



CENTRE ASSESSMENT STANDARDS SCRUTINY (CASS) POLICY



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1. SCOPE

1.1. The document clearly sets out the internal and external quality assurance for Smart Awards centres, external quality assurers, internal quality assurers and assessors.

1.2. Valid and reliable assessment is key to ensuring that Smart Awards qualifications have value and credibility. The purpose of this document is to describe the quality assurance systems and processes that must be applied to assessment, including actions to ensure that consistent assessment decisions are reached. This will assist centres in the management and delivery of Smart Awards qualifications. Any queries regarding the quality assurance of assessment should be addressed to Smart Awards.

2. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

2.1. Where a Centre undertakes any part of the delivery of a qualification on behalf of an awarding organisation, this condition applies in addition to the requirements in Condition C1.

2.2. Where this condition applies, an awarding organisation must ensure that arrangements between it and the Centre include a written and enforceable agreement. That agreement must in particular include provisions which –

(a) require the Centre to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the awarding organisation is able to comply with its Conditions of Recognition,

(b) require the Centre to take all reasonable steps to comply with requests for information or documents made by the awarding organisation or Ofqual as soon as practicable,

(c) require the Centre to assist the awarding organisation in carrying out any reasonable monitoring activities and to assist Ofqual in any investigations made for the purposes of performing its functions,

(d) set out all the requirements with which the Centre must comply in order to continue to deliver the qualification,

(e) establish a sanctions policy to be applied in the event that the Centre fails to comply with these requirements,

(f) require the Centre to retain a Workforce of appropriate size and competence to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by the awarding organisation,

(g) require the Centre to have available sufficient managerial and other resources to enable it effectively and efficiently to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by the awarding organisation,

(h) require the Centre to undertake the delivery of the qualification required by the awarding organisation in accordance with Equalities Law,

(i) require the Centre to operate a complaints handling procedure or appeals process for the benefit of Learners,

(j) set out any Moderation processes that the awarding organisation will undertake or that will be undertaken on its behalf,

(k) specify a process to be followed in any withdrawal of the Centre (whether voluntary or not) from its role in delivering a qualification, and

(l) require the Centre to take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners in the case of such a withdrawal.

H1.1 For each qualification which it makes available, an awarding organisation must have in place effective arrangements to ensure that, as far as possible, the criteria against which Learners' performance will be differentiated are –

- (a) understood by Assessors and accurately applied, and
- (b) applied consistently by Assessors, regardless of the identity of the Assessor, Learner or Centre.

H1.2 Where –

- (a) an awarding organisation offers an option as to tasks which may be completed by a Learner in an assessment or as to assessments which may be completed by the Learner (including units),
- (b) the awarding organisation reasonably concludes that there is a material inconsistency between the Level of Demand of two optional tasks or assessments, and
- (c) it is likely that the inconsistency will prejudice a group of Learners,

the awarding organisation must make a reasonable alteration to the criteria against which Learners' performance will be differentiated for the optional task or assessment so as to prevent that prejudice from occurring.

H1.3 Where such a reasonable alteration is made for an optional task or assessment, an awarding organisation must ensure that the alteration is applied uniformly in the marking of every task or assessment in relation to which a Learner has taken that option.

3. SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

3.1. Principle 10. The awarding body must ensure that its systems and processes for the identification, design, development, implementation and review of qualifications and assessments are fit for purpose.

3.2. Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.

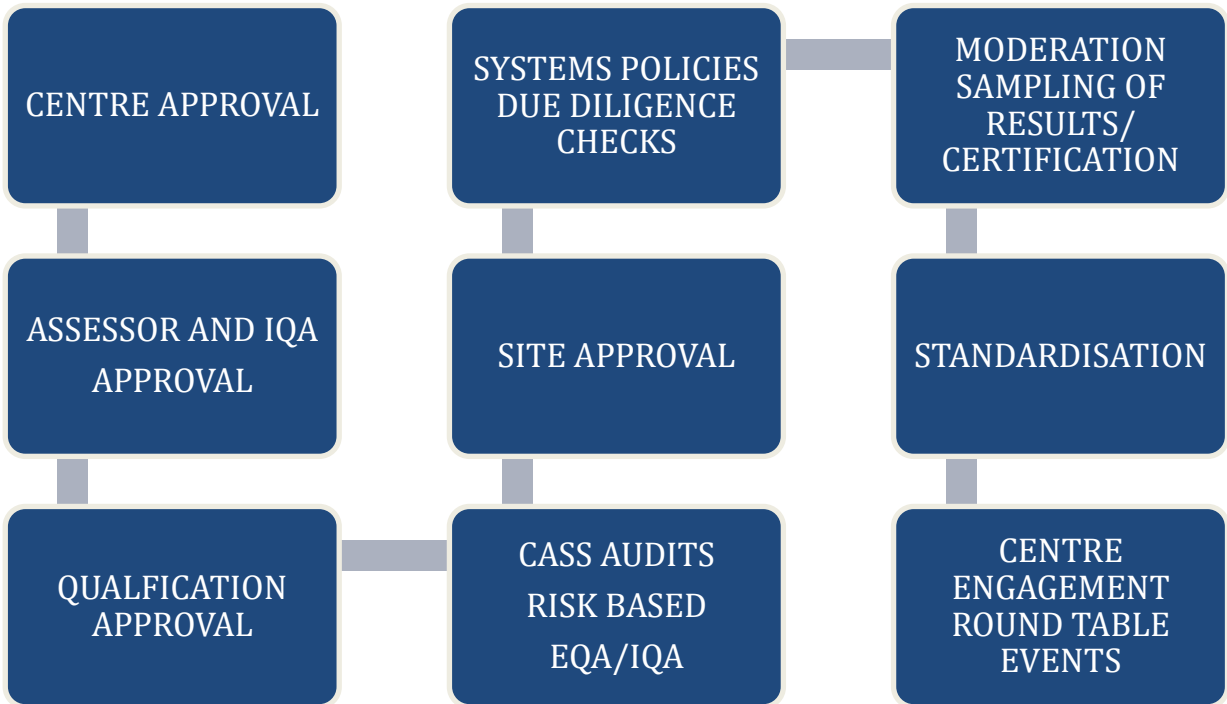
3.3. Principle 13. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have systems and processes which ensure the effective quality assurance of accredited qualifications.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. This policy is for qualifications offered by Smart Awards. This policy is for centres accessing Smart Awards qualifications and related services and all those involved with the delivery and quality assurance of Smart Awards qualifications.

4.2. Smart Awards has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it. Smart Awards has the day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretation.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL



6. APPROVED CENTRES

6.1. Organisations known as centres that are approved by Smart Awards to deliver Smart Awards qualifications.

6.2. The centre application process includes a number of checks to be carried out prior to the centre being approved to deliver and assess Smart Awards Qualifications.

6.3. We verify that each member of centre staff has the appropriate level of qualifications prior to approving the centre to deliver the qualifications. We also check and sign off the centre sites.

6.4. Ensure the centre has the appropriate agreements in place with all centre staff, ensuring they are aware of Smart Awards regulatory requirements when delivering, assessing, marking assessments, and conducting quality assurance activities.

6.5. Ensure the centre has all mandatory policies and procedures in place to protect the interest of learners throughout their learner journey.

6.6. We require evidence that the centre has the appropriate Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) procedures in place to verify the assessment decisions made by the centre staff.

6.7. We conduct a pre-approval introduction with all new centres to discuss the requirements surrounding becoming a centre and how to maintain compliance with the requirements set by Smart Awards and the regulators. Part of this visit allows us to provide additional support and guidance in all these areas, including how to maintain effective administration records for quality assurance purposes.

6.8. Once a potential centre has met all the necessary approval requirements, they are subject to the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Audits. All centres are subject to 2 audits annually, we may undertake a further unannounced audit based on risk.

6.9. We carry out round table events twice a year with all centres as part of our engagement strategy and standardisation.

6.10. Centres will be expected to carry out standardisation meetings. Standardisation is a fundamental component to offer a consistency of assessment processes for Smart Awards qualifications. Standardisation must also be carried out between assessors and internal quality assurers, this may occur through routine sampling or trends of actions/feedback through cohorts of learners.

7. CENTRE REQUIREMENTS

- Manage assessment and verification on a day-to-day basis.
- Have effective assessment practices and internal quality assurance procedures in place
- Meet Smart Awards requirements for qualification delivery
- Have sufficient competent Assessors and Internal Quality Assurer
- Verifiers with sufficient time and authority to carry out their roles effectively.
- Ensure they adhere to the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) strategy

8. CENTRE QUALITY ASSURANCE

8.1. It is important that all centres have minimum quality assurance in place prior to delivering any of Smart Awards qualifications. Centres are required to sign an agreement with Smart Awards regarding quality assurance arrangements.

8.2. To ensure that robust systems and processes are in place, there needs to be a named person with responsibility for the Centres internal quality assurance. Their role is to ensure that:

- Relevant policies are in place – Smart Awards provides guidance on the minimum expectations for policies.
- Adequate systems and processes are in place around registration, training/assessment and certification.
- Policies, systems and processes are kept under review so that they remain fit for purpose
- The Centre is prepared for monitoring visits where applicable.
- Any actions arising from monitoring visits are addressed.
- Communications from Smart Awards are disseminated as necessary.
- Where regulated qualifications are offered, any specific requirements around the qualification(s) are met

9. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

9.1. Smart Awards outline a number of policy requirements that may assist centres in devising their own policies. While Smart Awards policies may be used as a model, these will need to be adapted to suit the centre's own systems and processes.

10. DATA PROTECTION POLICY

- Make reference to the Data Protection Act 2018 to include the General Data Protection Regulations and that this relates to the collection and retention of personal information

- State that the centre has notified the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Note that Scotland has its own Information Commissioner.
- Include their ICO registration number.
- State specifically what data is collected and for what purpose.
- Indicate that data is collected and used with the consent of the individual who is also made aware that they may withdraw their consent at any time
- Say how long the centre holds the data for – this should be for the minimum amount of time and data stored needs to be kept up to date so the process for this should be referenced (note that for S/NVQs centres must retain records for three years)
- Say how the data is securely stored, e.g. password protected IT systems, lockable cupboards etc.
- Outline data portability and how requests for data are dealt with, including who to contact on this matter
- Include reference to further information on data protection visit the Information Commissioner's website <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

11. COMPLAINTS POLICY

- Outline the process for making a complaint i.e. how complaints may be made, for example must they be made in writing?
- State who complaints should be directed to (name or job role)
- Indicate timescales, for example, making an initial response to the complainant within five working days, reaching a decision within 20 working days etc. Any KPIs relating to dealing with complaints should be included.
- Outline the process for dealing with complaints including any committees that may be involved.
- State where a complaint is upheld that the centre will investigate whether this has any impact on other learners and whether any action needs to be taken to address this.
- Outline the process for appealing against the outcome of a complaint.
- Reference the complainant's right to complain, in turn, and once the previous stage has been exhausted, to the centre, to Smart Awards as the awarding body, to the regulatory bodies (SQA Accreditation in Scotland, Ofqual in England and Northern Ireland, Qualification Wales in Wales). Users of public bodies in Scotland may then complain to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) as the final arbiter. Contact details for these bodies should be provided.
- Make clear that for some complaints, there will be no requirement to escalate the complaint Smart Awards

12. APPEALS POLICY

- Specify what kind of things learners can appeal against – this should include appeals against assessment and verification.
- State how learners must appeal to and how, e.g. in writing
- State who appeals should be directed to (name or job role)
- Set timescales, for example making an initial response within five working days.
- Outline the process for dealing with appeals including any committees that may be involved.
- State where the appeal needs to be elevated to the awarding organisation (i.e. when internal processes have been exhausted)
- State where an appeal is upheld that the centre will investigate whether this has any impact on other learners and whether any action needs to be taken to address this.

- Reference the appellants right to contact the awarding organisation and the regulatory bodies (SQA Accreditation in Scotland, Ofqual in England and Northern Ireland, Qualification Wales in Wales) and provide contact details for these bodies.
- Note that where appeals have been referred that SQA Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements.

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

- Define discrimination.
- Identify where and how direct or indirect discrimination may occur.
- State how the centre seeks to tackle potential discrimination - this should include recruitment, induction, on-programme (including placement where applicable) and assessment and verification (where applicable)
- State the steps the centre takes to ensure equal access where possible – this may be physical access, and will include ensuring that any materials use language and images that are representative of society
- Outline the centres process for assessing whether a learner requires any 'reasonable adjustments' to be made so as not to disadvantage them
- State that the centre will notify the Smart Awards of any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made
- Reference relevant legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 (this details the nine 'protected characteristics')

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- State how the centre deals with accidents including internal logging and monitoring.
- Include reporting under RIDDOR.
- Outline how the centre ensures that venues and equipment used for the purposes of training and/ or assessment are safe.
- Describe the process for assessing risks and mitigating identified risks.
- Indicate any first aiders and state how others are made aware of them.

15. MALPRACTICE AND MALADMINISTRATION POLICY

- Describe what kind of things may be considered as malpractice and make clear that these could involve learners and/or instructors / assessors.
- Describe what kind of things may be considered as maladministration (examples are helpful)
- Outline the process for 'whistle blowing' (or reference a separate policy where this exists)
- Describe how the centre would deal with suspected malpractice or maladministration including any personnel or committees involved.
- State who to contact (name or job role)
- Indicate timescales / KPIs.
- Include notification of potential or actual cases to Smart Awards as soon as possible, and co-operation with investigations undertaken
- State where malpractice or maladministration is found to have taken place that the centre will investigate whether this has any impact on other learners.
- Include that the centre will liaise with the Regulatory Bodies regarding any investigation as necessary.

16. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- Define child/ young person and vulnerable adult.
- Identify when and under what circumstances children, young people aged 18 or under and vulnerable adults may be at risk.
- Detail steps taken to ensure their safety, including any risk assessments, the use of the Disclosure and Barring Service (where necessary) or Disclosure Records (Scotland)
- Confirm that any activities are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of those participating.
- Indicate any guidance given to centre staff regarding meetings with children, supervision arrangements, and parental consent for any child's participation.
- Describe how concerns are dealt with these, including the involvement of the DBS, other agencies and/or the police.

17. PREVENT POLICY

- Include its approach to the management of any speakers / events in order to balance free speech with the protection of the welfare of staff and students, ensuring that they do not provide any platform for the encouragement of terrorism and/or inviting support for a proscribed terrorist organisation.
- Outline its risk assessment and appropriate mitigating actions with regards to where and how learners and/or staff may be drawn into terrorism
- Indicate partnership working and the sharing of information.
- Indicate its approach to ensuring that staff, governors etc are adequately trained in this duty.
- Reference sign that may suggest radicalisation in learners.
- Ensure that IT policies indicate clearly what is / is not permissible.
- Make any sub-contractors used aware of this duty.
- Describe centre responses to suspected radicalisation.

18. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

- Outline the definition of a reasonable adjustment.
- Includes a process for requesting reasonable adjustments including approval from Smart Awards
- Outlines the evidence to support a reasonable adjustment.
- Outlines the definition of a special consideration.
- Includes eligible criteria.
- Includes a process for requesting a special consideration including approval from Smart Awards

19. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

- Includes the types of conflict of interest.
- Includes actions taken by centres to mitigate any conflicts of interest.
- How conflicts of interest are managed
- How conflicts of interests are recorded
- How to report conflicts of interest – to Smart Awards

20. QUALITY POLICY

- Outlines the quality assurance process in relation to the delivery of qualifications.
- Includes standardisation events and how these are managed.
- Outlines the IQA process.
- Outlines the sampling plan/strategy.

21. REMOVAL OF ASSESSOR OR CENTRE STATUS

21.1. The following grounds will be reasons for revoking Assessor and/or Centre status:

- Malpractice likely to bring the programme into disrepute.
- Negligence in maintaining password security.
- Failure to pay fees to the agreed deadlines.
- Persistent failure in making judgements that meet the required standards and lack of evidence that learning has taken place.
- In all cases there will be a period of suspension of 3 months to allow time for a investigation to take place and appeals will be allowed.

22. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

- Appointed by Smart Awards to monitor the work of approved Centres.
- Carry out centre audits.
- Make sure that decisions on competence are consistent across Centres.
- Make sure that the quality of assessment and verification meets Smart Awards standards
- Sample learner assessments and monitor assessment and verification practice.
- Provide feedback to Centres.
- Make regular visits to Centres and assessment locations.
- Support Assessors, and the IQA

23. LEAD EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

- Appointed by Smart Awards to monitor the work of approved EQAs.
- Monitor and sample your reports on a regular basis.
- Provide and agree with your SMART action and improvement points to help you to meet Smart Awards and regulatory requirements.
- Accompany you on centre visits, as appropriate.
- Check your CPD record on an annual basis.
- Provide feedback to Smart Awards on your performance.
- Contribute to the annual review process.

24. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

- Organise Assessment decisions and to support assessors
- Sampling assessments
- Monitoring assessment practice
- Standardising assessment judgements
- Liaise with the EQA

- Develop and support Assessors.
- Induction and mentoring of new Assessors.
- Ensure Assessors are fully informed of Smart Awards standards.
- Provide feedback to Assessors on their assessment decisions
- Provide feedback from external quality assurance visits
- Co-ordinate meetings with assessors to disseminate information on a regular basis.
- Manage the Appeals procedure in the first instance.

25. ASSESSORS

- Works on behalf of Centres to assess learners' work and evidence, in contact with learners.
- Assess learner's work and evidence against specifications.
- ensuring that learners' evidence is valid, authentic, current and sufficient.
- Provide support appropriate to learners.
- Decide whether the learner has demonstrated competence.
- Apply equal opportunities and free access to the assessment process
- Ensure that their assessment practice meets regulatory guidance.
- Keep up to date with training on assessment and CPD
- maintaining accurate and verifiable Learner assessment and achievement records

26. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

26.1. The External Quality Assurance process is managed by Smart Awards to ensure that centres have provided learners with access to fair and reliable assessment opportunities and that Smart Awards training and qualifications are delivered in accordance with the standards agreed in the qualification and training specifications.

26.2. Smart Awards appoints all EQAs as either sub-contractors or employed. They are subject specialists and have detailed knowledge of the qualifications and administrative arrangements to support centres in their assessment decisions and internal quality assurance procedures.

26.3. EQA visits are an integral part of Smart Awards quality assurance. An EQA is appointed by Smart Awards to visit centres and carry out an initial onsite visit at the point of approval as a new centre. A first visit after approval will take place to ensure systems are in place. Centres are subject to two audits a year, onsite and remote. We may carry out an unannounced audit where issues have been raised about a centre's activity. Centres may also request a support visit by our EQA, this is in addition to the scheduled 2 audits.

26.4. These audits and visits provide an important opportunity for centres to clarify questions about awarding organisation guidance or requirements, and for EQAs to update centre staff on new issues and legislation. However, the main purpose of audits and visits is to monitor the quality processes and consistency of internal quality assurance decisions and practices within a centre.

26.5. Smart Awards will liaise with centres to make sure that centres are clear about what is required as part of the quality assured process. Smart Awards will expect centres to provide evidence of Internal Quality Assurance Process to its External Quality Assurers.

27. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

27.1. As a requirement our External Quality Assurers must have achieved or be working towards Assessor and Internal Quality Assurer qualifications; A1, V1 or the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice units.

27.2. Role of the External Quality Assurer (EQA) is to:

- Advise and support centres on the requirements for units/qualifications delivered.
- Monitor the provision within approved Smart Awards centres.
- Monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance process.
- Ensure standardisation of assessment within and between centres
- Provide feedback to the centre and Smart Awards

27.3. The EQA is responsible for:

- Monitoring programme delivery and assessment practice and ensuring the continuity and consistency of quality
- Providing information and guidance on Smart Awards requirements for approved centres
- Acting as the key link between the centres own quality assurance system, in particular with the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA), to ensure that all internal systems are being implemented effectively
- Monitoring assessment practice to ensure consistency within the centre and across the range of centres for which they are responsible.
- Communicating and reporting information about consistent interpretation of standards by centres and across centres and supplying feedback and recommendation on all aspects of delivery and assessment to Smart Awards
- Meet the Centre Contact, IQA and other members of the programme delivery and assessment team to ensure understanding of their roles.
- Review the management and quality assurance systems (assessment and internal quality assurance)
- Sample the staff and physical resources that are stated for programme delivery and assessment.
- Discuss the proposed or current programme, assessment strategies and internal quality assurance procedures.
- Follow up action points from previous visits if appropriate.
- Give any help or guidance requested based on knowledge and experience.
- Audit reasonable assessment adjustments and/or special considerations records, plus learner evaluations for the relevant Smart Awards units and qualifications
- Audit assessment paperwork and decisions to confirm adherence to Smart Awards criteria and national standards.
- Return a written report to Smart Awards within 48 hours to make a recommendation.
- Provide a written report to both Smart Awards and the Centre Contact providing feedback and appropriate recommendation for action (if applicable)

27.4. The EQA will report and make recommendations on all aspects of the standards including:

- Learner profile/achievement monitoring
- Management systems
- Human resources
- Internal quality assurance
- Assessment
- Physical resources
- Learner guidance and support opportunities

- Assessment records including Exemption/RPL/Equivalence
- Learner evidence

28. MODERATION OF LEARNERS WORK

28.1 Smart Awards aim to provide access to assessment and accreditation services ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners within a framework of moderation or internal verification as appropriate. Moderation of assessors' judgments is then carried out routinely by Smart Awards' External Quality Assurers

28.2. Smart Awards will undertake monitoring activities for all centres and all qualifications based on their risk assessment using quantitative and qualitative data gathered over time. Risk will be broadly determined by the centre's performance such as:

- Sanctions or restrictions within the last 12 months, including any malpractice or maladministration.
- Internal assessment decisions have not been applied with required standards
- Inaccurate or incorrect claims for achievement or certification
- Number of registered learners
- Completion of monitoring action plans within time allocated.
- New or changes to approved centres, IQA or assessment team within the last 12 months
- New qualifications not previously assessed by the centre

28.3. Smart Awards amend the risk rating once the centre has been able to demonstrate compliance with Smart Awards requirements. Newly Approved Centres and/or Approved Centres assessing new qualification types will be deemed high risk and be subject to external moderation prior to certification.

29. SAMPLING PROCESS

29.1. Smart Awards will undertake external moderation and sample the approved centres marking of learner assessments prior to certification to ensure that the centres internal assessment decisions meet the required standards. The centre must ensure that all components of the learner's assessment are to be made available for external moderation following claim for certification.

29.2. Smart Awards will determine the size of the sample for both formative and summative sampling depending on the risk of the centre and Smart Awards sampling matrix.

Centre Risk Rating	Product Risk	Volume of Registrations	Sampling Number per Learner, across no more than 5 Products (10%) per audit	Learner numbers are capped if 10% exceeds
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	10%	300
	LOW	LOW	10%	150
MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	10%	200
	LOW	LOW	10%	100
LOW	HIGH	HIGH	10%	100

29.3. During the moderation visit, the centre will be obliged to facilitate external moderation. Smart Awards will conduct a moderation visit through the Smart Awards Portal in place or face to face. Paperwork must be appropriately presented, and clearly labelled and mark sheets must be submitted

as early as possible. The external moderator will discuss the grade profiles and determine if any areas of concern have arisen since the last visit.

29.4. Each centre is required to safeguard the validity of its assessment decisions by ensuring that it has a rigorous moderation/ verification process which is clear and transparent. External moderation will confirm through examination of relevant records, that the internal assessment is rigorous and ensures assessment decisions are fair, valid, consistent and free from bias.

30. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

30.1. Smart Awards must ensure consistency of assessment decisions within and across centres as part of meeting our awarding status. Irrespective of the size or type of centre, Smart Awards requires the centre to have their own Internal Quality Assurance system in place as an integral part of its overall Quality Assurance process. The centre must make sure that they have a person(s) in the centre responsible for implementing the centres internal quality assurance systems.

30.2. Centres' internal assessment processes and practices must be effective and support the integrity and consistency of the qualification. This is achieved through the internal quality assurance that is undertaken by the approved centre, and the external quality assurance that is undertaken by Smart Awards.

30.3. All process should be documented. Smart Awards do not prescribe how this is done, and could be hard copy or electronic, text or flow charts. These processes must be readily accessible to those that need to use them and should be kept under review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Auditing is a useful way to do this.

30.4. An effective internal quality assurance system ensures:

- Valid, reliable and consistent training and/or assessment
- Recorded assessment decisions which are appropriate, consistent, fair, transparent, current and equitable.
- Clarity for learners about assessment requirements
- Assessor networking and sharing of good practice
- A forum for discussion of borderline cases
- Effective preparation and presentation for external quality assurance
- Reduction in level of direct external quality assurance scrutiny

30.5. Centre management must demonstrate support for quality assurance, which means that the centre needs to allocate sufficient resource to enable the staffing, planning and implementation of a quality system, and the on-going training and development of Assessors and IQAs.

30.6. These requirements are checked by Smart Awards through its monitoring activities. This includes appointing Assessors and an Internal Quality Assurer (or where there are a number of these, a Lead Internal Quality Assurer) to monitor the outcomes of assessments made by the centre's Assessors.

30.7. The following activities must take place to underpin the internal quality assurance process. The contents of this plan should not be divulged to assessors. A plan of internal activity should be developed indicating:

- what will happen?
- when it will happen
- when it has happened
- who will be involved?

30.8. Where a qualification is internally assessed by the centre, the following principles which must underpin all assessments:

- Validity ensures assessment measures what it claims to measure, the evidence match the competences, the skills, knowledge, and expertise that are being demonstrated by the trainee at the appropriate level.
- Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an assessment is measured. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same results under similar conditions ensuring different assessors place a similar value on the evidence provided and make similar judgments when confronted with the same evidence
- A fair assessment, in addition to being valid and reliable, provides equity of opportunity for trainees in line with Equality legislation
- Quality is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of Smart Awards accreditation
- Sufficiency is the amount of evidence to cover all the aspects of the required criteria
- Authenticity refers to the ownership of the evidence. Assessors need to be confident that the work submitted really is the result of the learners' own effort and expertise.
- Currency refers to the date of the evidence. Assessors must be sure that the evidence submitted by the learner is recent enough to be considered a measure of the current levels of competence.

30.9. Records of internal quality assurance must be kept and made available to the EQA during monitoring visits. These should demonstrate that the internal quality assurance procedures have been carried out

30.10. An Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) can be the centre manager or assessor (the IQA cannot IQA their own assessment decisions), the process is in place to ensure that the centre is consistent in the quality of training and qualifications delivered as well as compliance with Smart Awards standards, so as not to disadvantage the learner. The IQA is responsible for the integrity of the unit/qualification, training and assessment that you, as a centre, claim for the learner. They will also ensure that there is no conflict of interest in assessment at the centre or where it cannot be avoided, that extra quality assurance is put in place.

30.11. There are three main roles of an IQA:

- Quality assurance of assessment
- Developing and supporting assessors
- Managing quality of the centre.

30.12. They liaise with centres to sample and confirm assessment decisions, the internal assessment and moderation process and confirm the evidence of achievement for qualifications. The IQA 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. Their main role is to sample and confirm assessment decisions of your assessors, the internal assessment and moderation process and confirm the evidence of achievement for the qualification.

30.13. Centres must ensure that IQAs are competent to perform their role. Centres must therefore provide appropriate training and development opportunities to ensure that IQAs either hold the qualifications needed to carry out internal quality assurance– or achieve within 18 months of commencing their role.

30.14. IQAs must:

- hold sufficient, verifiable, relevant up to date occupational experience, knowledge and understanding of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being quality assured before commencing, and for the duration of, their role
- have the above at sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when quality assuring judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions
- a full understanding of the content, structure and assessment requirements for the awards they are quality assuring and understanding of what is sufficient, valid and authentic evidence
- sound, in-depth knowledge of the relevant NOS and Assessment Strategy
- be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development
- be familiar with their centre's internal quality assurance policy and the Smart Awards qualification and assessment requirements.

30.15. It is best practice for Internal Quality Assurers to have one of the following Internal Quality Assurance Qualifications:

- V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process or have / be working towards relevant 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
- An appropriate IQA qualification

30.16. Holders of V1 must quality assure to the current National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning and Development.

30.17. Centres must appoint Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) who will be responsible for:

- regular sampling evidence of assessment decisions made by all Assessors across all aspects of assessment for the qualification and maintaining up-to-date records of IQA and sampling activity.
- facilitating appropriate staff development and training for Assessors including establishing procedures to ensure that all Assessors interpret the learning outcomes in the same way – standardisation activities such as cross marking assessment evidence, discussion around assessment evidence (competent or not yet competent), and pairing assessors during practical observations are all exercises that help to standardise to assessment decisions of Assessors and IQAs.
- monitoring and supporting the work of Assessors making sure that they receive on-going advice and support, e.g. on designing assessment activities
- ensuring that assessment records are available for external quality assurance monitoring, and that any corrective action required by Smart Awards is carried out within agreed timescales.
- ensuring that assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair, transparent, current and does not unintentionally discriminate against Learners or in favour of other learners.
- ensuring that the assessment decisions of unqualified assessors are checked, authenticated and countersigned by a vocational competent assessor who is appropriately qualified and occupationally expert for the qualification.

30.18. The IQA should sample assessments to ensure that:

- feedback to learners is clear and constructive
- teaching and assessment activities are standard and appropriate.
- assessment decisions are fair and consistent.

- teaching and assessment records are clear.
- undertake standardisation activities.
- ensure learners understand assessment requirements.
- provide advice and support for Assessors and share good practice.
- identify good assessment practice.
- Record internal quality assurance activities and findings, list action points and report to instructors/assessors and the EQA.
- Liaise with the EQA as necessary.
- Evidence of constructive feedback to learners
- Assessors to give the opportunity for learners to revisit assessment decisions made by the assessor

30.19. IQAs are responsible for monitoring the quality of assessment, hence the need for them to sample assessment practices and decisions. It is not usually possible or necessary to quality assurance every aspect of assessment at each internal quality assurance. A properly selected representative sample should identify any issues with assessment practices and decisions.

30.20. The sample should include an element of random selection by the IQA. It is not necessary to sample across every aspect of the programme at each event, but the plan should seek to cover everything over a period of time, e.g. 3 years. A well thought out plan that reflects risk factors should be sufficient and effective in validating the assessment process.

31. ASSESSORS

31.1. Smart Awards require assessors to be competent to perform their role. Assessors must have sufficient, verifiable, relevant current industry experience, knowledge and understanding of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being assessed and of sufficient depth to credibly verify judgements and assessments.

31.2. Centres must provide appropriate training and development opportunities to ensure that assessors:

- either hold the qualifications needed to carry out assessment –A1 or A2 or Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment, Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement, Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement or an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation – or achieve within 18 months of commencing their role
- have a sound, in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of, the relevant national and industry standards and assessment strategies to enable them to carry out assessment to the standards specified
- have the occupational expertise before commencing their role so they have up to date experience, knowledge and understanding of the particular aspects of work they are assessing
- only assess in their acknowledged area of occupational competence
- maintain the currency of this for the duration of their role

31.3. Centres must appoint assessors to carry out internal assessment. Assessors will be responsible and accountable for:

- assessment planning and making and recording assessment decisions.
- assessing evidence of Learner competence against the assessment criteria in the qualification
- ensuring that Learners' evidence is valid, authentic, current and sufficient.

- maintaining accurate and verifiable Learner assessment and achievement records

31.4. Assessment methods and the evidence generated must be appropriate to the qualification's learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and to the individual Learner. For competence-based qualifications these normally include a range of methods and evidence, including observation of Learner performance and verbal discussion or written questioning to confirm knowledge and understanding. The Qualification Specification includes suggested assessment methods and specifies any particular methods to be used in accordance with any published Assessment Strategy. Compliance with this is monitored by the EQA and IQA.

32. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

321. Centres must identify and manage any conflict of interest that centre staff, assessors or IQAs may have. Conflict of interest may occur when for example the Learner is related to or known to the assessor. In such a case another assessor should assess the Learner or, where this is not possible, the decision of the assessor should be quality assured by the IQA. Where the IQA has a conflict of interest, the EQA or Awarding Organisation must be notified. Where a potential conflict of interest has been identified, Smart Awards must be informed so that measures can be put in place, i.e. external quality assurance of assessment decisions can take place.

33. ENSURING COMPARABILITY AND CONSISTENCY OF ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

33.1. External Quality Assurers are required to lead on all standardisation activities and events, within and between centres

- Standardise the practices and processes of all centres and their staff.
- Ensure that evidence is sufficient to demonstrate achievement.
- Ensure consistency in the assessment judgements that are being made based on the available evidence.
- Ensure that the assessment does not prevent any unintended barriers to achievement for a learner and pay due respect to any issues of equality and diversity.

34. MONITORING

33.2. Assessment decisions will be monitored as described in this policy, and corrective action(s) applied where necessary. Smart Awards will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. Internal control systems and procedures will be subject to regular audits to provide assurance that they are effective in ensuring the quality and standards of all.

35. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

35.1. This policy is reviewed and revised annually in response to feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the regulators.