CASS STRATEGY FOR OFQUAL REGULATED QUALIFICATIONS

Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny

Strategy Rationale

The strategy includes the following factors:

- The typical course of study for the qualification – sessional, roll on roll off, fixed start/end dates for the qualification
- The typical duration of the course of study – number of weeks, months or terms
- The typical learner undertaking the qualification – Adult learners in the workplace and accredited study centres in the UK and internationally
- The typical type of centre delivering the qualification – FE College, Private Training Provider, HE College, University, School, Academy, Overseas centre
- The number of components in the qualification and the number of these that are marked by a centre – The number of units within the qualification and the number of centre-devised assessments associated with the units
- The typical evidence generated for the qualification may include – Assignments, a portfolio of evidence, assessor observation, multiple choice questions (MCQs) short answer questions (SAQs), oral and written feedback
- The assessment model – units that are marked pass/fail or graded relative to the qualification centre specification
- The number of learners taking the qualification – the overall number and whether these are following the same course of study
- The time period over which all components for a qualification are sampled
- The number of learners sampled during each activity for each component – based on the EQA sampling strategy and rationale
- The content of the monitoring sample of learners – a sample checking involves learners that have already received results for their qualification or only those that have yet to receive results and whether all or some Learners are sampled prior to receiving results
- The intended outcome of monitoring activities – to inform future changes to processes, monitoring visits or if certificates need to be revoked

CASS – Generic Key Factors

Key Factors	
Course of study	Roll on roll off or fixed start/end dates. Face-to-face classroom-based, online or blended
Duration of study	TQT – total qualification time and GLH – guided learning hours
Learner profile	Adult learners, aged 16-18 or aged 19+
Centres delivering	Schools, FE Colleges, Adult Education Centres Universities or HE Institutions Private Training Providers Central/Local Government/NHS Voluntary/Charity Organisations HM Prisons, Armed Forces Employer, Overseas Centre
Qualification components	Mandatory units or Mandatory units plus Optional units
Evidence types	Assignments, workbooks, MCQs, SAQs, tasks, assessor observation, peer assessment, case studies, practical performance evidence service/treatment/procedure evidence, oral questions, portfolio of product evidence
Assessment model	Summative assessments are provided by Qualifi
Number of learners taking the qualification	The course of study could vary depending on the delivery model and duration. Assessment requirements will be consistent. Internal quality assurance and external quality assurance to be conducted

Components of the qualification to be monitored	All components. All assessments – once internally marked, across all units and assessors. Learners from various cohorts to be sampled by Qualifi's EQA (based on the centre delivery model, duration)
Timing of monitoring	On completion of the first cohort, plus annually thereafter. Monitoring can take place at any time during the year
Number of components sampled during monitoring	All components, across multiple learners (based on the EQA sampling strategy)
Time period for sampling qualification components	Roll on, roll off basis.
Number of learners sampled during each monitoring	Based on the EQA sampling Strategy – a minimum of 10 students, or 20% of the total, whichever is higher
Content of monitoring sample	All learners who have completed Qualifi's standard assessments
Intended outcomes of monitoring	As mentioned in the External Quality Assurance – EQA Monitoring Report

Factors will vary relative to the qualification and specific attention will be given to the variation in delivery models, course duration, and assessment types via the External Quality Assurance process.

For the specific CASS key factors – refer to the centre specification for the qualification.

Additional considerations (centre-specific) to the strategy:

- Monitoring to take place (ahead of certification) if a centre has not previously marked assessments for the qualification.

- At approval, all members of the centre staff involved in the qualification will be approved. Centre staff updates to be provided by the centre Any additional centre staff will be approved and all staff to be monitored during the EQA process.
- Monitoring to take place if there is a significant increase in learner registration for the qualification, since the last EQA monitoring, based on the risk management of centres. An additional EQA monitoring would take place if the annual visit had been carried out.
- If there is any suggestion of malpractice, or maladministration in relation to delivery, assessment and certification of learners.
- When the qualification content considerably changes as a result of a review and development based on national occupational standards or industry requirements. This would apply to any centre offering the qualification once it had been changed
- Where the professional standard (licence to practice) is changed.
- If an analysis of data and evidence suggests any additional scrutiny is required.

External Quality Assurance (EQA)

– External quality assurance will include reviewing:

- Assessments marked by each centre (all assessors)
- Individual assessments within a qualification (all assessments)
- Assessments of specific components of a qualification
- Assessments undertaken on a range of cohorts within a centre

As part of the external quality assurance monitoring process centres have direct access to their EQA report through the Plato-Pro management portal, following sampling of centre-assessed marking, to include the following:

Overall approach

- why assessment marking by the centre is considered appropriate, or not, for particular assessments within a particular qualification or type of qualification
- the appropriateness, or not, of the approach to assessment by the centre, based on the nature of the evidence produced by learners in the relevant assessment
- why the approach is appropriate, or not, to ensure valid and manageable qualifications, based on the risks it has identified in relation to the qualification
- how the approach to assessment ensures that certificate claims are accurate and if certificate claims are inaccurate, what could be the possible reasons?

- what the centre needs to do to remain compliant or become compliant with the conditions

Feedback and actions will be recorded within the Qualifi External Quality Assurance Report following each external quality assurance monitoring visit.

Allowing the centre to mark assessments

Centres will be subject to a rigorous, Centre Approval process. Only once a centre has met all of the approval criteria will they be entitled to offer Qualifi qualifications. There are several checks made on the centre to ensure they have appropriate staff, skills, knowledge and competency, staff development and expertise to deliver internally assessed assessments for qualifications.

For each qualification centre staff will be approved based on:

- Relevant qualifications held.
- Experience and expertise based on the subject area.
- Evidence on continuous professional development

Only when a member of the centre staff satisfies the above criteria will they be approved to assess the qualification they wish to be approved for. Centre staff will be monitored at each external quality assurance monitoring. Any additional staff wanting to assess the qualification will need to be approved ahead of assessing the qualification.

Centres and subsequently staff will be approved per qualification, based on staff competency and the anticipated learner numbers for each qualification, ensuring that staff ratios are appropriate.

Assessment and marking guidance and materials will be provided for every Qualifi qualification.

Monitoring

Justification for the CASS of centre-assessed qualifications – The monitoring of centres will be based on risk management – per qualification to include centre staff, number of learners, locations of assessment (if applicable), and assessment methods used to internally assess the components of the qualification. The approach will be supported by the Qualifi External Quality Assurance policy.

Selection of personnel to undertake CASS of centre-assessed qualifications – Recruitment will be carried out to ensure all Qualifi EQAs are appropriately qualified, experienced and knowledgeable for the qualifications they monitor. Selection processes will be carried out by the Quality Assurance team.

Training provided for those personnel undertaking the monitoring of CASS at centres carrying out centre-based assessments – the EQAs will undertake an induction to Qualifi following selection, this will be followed by training on the external quality assurance processes to be applied. Further training and standardisation throughout the year.

Ensuring personnel undertaking monitoring activities remain suitable – CPD schedules and logs for all to be submitted on an annual basis and as part of the external quality assurance team resource review. It is a mandatory requirement for EQA to maintain their CPD that is relevant to the qualifications they externally quality assure and submit this to Qualifi.

To enable the CASS requirements to be met – guidance will be provided to centres to enable them to maintain information and records for monitoring purposes. Communication will be established prior to any monitoring visits to ensure the centre is aware of the information and assessment records requested for review and where applicable the learners required for observation sampling.

The requirements for centres to retain any data (including evidence generated by Learners and marked by Centres) necessary to allow it to undertake Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny – guidance provided to centres based on the documentation required for external quality assurance monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of centres – will take place once a centre has been approved to offer qualifications (monitoring to check staff, delivery model, planned assessments). Monitoring to take place upon completion of the first cohort (first monitoring) prior to any certificate claims being made by the centre. Thereafter annual monitoring will take place. Additional monitoring could be activated should there be any unusual spikes in registrations or certificate claims between the planned monitoring visits. Qualifi will be proactive in monitoring the data for each centre in relation to registration and certificate claims, ensuring no additional risk could occur through this process.

Feedback to Centres and monitor Centres performance over time – written feedback will be provided to centres following every external quality assurance activity, via the Qualifi EQA Monitoring Report. Centre 'real-time' activity reports (registration/certification) are shared with centres directly through the Plato-Pro management portal. These reports are reviewed by Qualifi to flag any unusual trends and trigger EQA monitoring if required.

Ongoing training and guidance – will be provided to centres, both via generic training sessions and updates, but also through a centre requesting a bespoke training session based, specifically on their own needs. Training, guidance and support will be provided on ways to deliver and assess qualifications.

The sampling approach – the Qualifi External Quality Assurance Sampling Strategy will be used to ensure that the sampling of centre assessments is appropriate, this will include a sample of learners, across each assessor, and each assessment method that relates to internally assessed assessments.

Selecting examples of marking – the centre will be advised of the sample chosen by the EQA ahead of the external quality assurance monitoring visit to enable them to prepare and make available all of the necessary documentation.

Conflict of Interests

Identify and monitor all relevant conflicts of interest, and any scenario that could foreseeably lead to such a conflict in the future – each EQA will be required to declare any conflict with a centre or any staff working at a centre that is approved by Qualifi.

Conflict of interest declarations will be completed and reviewed annually. As part of their contract of agreement for work, EQAs will be required to declare any conflict should it arise outside of the annual review.

Allocations of EQAs to centres will include consideration of any conflict of interest that has been flagged. Any conflict of interest will lead to an alternative EQA being allocated to the centre.

Take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice or maladministration in relation to the delivery or marking of assessments by a Centre – the Qualifi quality assurance processes will be used to ensure any acts of malpractice or maladministration are prevented through rigorous quality assurance. EQA monitoring will be carried out at the Centre Approval stage and annually thereafter. Other mechanisms for monitoring will include monitoring of registration numbers, certification claims and staff resources (centre staff to be approved before working with a qualification).

Enter into arrangements with a Centre on terms which allow the awarding organisation to comply with the Ofqual Conditions as a whole, and monitor, and where necessary take action, to ensure the Centre does not put the awarding organisation's compliance at risk.

Ensure that assessments for the relevant qualification remain fit for purpose upon delivery, ensure that the criteria against which Learners' performance is differentiated are being accurately and consistently applied by Assessors – regular review by Qualifi EQAs to monitor the quality of assessment across each of the qualifications a centre is approved to offer.

Ensure any results it issues are accurate and fully reflect the evidence produced by the Learner and the Learner's attainment when judged against the standard set by the awarding organisation – regular reviews by EQAs to monitor centre claims for certification and to ensure that learners have fully satisfied the requirements of the qualification with regard to evidence, and assessment and that assessment is consistent across each Assessor.

Taking action and making adjustments

EQA visits to the centre to monitor the quality of delivery and assessment and check the accuracy of the assessment. Outcomes of visits will include action plans that set actions for the centre to address, within a reasonable timescale, or recommendations for improvement, also with timescales for implementation. These actions will be included in Qualifi's EQA Monitoring report.

If you require any further information, please contact Qualifi's External Quality Assurance Team at ev@qualifi.net