



Internal Standardisation Generic Guidelines

Version 2



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You'll continue to see the OCR or Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations name while we work to update our material to our new name, Cambridge OCR. This will take some time, and you can still access all up-to-date qualification resources and materials via [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Introduction

This document provides guidance on how you may approach internal standardisation. You **must** use this guidance in conjunction with the appropriate centre handbook/specification and administration guides for the relevant qualification(s). This guidance must not be used in isolation.

The appendices in this document refer to exemplars that you could use during internal standardisation. These are not mandatory, and you may already use forms and documents that are effective.



The Purpose of Internal Standardisation

The purpose of internal standardisation is to monitor standards and ensure consistent and reliable assessment decisions across all staff in your centre. It also helps to ensure 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 that same level of skills or knowledge
- reliable - genuinely representative of the learners' knowledge and skills
- consistent – different assessors assessing the same units/qualifications are judging evidence and interpreting assessment requirements in the same way
- sufficient – meets in full all the requirements of the standards.

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

- The setting of assessments – including devising and/or modifying (where this is allowed)
- The production of evidence and expectations
- Standardising assessment decisions across your assessors

Internal standardisation should be an ongoing process and include the following formal stages:

- Review of centre created/modified assignments (where allowed)
- Standardisation of assessment decisions
- Sampling of assessment evidence
- Reviews of assessment practices

Roles in your centre

A nominated member of staff in your centre needs to take responsibility for the internal standardisation 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 (those in your centre assessing the qualification(s))
- monitor and observe assessment practice to ensure that all assessments are in line with the required standards
- make sure all 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 assessors and that the feedback given is documented/recorded
- suggest ways in which assessment may be brought into line to meet the required standard
- check that all units have been included in internal standardisation
- maintain assessment documentation
- liaise with the EQA (External Quality Assurer)/moderator
- organise regular standardisation meetings/activities/events for the centre (see Appendix 1 for an example meeting template)
- provide feedback to assessors and identify development needs
- act as arbitrator for any disagreements in outcomes of assessments, including appeals



The Process of Internal Standardisation

Setting Assessments We provide tasks or assignments for some qualifications which cover the requirements of the specification/unit. In some cases, you can modify our task or assignment to tailor the content to the needs/requirements of your centre or learners. However, if our task or assignment is not used, or it is amended, it is important that any task or assignment that you modify or create 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 IQA or by a member of staff with experience of the nature of the qualification should check any centre modified or created task or assignment. This check should ensure that the task or assignment is both appropriate for the level of the qualification and enables all learners to achieve the relevant assessment criteria. For example, making sure the task set allows access to all the intended pass, merit and distinction criteria (if relevant). The check should be documented and a record of the check kept in your centre. We may also provide qualification specific guidelines which you will need to refer to.

If, on completion of the check, the task or assignment is not appropriate, then it must be amended so that it is of an appropriate level and enables learners to achieve all 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 your learners' results.

For our Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Advanced Nationals qualifications, you must use the set assignments we provide to assess your learners. The live assignments to use will always be on Teach Cambridge, our dedicated teacher website. You are not allowed to devise your own assignments for these qualifications. In most cases, you are not permitted to modify our set assignments for these qualifications. Where we do allow modification, we will identify the modifications permitted in the teacher information section of the assignment. More information is in the specifications.

Standardising the delivery of assessment

Before you start delivery of assessment, it is essential that all those involved in the assessment process have a common understanding of the interpretation of the assessment criteria for the qualification and/or unit. This should reduce the possibility of there being different interpretations of the assessment requirements between your centre assessors and when we externally quality assure the assessments.

It is also vital that you agree the type of evidence expected for the criteria to be met. A good example is the use of witness statements. Before witness statements are used, you should agree the level of detail expected. For example, 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.

It is recommended that all teachers meet, after a certain proportion of assessments have been completed, 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 that you keep records of any stages of standardisation activities you complete e.g. minutes of meetings.

An appropriate approach for you 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. You should then hold a discussion to agree the mark/grade and feedback needed and any queries should be 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).

Assessment decisions/sampling assessments

It is of vital importance that all those in your centre who are involved in the assessment of a qualification (or of an individual unit in a qualification) meet to internally standardise the assessment of that qualification/unit. An IQA (or other suitably experienced person) should lead such meetings, to provide guidance about the process. Essentially, this process should ensure that each assessor in your centre will reach the same decision for assessments and will mark the material in exactly the same way (e.g. annotation). This will allow you to be confident that whichever centre assessor is involved in the assessment, there is a consistent standard so learners will not be at any advantage or disadvantage based on who marks/assesses their work/evidence.

Where only one member of staff is delivering a qualification, we advise that you identify someone else in your 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 meetings to discuss expectations and methods of assessment or complete the activities outlined above but on a smaller scale. You should also keep records of these meetings.

Sampling

There are two types of sampling:

- interim sampling
 - summative sampling.
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Interim Sampling

Interim sampling takes place periodically during delivery. For example, this may be when a small number of learners from a cohort have completed the assessment for a unit. This type of sampling ensures any concerns are picked up as early as possible, are addressed with the assessor and action is taken. It also helps the IQA to identify any possible training needs and enables a flexible approach to supporting assessors. Interim sampling can also be an ideal opportunity to share any good practice across all assessors. You must check the specification or centre handbook about assessment delivery requirements so that you are clear about what is allowed.

Summative Sampling

Summative sampling should review the assessment decisions taken through an evaluation of the approach the assessor took with learners' 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

We expect your internal sampling process to sample from across the entire qualification and to 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. Your sampling strategy will vary considerably according to your centre and assessors' needs. The overarching principle should be whether the sample provides a realistic overview of the assessment activity in your 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 grades or quality of work
- the experience of the assessor: for example, if someone is new to the qualification or assessing, we expect that they would have more work sampled than an experienced assessor
- if it is the first time your centre has assessed a particular qualification, we would expect a larger sample to be checked
- 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 learner cohorts e.g. full time or part time, different locations etc.

We recommend that you create a standardisation sample plan at the beginning of the assessment process, to make sure that the above points are met. We have provided a suggested format in Appendix 2.

When you complete the sampling of assessments, you will be focusing on the learners' work against the set assessment criteria. You will judge whether the work has been accurately assessed against the criteria. You must also make sure that the feedback provided to learners is appropriate.

Records of Internal Standardisation

Sampling activity should always be documented (see suggested formats in Appendix 3).

If, during sampling or standardisation meetings, you identify an inconsistency in the standards applied, the assessment judgements made, or a mismatch between assessor expectations and marking, you must take remedial action. Any evidence affected should then be reassessed to ensure that it is aligned with the agreed standard expected in the qualification. Where relevant, that standard should reflect the national standard, as determined by our criteria and moderation/verification processes. You should also discuss feedback from previous assessment series' (where relevant), as part of internal standardisation meetings, to make sure there is clarity of expectations and to 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. You should then complete further monitoring.

Our role

We complete moderation/verification and we expect that there is consistency in the internal assessments you complete. If your process of internal standardisation is robust and followed effectively, 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 you 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
- No sampling plan or strategy in place
- Record-keeping is not satisfactory, with inadequate reports/records
- Lack of feedback for assessors
- No standardisation activities planned

Appendices

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:	

Contact the team at:

☎ **01223 553998**

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