



VALIDITY POLICY



Version Number	Date	Purpose of Change	Classification	Sign Off
V4.1	20/10/2025	Merge of EPA and Awarding policies - new content and formatting	Public	Kerry Ore

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Unit F8A | Holly Farm Business Park | Honiley Road | Kenilworth | CV8 1NP
T: 02476 421125
E: info@smartawards.co.uk
W: www.smartawards.co.uk

Company Number 9079735 | VAT Number 216 7632

SCOPE

1.1 This policy outlines the process for ensuring validity across Smart Awards Qualifications, Apprenticeship Assessments and End-Point Assessments (EPA). Validity ensures that assessment outcomes accurately measure the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they are intended to measure, and that evidence presented is authentic, sufficient, reliable, and current for the purpose it serves.

RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Smart Awards has overall responsibility for maintaining the validity of all qualifications, apprenticeship assessments, and EPAs it offers.

2.3 Roles

Smart Awards Responsible Officer	Oversees management and assurance of validity, ensuring compliance with regulatory and industry standards.
Smart Awards Quality Team	Develops, monitors, and reviews validity throughout qualification and EPA design, delivery, and assessment.
Assessors / End-Point Assessors	Apply validity principles during assessment; ensure consistency, reliability, and fairness of judgements.
Centres / Training Providers	Implement assessment procedures in line with Smart Awards guidance; ensure validity in delivery.
Technical Experts	Provide expert input to design and review assessments, ensuring alignment with assessment plans, occupational standards and specifications.

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Smart Awards considers validity throughout the lifecycle of a qualification and/or assessment—from design and development, through delivery and assessment, to post-assessment evaluation and continuous improvement.

3.2 Validity is achieved by ensuring that assessments effectively measure what they intend to measure, that assessment methods are appropriate, and that all outcomes are meaningful, consistent, and defensible.

Application To Qualifications

3.3 Validity in qualifications refers to ensuring that assessment outcomes align with qualification specifications. Assessments must test the intended learning outcomes and produce reliable results that can be interpreted consistently by assessors.

Application To Apprenticeship and End-Point Assessments

3.4 Validity in assessments ensures that apprenticeship and/or end-point assessments measure the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours of an apprentice as set out in the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan. They must enable results to be trusted as a measure of competence and be meaningful to employers and apprentices alike.

VALIDITY PRINCIPLES

4.1 Smart Awards adopts the following principles to maintain validity across all assessments:

- Validity – The extent to which assessment outcomes accurately measure intended performance.
- Reliability – Consistency of results under comparable conditions.
- Manageability – Practicality and efficiency of assessment processes for all stakeholders.
- Fairness – Equity of opportunity for all learners and apprentices.

- Sufficiency – Availability of enough evidence to meet criteria.
- Authenticity – Confirmation that the evidence produced is the learner's or apprentice's own work.
- Currency – Evidence must reflect current competence levels.

5. TYPES OF VALIDITY

5.1 Smart Awards applies two key types of validity across all assessments:

- Content Validity – The degree to which assessment content reflects the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours in the assessment plan, standard or specification
- Construct Validity – The degree to which the assessment measures what it intends to measure, rather than unrelated skills or knowledge.

CREATE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

5.1 Smart Awards develops assessment instruments in collaboration with technical and occupational experts to ensure alignment with qualification specifications and/or apprentices assessment plans.

5.2 The following factors are considered during development:

- Assessments must reflect the learner's or apprentice's experience and competence.
- Assessments must align with qualification specification and/or apprenticeship assessment plans.
- Processes must avoid unnecessary duplication of evidence collection.
- Assessments must be inclusive and allow reasonable adjustments.
- Materials must promote equality and be free from bias.
- Digital assessment should be used where suitable and feasible.
- Support and guidance materials must be made available for assessors and learners.
- Assessment timeframes must be achievable and appropriate.

DEVELOPING THE ASSESSMENT

6.1 When developing assessments, Smart Awards ensures that methods are appropriate, inclusive, and proportionate to outcomes.

6.2 The following principles are applied:

- Collect sufficient evidence to demonstrate competence against all learning outcomes.
- Ensure accessibility and inclusion for all learners and apprentices.
- Provide equitable opportunities for all participants.
- Avoid bias or discrimination in assessment design and delivery.
- Ensure assessments are efficient, effective, and practical.
- Maintain a regular review cycle to uphold validity and industry relevance.

DEFINE ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE

7.1 Smart Awards defines acceptable evidence through qualification specifications, assessment plans, and mark schemes.

7.2 The following standards apply to acceptable evidence:

- Evidence must be authentic and the learner's or apprentice's own work.
- Evidence must be sufficient to meet assessment outcomes.
- Evidence must reflect current levels of competence.
- Decisions must be consistent across assessors and centres.
- Assessment outcomes must be comparable across all delivery contexts.
- Assessment and evidence collection must be efficient and manageable.

8. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

8.1 This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required, in response to feedback, legislative updates, or regulatory guidance from Ofqual, SQA Accreditation, or other relevant authorities.

9. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

9.1 D1.1 – Qualifications must be fit for purpose.

9.2 D1.2 – Qualifications must ensure validity, reliability, comparability, manageability, and minimise bias.

9.3 D1.3 – Validity must be considered throughout design, delivery, and evaluation.

9.4 PR1.1 An awarding organisation must conduct its activities in a way that is designed to facilitate its adherence to the following principles:

- (a) Principle 1 – An awarding organisation must act with honesty and integrity.
- (b) Principle 2 – An awarding organisation must treat Learners fairly by acting and taking decisions with due impartiality and based on appropriate evidence.
- (c) Principle 3 – An awarding organisation must ensure that each qualification that it makes available, or proposes to make available is, and continues to be, fit for the purposes for which it is intended.
- (d) Principle 4 – An awarding organisation must act in a way that maintains and, where possible, promotes public confidence in qualifications.

10. OFQUAL APPRENTICESHIP CONDITIONS

10.1 EPA1.1 – Compliance with Assessment Plans and Gateway Requirements: Smart Awards ensures all EPAs comply with the relevant Assessment Plan and that learners meet gateway requirements before assessment.

10.2 EPA3.1 – Notification to Ofqual: Smart Awards promptly notifies Ofqual of any event that could have an Adverse Effect on validity, reliability, or assessment outcomes.

11. QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

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