Quality Assurance
Principles, Elements and Criteria

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Contents

Foreword

Developing its policy on assessment and quality assurance was one of the first tasks undertaken by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) on its formation. SQA inherited policies and procedures from its predecessor bodies, and these had to be integrated. It also had to take account of decisions already made in relation to the new Higher Still provision. Assessment and quality assurance of Higher National Certificates and Diplomas were also under review, as were the criteria applied to Scottish Vocational Qualifications. Convergence, where possible, with the emerging policies of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has been another important consideration.

SQA works in partnership with centres to ensure that all of its qualifications are subject to rigorous quality assurance and has now drawn up a number of quality assurance principles to maximise the effectiveness of its partnership. Specific elements of quality assurance are based on these principles, and each element consists of a number of criteria. The elements and criteria are designed to ensure that all SQA qualifications are assessed to national standards.

By reading this publication, staff in centres should develop an understanding of the criteria and of the ways we can work together to ensure that all SQA qualifications continue to meet the requirements of the people of Scotland.

Overview of Assessment and Quality Assurance

1 Introduction

This document sets out SQA's quality assurance principles, elements and criteria. Responsibility for meeting some of the criteria falls mainly on SQA itself, while for other criteria it falls more on the centre.

How SQA monitors the way a centre carries out its responsibilities depends on the type of centre and the type of qualification being offered. For a qualification which is assessed wholly by an externally-marked question paper, such as some Standard Grade subjects, most of the quality assurance burden falls directly on SQA. For an internally-assessed qualification, responsibility is shared with the centre, so a different range of quality assurance procedures is required. Another consideration was that the assessment processes of education authority schools and further education colleges are subject to the quality assurance procedures of a number of external bodies, whereas for some other organisations it may be SQA alone which externally monitors assessment decisions.

The most important objective of SQA's assessment and quality assurance principles and procedures is to ensure that assessment of SQA qualifications is valid and reliable; ie that candidates who have demonstrated the competences required by a qualification receive certification and that those who have not demonstrated competence do not. This has to be achieved in a practical and cost-effective manner, and we have taken account of concerns about the quality assurance burden expressed by some centres. Every effort has been made to keep the quality assurance demands on centres to the minimum.

The rest of this section gives an overview of how quality assurance will be carried out in the various contexts in which SQA qualifications are assessed.

2 Primary Schools

SQA's involvement in primary schools relates to 5 – 14 National Testing. Policy direction for National Tests lies with The Scottish Office and, of course, National Tests do not result in a qualification or the issue of a certificate. Some of the centre criteria are nonetheless relevant but are only of an advisory nature for primary schools. For example, internal moderation of the marking of National Tests is strongly encouraged.

3 Secondary Schools

Approval as an SQA centre
Education authority schools will receive centre approval automatically, as the education authority is obliged to ensure that minimum standards of resourcing are attained and all teachers have to be registered with the General Teaching Council. Independent schools fully registered with The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) will be approved following a development visit by a member of SQA's staff.

Approval to offer specific qualifications
A school wishing to introduce a new National Qualification in an area in which it has experience simply needs to let SQA know. This will help SQA to plan assessment moderation.

Where a school wishes to offer a qualification in an area in which it has no experience, there may be specialist skills or equipment required, or a specific learning environment. In such instances approval to offer the qualification will be required. The completion of a form will normally be sufficient, though an approval visit may take place if SQA needs more information

Validation
Schools, for the most part, will be delivering National Qualifications which are developed nationally. Schools' involvement in validation will, therefore, focus on their willingness to release staff on request to serve on national development groups, and to respond to consultation on proposals for introducing new qualifications or revising existing ones.

Internal moderation/verification
It is important that schools ensure that internal assessments and estimates are made in a consistent manner. SQA will assume that all candidates in the school entered for the same qualification are assessed to a common standard, so methods of ensuring that assessments are consistent should be applied. It is also important that any new member of staff has access to all the relevant SQA documentation.

Where external moderation reveals a significant problem in assessment the external moderator may look into the way internal moderation is carried out. Should a centre-wide problem be identified through external moderation, then a visit by a systems verifier may be arranged.

External moderation
External moderation will follow the principles and procedures which SQA consulted on early in 1998. The system will involve both visiting and central (including postal) moderation. External moderation will focus on the validity and reliability of the school's assessment. There will be a greater role for holistic assessment at outcome level.

Development visits will be offered. A separate charge will be made for these but no charge will be made for moderation visits instigated by SQA. The National Assessment Bank items should enhance the validity and reliability of internal assessment of the National Units covered by the Bank. This resource, coupled with the use of external assessment, will allow less obtrusive moderation of these units. Further details on

moderation will be found in the Summary of the Outcomes section of SQA's *Assessment Moderation/External Verification Project: Outcomes of the Consultation*.

External assessment

The conduct of national examinations requires a high degree of organisation and preparation. Most of this falls to SQA, but centres have an important role to play in submitting estimates and entering candidates at the appropriate course level. Accommodation for large numbers of students sitting examinations is required, as is the school's co-operation in special assessment arrangements, and procedures for absentees and assessment appeals. The production by candidates of folios, projects etc outwith the examination room demands different quality assurance measures for ensuring that the work is the candidate's own. Schools will already be familiar with these requirements but the emphasis on supervised 'write-ups' will increase.

4 Colleges

Approval as an SQA centre

As independent institutions, colleges new to SQA will require individual approval in order to become an SQA centre. Full registration with SOEID and/or the Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) or with another awarding body should result in an abbreviated approval process.

Approval to offer specific qualifications

For most colleges, responsibility for this function is devolved after a successful audit. The responsibility may be withdrawn should difficulties in assessment arise from inadequate resourcing and staffing.

Validation

Responsibility for validating National Qualifications will not be devolved as National Qualifications will be developed nationally in consultation with centres. Colleges' involvement will focus on their willingness to release staff on request to serve on national development groups, and to respond to consultation on proposals for introducing new qualifications or revising existing ones.

For Higher National Units, where a college has obtained devolved responsibility for validation of units and/or group awards on SQA's behalf, the extent of this devolution is defined in the centre's quality contract with SQA. In the centre's exercise of its devolved responsibility for validation, it must:

◆ have a system and procedures which ensure that all validation proposals are appraised against the validation criteria

◆ have documentation describing all validations which have been carried out, including the result of the appraisal against each of the criteria

◆ ensure that the outcomes of validations are timeously reported to SQA for recording in the appropriate catalogue

Accreditation of Scottish Vocational Qualifications is not devolvable.

Internal moderation/verification

It is important that colleges ensure that internal assessments and estimates are made in a consistent manner. SQA will assume that all candidates in the college entered for the same qualification are assessed to a common standard, so methods of ensuring that assessments are consistent should therefore be applied. It is also important that any new member of staff has access to all the relevant SQA documentation.

Where external moderation reveals a significant problem in internal assessment, the external moderator may look into the way internal moderation is carried out. This may lead to a visit by a system verifier, or to monitoring of the centre by an auditor if the problem appears to extend beyond a single department.

External moderation

Colleges are familiar with visiting moderation, but have also had some experience of central moderation. In the new system central moderation will play a larger role than previously. For National Units developed as part of Higher Still, it will be the prevalent form. The advantages of this method are that moderation decisions are closely monitored by the Senior Moderator, and it is cost-effective. There will be a role for visiting within central moderation, however; where major problems in a college's assessment of a unit are identified through central moderation, a visit to the centre will be made without charge.

Most National Units not part of Higher Still, Higher National Units and SVQs will continue to be subject to visiting moderation, although over time units will be scrutinised to see if they could more effectively be centrally moderated.

Where the candidate evidence is ephemeral, for example a performance in Drama or a process in Catering, or results in a product which cannot be readily transported, visiting moderation will always be used.

External moderation will focus on the validity and reliability of the college's assessment of the candidates' evidence. There will be a greater role for holistic assessment at outcome level, although moderation of all SVQs will continue to be based on a pc by pc approach.

Development visits will continue to be part of the system. A separate charge will be made for these visits, but no charge will be made for moderation visits instigated by SQA. The National Assessment Bank items should enhance the validity and reliability of internal assessment of the National Units covered by the Bank. This resource, coupled with the use of external assessment, will allow less obtrusive moderation of these units. Further details are given in the Summary of the Outcomes section of SQA's *Assessment Moderation/External Verification Project: Outcomes of the Consultation*.

External assessment

The conduct of national examinations requires a high degree of organisation and preparation. Most of this falls to SQA, but centres have an important role to play in submitting estimates and entering candidates at the appropriate course level. Accommodation for large numbers of students sitting examinations is required, as is the college's co-operation in special assessment arrangements, and procedures for absentees and assessment appeals. Most colleges are familiar with these procedures, but the scale will increase with the implementation of Higher Still. The production by

candidates of folios, projects etc outwith the examination room demands different quality assurance measures for ensuring that the work is the candidate's own. Because of the form of attendance this probably represents a greater challenge for colleges than for schools, and supervised write-up sessions have a particular importance in maintaining credibility.

Quality auditing

Quality auditing ensures that colleges have the systems in place to enable them to take on responsibility for aspects of quality assurance normally held by SQA. Concerns have been expressed about over-auditing and SQA is sensitive to them. The devolution of quality elements to colleges will depend on a successful audit against the criteria set out in this document. After auditing, feedback from external moderation and, where relevant, knowledge of the performance of candidates in external assessment will allow SQA to monitor the quality of assessment in the college. If all is well, further intensive audits should not be necessary, although there will be on-going monitoring. Where difficulties arise which are not restricted to one department, further action may be taken by systems verifiers or auditors.

5 Universities

It is important that SQA procedures and those of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) are aligned where possible. Discussions with QAAHE and the universities which are SQA centres are continuing, and the outcomes will be made known in due course.

6 Private training providers and employers

Approval as an SQA centre

All private training providers and employers will require individual approval to become an SQA centre. Some will be visited to ensure the centre criteria are met, and to discuss how their systems and SQA's can dovetail together. Others which have been approved by the Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) or another awarding body will, providing they can make suitable arrangements for assessment moderation (verification), be approved without a visit.

Approval to offer specific qualifications

The approval process will depend on the centre's track record in the specialist area from which the qualification is drawn. If the centre is new or has not offered qualifications in the specialist area before, a visit by an external moderator (verifier) will be necessary. If the centre has experience in the specialist area and a good track record, and has made an approval submission which provides satisfactory information, then a visit may not be necessary.

Validation

Though responsibility for accrediting and re-accrediting SVQs can not be devolved, staff of private training providers and employers will have the opportunity to make representations to National Training Organisations (NTOs) to develop SVQs. Staff may also be invited by SQA to assist in developing qualifications comprising National or Higher National Units.

Internal moderation/verification

It is important that private training providers and employers ensure that internal assessments and estimates are made in a consistent manner. SQA will assume that all candidates in a centre entered for the same qualification are assessed to a common standard, so methods of ensuring that assessments are consistent should be applied. It is also important that any new member of staff has access to all the relevant SQA documentation. Where external moderation/verification reveals a significant problem in internal assessment the external moderator will look into the way internal moderation/verification is carried out. This may lead to a visit by a systems verifier if the problem appears to extend beyond a single specialist area.

External moderation/verification

Private training providers and employers will be familiar with visiting moderation/verification and that will continue to be the main approach. Central moderation, where paper-based evidence is posted to SQA in an envelope supplied by us, and returned to the centre as soon as possible after scrutiny, may be used to a small extent. External moderation/verification will focus on the quality of the centre's assessment of the candidates' evidence.

Development visits will continue to be part of the system. A separate charge will be made for these visits, but there will be no charge for moderation visits instigated by SQA. Further details are given in the Summary of the Outcomes section of SQA's *Assessment Moderation/External Verification Project: Outcomes of the Consultation*.

External assessment

Private training providers and employers are unlikely to be involved in examination room types of external assessment, though other forms such as reports, folios, investigations and so on may be introduced if independent assessment becomes part of the design rules for SVQs under the revised criteria. If so, the administrative procedures would be similar to those for central moderation.

Quality Assurance Principles

SQA is committed to quality assuring all its qualifications to ensure public recognition and credibility through the maintenance of standards. SQA quality assurance is based upon the following principles:

- *the SQA assessment and quality assurance system should be understandable to stakeholders, effectively administered, publicly accountable and cost effective to operate*

- *qualifications should be accessible to all candidates who have the potential to achieve them*

- *the criteria which define the performance required of candidates for them to achieve qualifications should be appropriate to purpose, explicit and in the public domain*

- *each unit, course and group award should be unique and necessary, and should comply with the relevant qualification specification*

- *assessments should be valid, reliable and practicable, and assessment results should be in line with qualification criteria*

- *qualifications should be offered in centres which have the resources and expertise to assess candidates against the qualification's criteria*

- *staff in centres should be provided with effective support in assessing candidates for certification*

- *responsibility for quality assurance should be devolved to centres where this is consistent with the maintenance of national standards*

Quality Assurance Elements

In order to ensure that the qualifications SQA offers are designed, delivered and assessed to acceptable national standards, we have identified key quality assurance *elements*, based on the quality assurance principles. These elements underpin all SQA qualifications, and are the mechanisms through which national standards are established and maintained.

We have divided each element into requirements or *criteria*. SQA and centres have corresponding responsibilities for these. Quality provision requires an effective partnership, based on the quality assurance criteria, between SQA and staff in centres. Some criteria relate to all of the elements and they have been extracted and described separately.

The elements are:

♦ *approval as an SQA centre*
the criteria relate to the management procedures which underpin the implementation and assessment of SQA qualifications in centres

♦ *approval to offer specific SQA qualifications*
the criteria relate to resources required of centres for the implementation and assessment of specific SQA qualifications

♦ *validation of SQA qualifications*
the criteria relate to ensuring that SQA qualifications are fit for purpose

♦ *internal moderation of internal assessment*
the criteria relate to the processes by which centres ensure that all internal assessment is valid, reliable, practicable and cost-effective

♦ *external moderation of internal assessment*
the criteria relate to external processes by which SQA ensures that internal assessment is in line with the national standards set out in the qualifications. 'Verification' has the same meaning and will continue to be found in publications referring to SVQs.

♦ *quality control of external assessment*
the criteria relate to the processes by which SQA and centres ensure that external assessment is in line with the national standards set out in the qualifications

♦ *monitoring of SQA's quality assurance elements*
the criteria relate to the processes which are used to measure the success of the other elements in supporting the consistent application of national standards

General criteria

The following criteria are implicit in *all* of the quality assurance elements and have therefore been set out separately.

Criterion	SQA	The centre
A1 Processes which support all SQA qualifications are reviewed and continuously improved	• continuously monitors quality assurance processes and updates them in line with qualification and centre requirements • consults with stakeholders and takes action on feedback	• reviews and updates internal quality assurance processes as required • identifies staff roles and responsibilities • facilitates staff participation in consultation exercises and takes action on feedback from staff
A2 All main processes are in the public domain and information and guidance are provided	• gives targeted information and guidance to centres and other stakeholders as required	• disseminates information to staff, candidates and other stakeholders as required
A3 Special assessment arrangements are made for candidates who require them	• provides guidance on possible special assessment arrangements for candidates • makes fair and consistent decisions on individual cases submitted by the centre	• seeks SQA approval for special assessment arrangements and implements these arrangements as agreed
A4 Data processes are accurate and timeous	• maintains a comprehensive record of candidate achievement • issues results data and certificates accurately and timeously	• allocates the Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) to new candidates only; ensures existing candidates use correct SCN • submits entry data timeously

Element: Criteria for approval as an SQA centre

For centres not yet established, the potential to fill the criteria should be demonstrated.

Criterion	SQA	The centre
B1 *Quality assurance is managed effectively*	• provides information, guidance and support on quality assurance requirements to centres	• manages effectively the internal processes which underpin SQA provision
B2 *Information is managed effectively within the centre and between the centre and the SQA*	• provides information on SQA requirements eg qualification information including arrangements documents and unit specifications • processes information received from centres	• stores information on SQA qualifications, procedural requirements and candidates • disseminates SQA related information to staff and candidates as appropriate • records information about candidates, qualifications and procedural requirements • submits information to the SQA accurately and timeously
B3 *Resources are managed effectively*	• approves assessment and quality assurance processes within centres and monitors them for continuing compliance	• ensures that staff are competent in the subject /cognate/occupational areas within which they operate and that they are competent to assess • provides accommodation, reference material, equipment, learning and assessment material which supports the assessment of SQA qualifications • maintains financial viability
B4 *There are arrangements in place which facilitate external and internal quality control of SQA qualifications*	• makes available information on external and internal quality control requirements	• ensures that staff understand the process and SQA requirements • allows access for SQA representatives • makes available relevant materials in the appropriate locations
B5 *Candidates are provided with induction, guidance and support*	• monitors processes within centres • provides guidance to centres and candidates	• makes curricular, vocational and qualification-related guidance and support available to candidates • demonstrates a commitment to equal opportunity in the selection, admission and assessment of candidates • makes material relating to SQA qualifications available
B6 *There is a satisfactory appeals procedure within the centre for candidates*	• approves the centre appeals process for internal assessment decisions and monitors it for continuing compliance	• operates a satisfactory internal assessment appeals procedure for candidates • disseminates information on the appeals procedures to staff and candidates • maintains records of appeals

Element: Criteria for approval to offer specific SQA qualifications

This element can be devolved for all qualifications.

Criterion	SQA	The centre
C1 *An approval process for specific SQA qualifications is defined*	• defines procedures for obtaining approval for specific qualifications • operates an approval system to meet the requirements of centres and qualifications • monitors the effectiveness of the centre's approval system • records and stores information relating to specific qualification approval	• defines internal processes which underpin specific qualifications approval • records and stores information on obtaining approval for specific qualifications
C2 *Resources meet the requirements of:* . *the qualifications* . *the method of assessment* . *the number and needs of candidates* . *the mode(s) of delivery*	• gives guidance on the resources required for specific SQA qualifications • approves resources for specific qualifications and monitors them for continuing compliance	• provides accommodation and equipment which is suitable for the qualification and takes account of technical/specialist needs • provides sufficient numbers of qualified/experienced staff to assess and internally moderate internal assessments and estimates • provides all candidates with access to reference and learning materials which support the qualification • uses assessment material which is appropriate to the requirements of the qualification

Centres with devolved responsibility for approval must:

♦ have a system and procedures which ensure that all approval proposals are appraised against the approval criteria

♦ have documentation describing all approvals which have been carried out, including the result of the appraisal against each of the criteria

♦ ensure that the outcomes of approvals are timeously reported to SQA for recording in the appropriate catalogue

Element: Criteria for the validation of SQA Qualifications

This element can be devolved only for HN Qualifications.

Criterion	SQA	The centre
N and HN		
D1 The validation process for qualifications which are to be included in the SQA National or Higher National Qualifications catalogue is defined and in the public domain	• publishes the system, procedures and timescales for the validation of new and revised National and Higher National Qualifications and makes them known to centres	• ensures that submissions to SQA of locally-devised proposals for validation comply with the SQA's system, procedures and timescales
D2 The qualification conforms to the SQA design rules and other technical requirements which are current at the time of its validation for inclusion in the appropriate SQA qualifications catalogue	• publishes design rules and other technical requirements and guidance on their use • develops National and Higher National Qualifications and validates them to ensure that all of these qualifications comply with the design rules and the technical requirements prior to inclusion in the appropriate SQA qualifications catalogue* • validates qualifications to ensure that they comply with the design rules and other technical requirements prior to inclusion in the appropriate SQA qualifications catalogue*	• uses the SQA's design rules and other technical requirements as the basis for development of proposed qualifications to be submitted to SQA for validation
D3 There is a demonstrable need for the National or Higher National Qualification which fills a gap in the qualifications framework and makes a valuable and unique contribution to the SQA's portfolio of qualifications	• works with stakeholders to identify the qualifications required to meet the needs of Scottish society* • consults with appropriate bodies to identify the need for the National or Higher National qualification* • has a feedback system through which it collects stakeholders views in order to regularly review the National and Higher National Qualifications with a view to engaging in a programme of updating where appropriate*	• provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which the qualifications in the National and Higher National Qualifications catalogues meet this criterion
D4 The qualification is accessible to all candidates who could potentially achieve it	• ensures that all National and Higher National Qualifications which it validates are free from unnecessary barriers to achievement	• strives to serve the best interests of prospective candidates and does not create artificial barriers to achievement • provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which qualifications in the National and Higher National Qualifications catalogues meet this criterion

Criterion	SQA	The centre
N and HN		
D5 *The qualification requires a candidate to demonstrate significant, achievable outcomes in a recognised curricular or vocational area*	• ensures that qualifications which it validates meet this criterion* • ensures that qualifications which it validates have assessment arrangements appropriate to the outcomes which candidates must demonstrate* • has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which National and Higher National Qualifications meet this criterion*	• provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which qualifications in the National and Higher National Qualifications catalogues meet this criterion
D6 *The qualification is coherent and its title accurately reflects its content*	• ensures that qualifications which it validates meet this criterion* • has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which National and Higher National Qualifications meet this criterion*	• provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which qualifications in the National and Higher National Qualifications catalogues meet this criterion

Centres with devolved responsibility for validation must:

♦ have a system and procedures which ensure that all validations are appraised against the validation criteria in the column for centres as well as the criteria marked '*' in the SQA column

♦ have documentation describing all validations carried out, including the result of the appraisal of the proposed new or revised qualification against each of the criteria in the column for centres as well as the criteria marked '*' in the SQA column

♦ ensure that the outcome of devolved validations is timeously reported to SQA for recording in the appropriate catalogue

Criterion	SQA	The centre
SVQ		
D7 *The qualification conforms to the SQA design rules and other technical requirements which are current at the time of its submission for accreditation*	• develops design rules and other technical requirements which comply with the SVQ criteria and associated guidance published by the accreditation body • develops SVQs based on standards developed by national standard-setting bodies • ensures by a validation process the SVQs comply with the design rules and other technical requirements prior to submission to the accreditation body for accreditation	• is not involved in SVQ validation
D8 *There is a demonstrable need for the SVQ which fills a gap in the qualifications framework and makes a valuable and unique contribution to the SQA's portfolio of qualifications*	• provides, in consultation with stakeholders, SVQs which add value to the Scottish qualifications portfolio • has a feedback system through which it collects stakeholders views in order to regularly review the SVQs for which it is awarding body, in accordance with the criteria for reaccreditation	• provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which the qualifications in the SVQ catalogue meet this criterion
D9 *The qualification is accessible to all candidates who could potentially achieve it*	• ensures that SVQs it submits for accreditation are free from unnecessary barriers to achievement • has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which National and Higher National Qualifications meet this criterion	• strives to serve the best interests of prospective candidates and does not create artificial barriers to achievement • provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which the qualifications in the SVQ catalogue meet this criterion
D10 *The qualification requires a candidate to demonstrate significant, achievable outcomes in an occupational area and in the conditions of the workplace*	• ensures that SVQs it submits for accreditation are based on accredited national occupational standards • ensures that SVQs it submits for accreditation have assessment arrangements appropriate to the outcomes which candidates must demonstrate and to any assessment strategy defined by the national standard setting body • has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which National and Higher National Qualifications meet this criterion	• provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which the qualifications in the SVQ catalogue meet this criterion
D11 *The qualification is coherent and its title accurately reflects its content*	• ensures that qualifications which it submits for accreditation meet this criterion • has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which National and Higher National Qualifications meet this criterion	• provides feedback to SQA on the extent to which the qualifications in the SVQ catalogue meet this criterion

Element: Internal moderation of internal assessment

Criterion	SQA	The centre
E1 *The internal moderation system ensures that centres' assessments of internally assessed qualifications are valid and reliable*	• provides guidance on best practice for internal moderation as it applies to different types of qualifications	• ensures that the chosen assessment instruments and assessment schemes are valid and applied consistently by all assessors for the same qualification across all candidates • ensures that the final assessment decisions made by assessors are accurate, reliable and recorded
E2 *The internal moderation system is reviewed to ensure efficient and effective deployment of internal moderators*		• monitors the effectiveness of the internal moderation system and implements any necessary changes
E3 *The internal moderation system reflects developments in assessment policy and procedures*	• issues guidance in relation to any amendments to policy relating to internally assessed qualifications	• implements any changes made necessary by changes to SQA policy

Element: External moderation of internal assessment

Criterion	SQA	The centre

F1 *The external moderation system ensures that there is an appropriate level of moderation conducted for each qualification area*	• designs and maintains an algorithm which will select for each qualification those centres which should be moderated
	
	• determines a minimum quota of moderation for each qualification
	
	• samples centres for moderation, for a particular qualification, according to criteria including if the centre:
	  • is offering the qualification for the first time
	  • did not offer the qualification in the previous two years
	  • had its assessments 'not accepted' on the last occasion the centre was moderated
	  • has not been selected for a period of years
	  • requested information and this was agreed by SQA
	  • is selected at random
	where relevant, if the relationship between success in the external and the corresponding internal assessment is weak
		• informs SQA of the qualifications it is delivering, at the appropriate time
		
		• informs SQA of any changes to completion dates or candidates undertaking the qualifications selected for moderation

F2 *The moderation system ensures that there is adequate cover of moderators to allow moderation to take place*	• recruits, appoints and trains sufficient personnel with the appropriate subject and assessment expertise	• releases, where possible, personnel to act as moderators

F3 *The moderation system ensures that centres' assessments of internally assessed qualifications are valid and reliable*	• selects the appropriate form of moderation for the particular qualifications being moderated
	
	• notifies centres whether or not they have been selected for moderation within the published period from the date of requested certification
	
	• makes the necessary arrangements for the moderation of the selected centres
	
	• oversees the conduct of moderation and the performance of moderators
	
	• accepts centres' assessment decisions which are in accordance with the national standards and assists centres in achieving national standards where their assessment decisions have not been accepted
	
	• provides feedback to centres regarding the result of the moderation
		• retains appropriate evidence until agreed disposal dates
		
		• makes available to SQA assessment instruments, assessment schemes, candidate evidence and assessment decisions in relation to the national standards for a nominated sample of candidates when requested by SQA and in the format requested
		
		• where appropriate, sends the above materials when requested to SQA
		
		• provides adequate support for the visit of a moderator
		  • co-operates in arranging a date within the given period
		  • provides suitable accommodation/equipment
		  • notifies all concerned
		  • makes available all requested documentation
		
		• where appropriate, acts on any moderation feedback provided by SQA

Criterion	SQA	The centre
F4 *The moderation system ensures that records of all moderation activity are complete and accurate*	• records and stores reports on each moderation conducted to inform future selections	

F5 *The moderation system is reviewed to ensure efficient and effective deployment of moderators*	• monitors the performance of moderators
	
	• operates a feedback system to:
	
	  • identify any team or individual training needs
	  • meet any identified training needs
	  • ensure that moderators are consistent in moderation decisions and are kept abreast of current assessment practice in their subject/qualification/ cognate area
		• assists SQA by providing feedback on moderation when requested

F6 *The moderation system reflects developments in assessment policy and procedures*	• keeps moderation under review • notifies all parties concerned of any policy and procedural changes relating to moderation • identifies and meets training needs for moderators as a result of any amendments or new policy and procedures introduced in relation to internally assessed qualifications	

Element: Quality control of external assessment

Criterion	SQA	The centre
G1 *External assessment procedures are defined*	• explains its external assessment procedures and publishes specific information on the examination in good time	• disseminates internally, and stores, information on examination procedures and timetables

G2 *Resources are sufficient to support external assessment*	• maintains systems for processing external assessment
	
	• appoints and trains sufficient personnel with appropriate expertise to carry out the following roles:
	    • examiner
	    • setter
	    • scrutineer
	    • marker
	    • invigilator
		• nominates invigilators
		
		• on request, releases staff to SQA where possible
		
		• provides suitable accommodation for the conduct of examinations and safe storage of scripts etc until dispatch

G3 *Assessment instruments are valid, practicable and cost-effective and their marking is reliable*	• ensures that its assessment instruments conform in all respects to the assessment arrangements • scrutinises the quality of work of each marker and takes action where required • pass-marks and cut-offs are decided using all relevant information and expertise in order to maintain comparability from year to year and across similar qualifications • seeks systematic feedback from centres on the quality of question papers	• ensures that candidates understand the assessment criteria and form of assessment by which they will be assessed • submits accurate entry details and estimates of performance for each candidate • Responds to requests for feedback
G4 *Awards may be reviewed through an Assessment Appeals process*	• a pre-results review of awards is carried out for all candidates • post-results Assessment Appeals are carried out and the outcomes are reported timeously	• Assessment Appeal requests are submitted where supported by coursework evidence

Element: Monitoring of SQA's quality assurance elements

Criterion	SQA	The centre
H1 *Each quality element is periodically subject to qualitative and quantitative evaluation*	• develops and implements a systematic review of the effectiveness of the quality element according to a rolling programme	• contributes to the evaluation by co-operating with the evaluation exercise
H2 *Standards are monitored across qualifications at the same level and over time*	• develops and implements a systematic review of candidate evidence sampling across qualifications and from an archive	• where possible, provides candidate evidence on request