



VALIDITY POLICY



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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1. This policy outlines the process of validity ensuring the qualification measures what it claims to measure, the evidence match the competences, the skills, knowledge, and expertise that are being demonstrated by the learner at the appropriate level.

2. SCOPE

2.1. Smart Awards has identified the following principles which underpin all Smart Awards qualifications:

- **Validity** The extent to which evidence and theory support the interpretation that the assessment outcomes meet their intended uses.
The evaluation of Validity involves the development of a clear argument to support the proposed interpretation of the outcomes and consequently the intended uses of the assessment. The Validity argument should be built on statements of the proposed interpretation and supporting evidence collected from all stages of the assessment process.
- **Reliability** refers to the accuracy with which the qualification 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.
- **Manageability**: relates to the feasibility of carrying out particular assessment processes. A Manageable assessment process is one which places reasonable demands on Centres and Learners. The evaluation of the reasonableness of the demands will be based on the scale of the assessment process on the participants, balanced by the usefulness of the outcomes. As with the other requirements (Validity, Reliability, Comparability and Minimising Bias), judgements about Manageability must be balanced with considerations around the other requirements.
- A fair assessment, in addition to being valid and reliable, provides equity of opportunity for learner in line with equality legislation.
- **Quality** is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of Smart Awards qualifications.
- **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 learner's 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.

3. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

3.1.4.2 D.1(b) any such qualification must, as far as possible, be Valid, Reliable, Comparable, Manageable and Minimise Bias

3.2. All awarding organisations who offer regulated qualifications must ensure that each qualification they make available is fit for purpose. Under Condition D1.2 a regulated qualification will only be fit for purpose if that qualification, as far as is possible, secures the requirements of Validity, Reliability, Comparability, Manageability and Minimising Bias.

3.3.D1.1: An awarding organisation must ensure that each qualification which it makes available is fit for purpose.

3.4.D1.2: A qualification will only be fit for purpose if that qualification, as far as possible, secures the requirements of – (a) Validity.

4. SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

4.1. 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.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

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

6. POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

6.1. This policy is structured around Smart Awards qualification principles and shows how they can be applied to ensure that our qualifications meet the qualification assessment plans

6.2. Validity is the degree to which it is possible to measure what needs to be measured by implementing an assessment procedure. Our expectation is that independent assessors should, in particular:

- Effectively test the knowledge, skills and behaviour as prescribed within the assessment plan.
- Enable results to be trusted as a measure of what a learner knows and can do.
- Have a purpose and content that meets the needs of end users.
- Be graded in line with clear and defensible prescriptions contained in the assessment plan.
- Keep under regular review.

6.3. The sections that follow focus mainly on validity and reliability, but you will see that the principles of equity, fairness and practicability are also addressed because they underpin all assessment issues.

6.4. Validity is a measure of the accuracy of an assessment. The qualification is valid when it:

- Is appropriate for its purpose.
- Has been designed to allow learners to show that they have the required knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the qualification standard.
- Allows all assessors to make reliable assessment decisions.
- Allows the interpretation and inferences which can be drawn from the assessment outcomes to be meaningful and justifiable.

6.5. Validity must be ensured at each stage of the assessment process. There are two key aspects of validity used by Smart Awards — content and construct.

6.6. Content validity is the measure of how closely the content of a qualification matches the content of the assessment plan. It is concerned with the level of knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours that is required to meet the standard.

6.7. Construct validity concerns the extent to which an assessment actually measures what the assessment plan states it is intended to measure. For example, an assessment that asked a learner to write about a

skill rather than demonstrate it would have low construct validity.

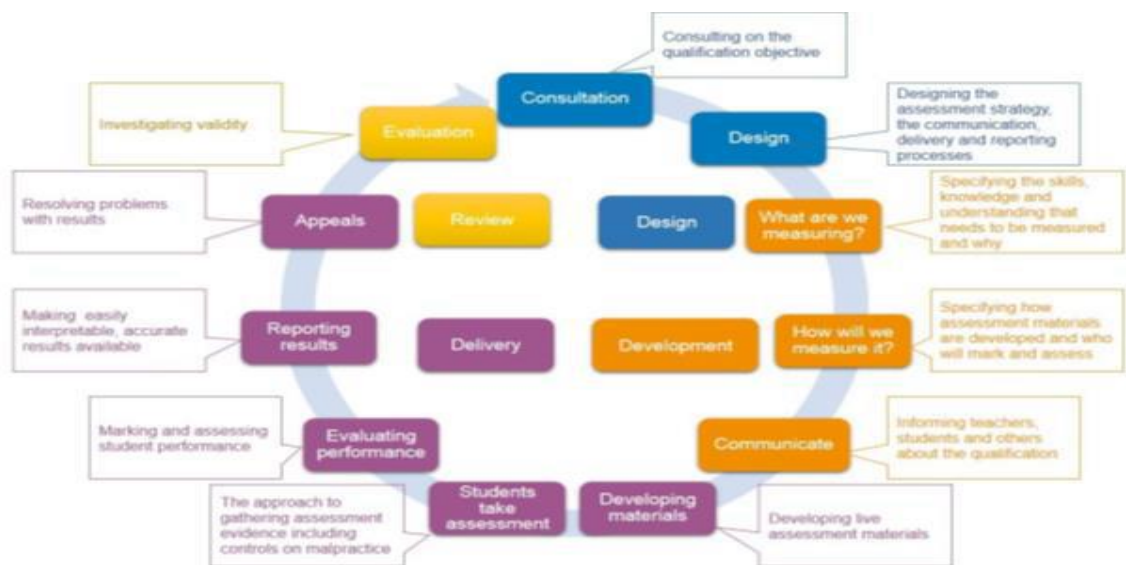
6.8. Both types of validity are achieved by choosing the appropriate assessment methods, developing the assessment, and evaluating it against the assessment outcomes.

6.9. The steps in the next section ensures that each assessment is appropriate for its purpose and has high content and construct validity.

6.10. The key steps in ensuring validity are:

- Get to know the content of the qualification and assessment plan.
- Assessors should take time to familiarise themselves with the qualification and assessment plan and their specific requirements. This allows assessors to identify the knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours which are to be assessed. An important element of valid assessment is to know what is required by the learner and assessment plan.

6.11. Smart Awards consider validity through each stage of a qualification's lifecycle:



7. CREATE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

7.1. As assessment is the process of evaluating a learner's assessment. Smart Awards develops assessment materials with the support of technical people that aligns to the qualification and assessment outcomes with the learning process and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours indicating how and when the assessment will be assessed. As part of the qualification development process we consider:

- The learner as well as the assessment
- If the assessment matches the qualification and assessment plan
- Avoiding over assessment
- Making use of using e-assessment
- Making available support and guidance materials
- If the time required for assessment is realistic
- If the assessment offers all learners an equal opportunity to demonstrate their attainment
- If the scenarios or contexts in the assessment is open and comprehensible to all learners
- If the assessment has no adverse impact on disabled learners or any other groups
- That illustrative material reflects an inclusive view of society which promotes equality.
- If the qualification allows reasonable adjustments to be made

8. ASSESSMENT METHODS

8.1. Assessment methods and the development of the assessment itself requires professional expertise and judgement. Familiarity with the qualification scope allows Smart Awards to identify what learners must be able to demonstrate, and the knowledge and understanding that they need to attain. Assessment methods will be developed in line with Smart Awards qualification development process.

9. DEVELOPING THE ASSESSMENT

9.1. When developing the assessment Smart Awards ensures that the choice of assessment method will:

- allow learners to produce sufficient evidence of the skills, knowledge and understanding specified in the qualification to ensure coverage of the outcomes.
- allow learners to produce evidence that can be measured against the qualification.
- be accessible to all learners who have the potential to achieve the qualification, including disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs.
- ensure assessments are carried out effectively and efficiently.
- ensure that the assessment is fair for all learners.
- ensure that the assessment is cost effective.
- ensure the qualification is free from bias.

10. DEFINE ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE

10.1. In developing the assessment, it is important to think about what is accepted as evidence and how this will be marked or measured. Smart Awards develops testing instruments and mark schemes in line with the assessment plan. This will ensure that:

- The knowledge, product or performance evidence expected to receive from the learner will actually be generated by the assessment Smart Awards has developed.
- Assessment decisions will be consistent and will be compare the evidence from other learners to ensure that grading to all learners is in the same way.
- The assessment decisions of all assessors will be consistent. An assessment strategy helps to ensure that all assessors apply the same standards across all learners.
- The assessment process is as efficient as possible. A clear assessment strategy helps the process to be completed in the timeframe allowed for the assessment.
- The type of evidence generated by the assessment will; give a full range of skills expect to see demonstrated; the expected performance levels; the degree of technical tolerance that is acceptable.

11. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

11.1. This policy is reviewed and revised annually in response to feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the regulators, SQA Accreditation or Ofqual.