006257	30/10/24	VARS updated with VARCS Page 4
V1.0	26/09/25	Cover and document control sheet and sections 7 to 10 added

Contents

1. The role of the centre internal verifier

The internal verifier is at the heart of quality assurance. Their role is to manage and oversee assessment so that it consistently meets national standards, thus maintaining public confidence in every qualification awarded.

2. Requirements for internal verifiers

Internal verifiers should hold, or be working towards, a recognised internal verification qualification. The following examples are acceptable (although Active IQ will consider other internal verification qualifications upon submission):

- Level 4 Award in Understanding the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- V1 qualification
- D34 qualification

If the internal verifier wishes to verify work-based competence qualifications (NVQs), they must hold one of the following qualifications:

- Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- V1 qualification
- D34 qualification

Internal verifiers must also have the following:

- a relevant qualification alongside appropriate industry experience that demonstrates the knowledge, understanding and competence of the qualification they wish to internally verify

3. Verifying assessment

The aim of the role is to:

- ensure consistent and reliable assessment and internal verification decisions for all learners

- monitor the quality of assessment and highlight problems, trends and development needs of assessors

This can be done by:

Sampling assessments
This should involve reviewing the quality of assessors' judgements and practices at different stages of the programme.

Beginning – mid-programme (interim)
The internal verifier should sample the assessment process at different stages. This should include:
- looking at portfolios that are, at the time of sampling, incomplete
- checking the feedback and advice given to learners by assessors on complete/incomplete evidence e.g. action plans, formative assessment
- checking that results are up to date, e.g. (ongoing) summary of achievement
- monitoring programme delivery of the qualification/s and formative assessment ensuring additional learning needs of learners are being catered for appropriately
- interviewing learners to ascertain whether the programme objectives are being met, and if they are adequately prepared for any planned assessments

This may result in:
- picking up problems at an early stage and thus avoiding having to turn down assessors' final decisions
- highlighting individual tutor/assessor needs e.g. further guidance or training
- identifying and sharing good practice within the centre across the team (standardisation)

End of programme (summative)

This entails reviewing the quality of the assessment decision by evaluating how the assessor has reached the decision, through observing the assessor in practice and reviewing assessor feedback and comments to learners in relation to the assessment specifications/criteria. This should be sufficiently detailed for the internal verifier to feel confident in judging whether the correct decision was made. This is to be reviewed alongside any questioning carried out by the assessor, appropriate feedback given, and whether the assessor is familiar with the standards required for the qualification/s.
In addition, the internal verifier should comment on:

- assessment records in learner portfolios (including the summary of achievement and learner declaration of authenticity etc.)
- the overall presentation of the portfolio
- whether validity, authenticity, reliability, currency, sufficiency (VARCS) have been utilised successfully
- whether timely progress/achievements have occurred

The internal verifier should record comments to assessors on approved internal verification documentation.

4. Sampling strategy

100% sampling is rarely a good use of internal verifier resources. It implies a lack of confidence in both assessor practice and internal verifier strategy and is difficult to maintain.

The sampling strategy will vary according to the needs of the centre, the experience of tutors/assessors and the particular programme(s), but it must always be agreed with the external verifier.

In defining the strategy, the following should be taken into account:
- size of sample
- assessment methods
- assessors
- units and qualifications
- assessment sites/satellite centres

Sample size

The sample should present a sufficiently accurate picture of the quality of assessment in the centre to be confident that those decisions not sampled also meet national standards. It is the internal verifier's responsibility to decide how to apportion their time to meet the needs of the learners and tutors/assessors. For example: an assessor that has only just started assessing may well need more guidance and support than an assessor who has been performing their role competently for the last five years.

The internal verifier should review each tutor's/assessor's risk rating to identify trends and feedback from ongoing quality assurance activities. Ideally, the internal verifier should risk rate tutors/assessors depending on specific roles or qualifications in which they are involved.

The key factor is that the internal verifier has a clear rationale for which risk rating to set for each tutor and assessor for every qualification in which they are involved, and that they could amend allocated risk ratings depending on identified findings from completed internal/external quality assurance activities as a result of learner feedback/complaints, or as a result of significant changes in learner achievement rates or pass marks. In addition, risk ratings should also be amended to reflect any awarding organisation changes to qualifications and/or the associated assessment strategies to ensure that evidence is available that confirms tutor/assessor adherence to the new requirements.

5. Assessment methods

The internal verifier must, over time, sample the full range of assessment methods, for example RPL, observation of performance, theory papers, worksheets, session plans, self-evaluations, case studies, oral questioning etc. For work-based qualifications, the following should also be sampled over time if they have been utilised: observation of performance, witness statements, reflective diaries/accounts, simulations, logbooks, underpinning knowledge, professional discussions and work products.

Assessors
All assessors should be included in the sample and take into account their allocated risk rating (per qualification) and their workload (learner numbers):

- newly qualified assessors and assessors working towards their assessor qualification
- qualified and experienced assessors may not need to have more than one or two decisions per learner, and only one or two learners sampled (depending on learner numbers)
- the greater the workload, the larger the sample per assessor should be. Increased ratios of learners to assessors may indicate assessment problems, e.g. diminished quality of assessment, therefore sampling should be increased

Note: Internal verifiers also working as assessors cannot internally verify their own assessment decisions and should not be carrying out any aspects of programme delivery or assessment if they are the allocated internal verifier for that learner/cohort.

Units and qualifications

All units (not necessarily all learners) for all qualifications for each cohort should be sampled. Internal verifiers can only verify assessment decisions in the areas in which they have relevant subject competence and currency.

Where potential problems in interpreting or understanding standards exist, the sample should take these into account. For example: when standards are revised, particularly where both sets of standards (old and new versions) are being used simultaneously, there is potential for confusion.

Assessment sites/satellite centres

The strategy should be repeated for all assessment sites/satellite centres.

Peripatetic assessors, who visit across a number of assessment sites, must be included in the sampling strategy.

6. Monitoring assessment practice

The aims are to:
- ensure that national standards of assessment (as defined in Active IQ's qualification and specific assessment guidance documents) are adhered to by all assessors
- identify problems or areas where assessors require advice/development, to ensure that learners are aware of, and are satisfied with, the assessment process

This can be done by observing assessors in action and giving them feedback on their performance.

The internal verifier should aim to monitor all assessors within a 6-12 month cycle, depending on the size and level of activity of the assessment team.

The quality and accuracy of all assessor records and reports should be included in the review, as well as the assessor's interpersonal skills.

The internal verifier should note any advice or training needed by assessors, and any areas within the qualifications which could create difficulties for other assessors.

Feedback to assessors should be given in private, and be constructive and positive, including praise.

The internal verifier should record all comments and development points given to assessors on approved documentation. For large centres operating from multiple sites, or with satellite centres, it may be necessary to have a lead or coordinating internal verifier with overall

responsibility for the assessment and verification team. This helps to ensure that decisions made in one site/satellite centre are consistent with those made in others.

In this case, the routine of observing assessment practice must be extended to include observation of internal verifiers.

Interviewing learners

The internal verifier should check with learners that they are able to:
- state which qualification/s they are working towards
- describe the assessment process
- describe what progress they have made towards achievement and any outstanding elements
- have confidence in their assessor
- describe the centre's procedures that relate to them
- agree all their learning needs are being met

The internal verifier should record answers from learners on approved or appropriate documentation.

Standardising assessment judgements

The aims are to:
- ensure that each assessor consistently makes valid decisions
- make sure that all assessors make the same decision on the same evidence base • ensure that all learners are assessed fairly

This can be done by carrying out standardisation exercises.

It is critical that standardisation exercises are undertaken with all assessors on a regular basis, particularly where peripatetic or inexperienced assessors exist or where centres operate from different sites/satellite centres.

The simplest method is to make copies of a piece of evidence (e.g. internal theory paper, worksheet, session plan or recorded performance of a task) and ask each assessor to make a decision based on what is in front of them.

The internal verifier is checking that the process of assessment, as well as the judgement, is sound, by looking at whether each assessor:
- reaches the same decision

- wants to ask the same questions in order to authenticate the evidence or make a decision
- gives the same feedback

Examples of ideas for standardisation exercises:

- a 'problem' unit/evidence type

Ask each assessor to bring along two examples of completed evidence that they have signed off. Each assessor completes an assessment feedback form, as if they were assessing and feeding back to the learner, for each piece of evidence.

Discussion follows as a group, and if necessary, feedback is given to assessors in confidence at a later date. The internal verifier should record feedback to assessors on approved documentation.

- new standards

Where a unit/evidence in an old qualification appears similar to that in a new qualification, evaluate evidence presented for the old standards against the new standards. Aim to highlight the different requirements between old and new standards.

- alternative forms of evidence

Enable assessors to share an alternative form of evidence with colleagues, perhaps resulting from applying reasonable adjustments for a learner with special needs. Form a consensus view about its acceptability or otherwise against the standards.

Where a centre has a lead or coordinating internal verifier, standardisation exercises must be extended to include internal verifiers so that consistency of verification judgements is monitored across all teams.

Developing and supporting assessors
The internal verifier aims to guide, support and ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of assessors/tutors in their team.

This is exacerbated when there are new tutors/assessors, when standards change or following an external verifier visit or other inspection.

All new tutors/assessors should receive an appropriate level of induction.

Internal verifiers should ensure that all tutors/assessors in their team have access to:

- national standards/qualification specifications for the qualification(s) they are to deliver/assess
- all assessment materials and documents as provided by Active IQ, the centre's appeals procedure, equal opportunities policy, etc.
- the centre's health and safety policy
- Active IQ policies and procedures (where relevant) and other awarding organisation documentation

Internal verifiers should ensure that all tutors/assessors are aware of:

- verification procedures
- information about Active IQ and their external verifier
- the Active IQ access to assessment policy and how to deal with any learners with special needs
- the appeals procedure, and equal opportunities and diversity policy

The internal verifier should also check and hold on file the following information for each tutor/assessor:

- personal profile or CV
- relevant competencies
- validated copy of their assessor and/or teaching award certificate
- relevant certificates to demonstrate subject competence(s)
- CPD record for each tutor/assessor
- completed skills scan document for each tutor/assessor

If any assessor or internal verifier is working towards appropriate assessor/verifier qualifications, their decisions *must be countersigned by a qualified assessor or internal verifier.*

Please note: the allocated countersigning assessor cannot also act as the internal verifier for the same trainee assessor. In this situation, a separate internal verifier must be used.

The external verifier will expect to see evidence that the internal verifier has identified and addressed learning and development needs for each assessor. A system of CPD must be in place and maintained.

This may include:

- training in access to assessment, reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- updating on Active IQ requirements
- updating vocational skills and/or knowledge
- updating national standards for assessment
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Where a centre has a lead or coordinating internal verifier, this model must be extended to include other internal verifiers.

6. Managing the quality of the programme

The aim is to:

- ensure assessment resources, including personnel, are effectively managed and planned
- provide a quality assurance role

This can be done by managing:

- tutors/assessors and their workloads
- equipment and materials for access to assessment
- learner needs and support. The internal verifier should specifically monitor the progress within a qualification of any learners with special or additional learning needs

In addition, the internal verifier should be in a position to report directly to the senior management of the organisation on all aspects of the programme.

The internal verifier should also have an explicit responsibility to carry out self- assessment of the centre's performance against Active IQ's internal verification requirements of centres.

Acting as a link between external verifiers/Active IQ and the centre
The aims are to:

- provide a link and good relations with Active IQ
- improve the quality of programme delivery assessment

This can this be done by liaising with the external verifier and providing them with access to the following:

- tutor/assessor details

- number of learners registered with Active IQ for each qualification (enrolment details/forms)
- records of learner achievements to date
- any reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations required/applied
- the internal verifier sampling strategy
- internal verifier records (feedback to tutors/assessors, learner interviews, learner portfolios). Note that the external verifier is at liberty to request some portfolios without prior knowledge
- certification claims
- evidence of progress towards meeting agreed action plans
- ensuring the centre has up to date information from Active IQ and that this is passed on to all assessors/tutors

Note: It is important that action plans are completed within the specified timescales. Failure to do so may result in a quality issue being noted on the centre files, and may raise the risk rating and render the centre non-compliant or, ultimately, lead to sanctions.

Active IQ can provide you with internal verification documentation to use if you do not have your own documentation. Please contact your allocated external verifier to provide this documentation for you.

7. References to associated documents

- Active IQ's Appeals Policy
- Active IQ's Approved Centre Risk Management Policy
- Active IQ's Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy
- Active IQ's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

8. Implementation and dissemination

This policy is available in Active IQ website.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy is to be reviewed by the External Quality Assurance team.

10. Data retention

Any data gathered, processed, or deleted will be handled in accordance with NCFE Data Retention Policy