



# Internal Quality Assurance Strategy

Most recent update: 27 May 2026

## Rationale

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is the process through which quality and achievement of learning is moderated and assessed, and good practice widely disseminated. IQA involves final stage standardisation and verification of accredited courses, as well as quality checks on both accredited and non-accredited provision. Pre-course quality checks confirm that activities, assignments and tasks meet the assessment criteria for accredited provision prior to distribution to learners. The IQA process also ensures recognising and recording progress, achievement and progression (RARPAP) guidelines are followed for all non-accredited provision.

IQA checks provide opportunities for

- feedback on any issues arising
- reports on progress and development
- monitoring and recommendations for improvements

Assessments of learner progress toward accreditation are also monitored on an ongoing basis through standard quality support visits (QSVs), formative feedback and walk-through procedures. Relevant information from this monitoring is used to inform best practice.

Internal moderation and verification (including second marking) gives all learners access to fair and accurate assessment. Moderation and verification also ensures assessment practices meet the requirements and standards of awarding bodies, being consistent, transparent, valid and reliable.

This IQA strategy provides a framework with clear guidance, to enable greater consistency of assessment practice and standards within Skills and Employment programmes, irrespective of course content. The strategy is concerned with both assessment materials and assessment decisions.

Internal moderators and verifiers, including second assessors, should have qualifications, experience and knowledge relevant to the assessment and verification of the qualification they are verifying.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Officer for Curriculum Development and Delivery (in consultation with other Senior Officers and the Skills and Employment Manager) to:

- exercise professional judgement in selecting competent internal moderators, assessors, verifiers and second markers
- ensure the overarching organisational quality assurance framework is followed
- disseminate regulatory requirements and key updates to all relevant members of the team
- update centre contact details with registered awarding bodies when changes arise
- ensure long-term absence and succession plans are in place for all designated roles relating to the accredited programmes we offer, specifically for Quality contacts, Internal Verifiers (IVs) and Assessors



### The Skills and Employment IQA process

- Assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not unintentionally discriminate against any learner
- Tutors and assessors receive on-going advice and support, for example in designing assessment activities
- Assignment tasks and briefs are internally verified prior to the distribution to learners
- Learners clearly understand assessment requirements and are given opportunities to achieve against the assessment criteria by completing appropriate assessment tasks
- Learners' work is presented in a manner that enables effective verification to take place
- Learners' assessed work presented as evidence for the award of credit is authentic
- Evidence of learner achievement is clearly mapped to the assessment criteria
- Recommendations for the award of credit are valid, reliable and consistent

### Assessment Inaccuracy Procedure

When the internal verification process identifies assessment inaccuracies, the following steps will be taken to ensure transparency, fairness, and continuous improvement:

#### 1. Identification and Communication

- The internal verifier will document the identified inaccuracies and communicate them to the assessor in a timely and constructive manner
- The nature and extent of the inaccuracies will be clearly explained, with specific examples provided
- The impact of the inaccuracies on learner grades and feedback will be assessed

#### 2. Corrective Action

- For minor inaccuracies: The assessor will review and revise their marking, ensuring alignment with the assessment criteria and internal verification feedback
- For moderate or significant inaccuracies. Depending on the severity and impact, one or more of the following actions may be taken:
  - Re-assessment of a sample  
The assessor will re-assess a representative sample of learner work based on the IV feedback
  - Re-assessment of the entire cohort  
In cases of widespread or systemic inaccuracies, the assessor may need to re-assess all learner work for fairness and consistency. With cohorts of 8 or below the entire cohort will be resampled as standard practice
  - Change in RAG risk rating for a period of time for this assessor



The assessor may be informed that they will change in risk rating (e.g. an increased sample size may be requested for future cohorts for a period of time deemed necessary by the IV). This will be communicated to the assessor and documented as part of the IV process

- Learner resubmission opportunity

If appropriate and feasible, learners may be offered the opportunity to resubmit their work based on clarified criteria and feedback

### 3. Verification and Communication of Outcomes

- The internal verifier will confirm the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken by the assessor
- Learners will be informed of any changes to their grades or feedback in a clear and timely manner, with a rationale for the changes provided
- The IQA team will document the entire process, including the identified inaccuracies, corrective actions taken, and communication with learners

### 4. Additional Considerations:

- Impact on future assessments

Based on the identified inaccuracies, the IQA team may recommend revisions to the assessment criteria, training for assessors, or adjustments to future assessments to prevent similar issues

- Data protection and confidentiality

We will ensure all procedures comply with relevant data protection and confidentiality regulations

- Transparency and fairness

All actions taken should be transparent and fair to all learners

**IQA Stages and Activities**

Timescales are subject to modification dependent on start dates of units and delivery models

It is important to note that the key functions of internal moderation/verification described below will be carried out by the designated internal verifier (IV).

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Peer Review/Internal Moderation/Standardisation/Verification Activities</b>
<b>Autumn Term 1 August – October</b>	Induction for new tutors. Tutors assigned units/modules. Course spread sheet produced. Internal moderator/verifier informed. Pre-course check of assessment completed for all courses.
	IQA schedule established and circulated to all stakeholders including standardisation/CPD sessions scheduled.
	Internal verification sampling plan produced
	Courses observed as per sampling plan (QSVs and walk-throughs)
	Autumn 1 IQA moderation & standardisation IV samples assessed work as per sampling plan
	Peer review process monitored to inform improvements
<b>Autumn Term 2 November – December</b>	Internal verification sampling plan continues
	Autumn 2 IQA moderation & standardisation IV samples assessed work as per sampling plan
	Documentation prepared for EV visit (if relevant)
	Peer review process monitored to inform improvements
<b>Spring Term 1 January – February</b>	Spring term sampling plan actioned (QSVs and walk-throughs)
	Spring 1 IQA moderation & standardisation IV samples assessed work as per sampling plan
<b>Spring Term 2 March</b>	Spring 2 IQA moderation & standardisation IV samples assessed work as per sampling plan
	Peer review process monitored to inform improvements
<b>Summer Term 1 April – May</b>	Summer term sampling plan actioned (QSVs and walk-throughs)
	Summer 1 IQA moderation & standardisation IV samples assessed work as per sampling plan
	Peer review process monitored to inform improvements
	Prepare documentation for EV visit (if relevant)
<b>Summer Term 2 June - July</b>	Summer 2 IQA moderation & standardisation IV samples assessed work as per sampling plan
	Pre course checks to be carried out for next academic year provision prior to first delivery.
	Peer review process monitored to inform improvements



## Sampling

A risk-rated (RAG) sampling approach is applied to ensure that internal quality assurance activity is proportionate, robust and focused on areas of greatest risk. Sampling is designed to provide confidence that assessment decisions are fair, consistent, valid and reliable across all tutors, courses and delivery settings.

### RAG Risk Rating System

Each tutor and course is allocated a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating. This determines the amount, depth and frequency of sampling required.

#### Red – High Risk (100% sampling required)

Red indicates high risk and always requires full sampling meaning:

- All learners on the course are sampled
- All units for each sampled learner are reviewed
- All assessment methods used are checked

Red is applied when:

- The tutor is new
- The tutor is experienced but delivering a new course or qualification
- The course is being delivered for the first time
- There is limited or no prior IQA evidence
- Significant issues have been identified through IQA or awarding body review

100% sampling continues until sufficient evidence supports moving to Amber.

#### Amber – Medium Risk (variable; usually around 50% of cohort)

Amber indicates medium risk where some assurance exists, but development or monitoring is still required. Amber sampling is:

- Variable and determined by the Lead IQA, based on professional judgement
- Typically around 50% of the cohort unless risk indicators suggest a higher or lower proportion

Amber is applied when:

- An experienced tutor is delivering a course new to them
- A course has been delivered only a few times
- IQA has previously identified actions or areas for development
- A tutor/course is moving from Red toward Green but is not yet fully secure

Sampling is more extensive than Green but less than Red.



### **Green – Low Risk**

Green indicates confidence in consistent, accurate assessment practice. Minimum sampling requirements for Green-rated tutors/courses:

- Fewer than 8 learners → sample 2 learners
- 8 or more learners → sample 3 learners
- Determined by the Lead IQA

Green is applied when:

- Tutors are experienced
- Courses have a consistent track record of compliant delivery
- Courses hold Direct Claims Status (DCS)
- Previous IQA activity shows secure and accurate assessment decisions

### **Movement Between Ratings**

RAG ratings are not fixed:

- Tutors may move from Green to Amber if IQA identifies concerns
- Tutors/courses may move to Red where significant issues arise
- Improvement through IQA, support or CPD may lead to re-rating to Amber or Green

At the end of every IQA moderation meeting, a review of all current RAG ratings must take place to ensure they are accurate and up to date.

### **Sampling Approach**

Sampling considers:

#### Units

Work will be sampled from all units delivered during the term.  
Red status requires all units to be sampled for all learners.

#### Learners

Sampling includes a representative spread of learners, considering demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability and is determined by the Lead IQA.

#### Tutors

Sampling volume is directly linked to RAG rating, with greater scrutiny for inexperienced or higher-risk tutors.

#### Centres

Where delivery occurs in multiple centres or settings, each will be sampled as appropriate.

#### Assessment Methods

Sampling will include the full range of methods used, such as:

- Individual written work
- Tutor observation and feedback
- Presentations



- Practical assessments
- Online submissions

### **Short and Long Courses**

#### Short Courses (5 Units or Fewer)

Due to their compact structure, short courses receive full moderation for selected learners.

- The IQA selects learner samples based on this sampling strategy and RAG rationale.
- For each learner selected, 100% of the units must be moderated.
- If a short course or tutor is Red-rated, then 100% of learners and 100% of units must be sampled.

#### Long Courses (More Than 5 Units)

For larger or longer programmes:

- The IQA will produce a sampling plan outlining units, assessment methods and learners to be sampled.
- The sampling plan will reflect the RAG rating of both tutor and course.
- Red ratings still require 100% sampling, regardless of course length.

Longer courses (over 5 units) must also include an interim IQA review partway through delivery, whereas short courses do not require an interim IQA due to their shorter duration and full end-point moderation.

### **Review of Sampled Work**

Moderation of selected samples includes evaluation of:

- Method of assessment – suitability for the learning outcomes
- Learning outcomes achieved – fully, partially or not yet met
- Assessment criteria – completeness and sufficiency of evidence
- Levels – accuracy of level applied
- Feedback – clarity, justification and usefulness
- Quality standards – consistency with centre expectations (see Quality Checklist)

The IQA selects samples using all elements of the rationale above, including RAG rating, tutor experience, learner demographics, assessment methods, course structure and risk indicators.

### **Documentation Requirements**

All IQA activity must be supported by accurate documentation, including:

- Current RAG risk ratings
- Sampling plans
- Moderation and standardisation records
- Quality checklists
- Double-assessment evidence (where required)
- Sampling proformas