

**17 November 2022**

## **Ofqual Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny**

Last year we introduced our Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy, developed to meet [Ofqual's CASS](#) requirements for all centre-marked assessments. As part of our quality improvement procedures, we have now reviewed and updated our CASS strategy. The key changes to our strategy are highlighted in this communication and a full version of the revised strategy is available on our website.

It is important to note that our existing quality assurance principles and processes have not changed and our [systems verification](#) and [qualification verification](#) guidance sources remain as the principle points of reference for all of our centres.

### **Strategy updates**

#### **Candidate entry to certification timescales for Ofqual qualifications awarded by SQA**

SQA must maintain a window of opportunity during which, if required, we can conduct external quality assurance of internally assessed qualifications prior to their certification. In support of this requirement, we require centres to enter candidates for qualifications as soon as possible after enrolment on their chosen programme.

Centres are also required to allocate sufficient time between entering candidates for a qualification, and certification. To inform the calculation of sufficient time, the Total Qualification Time (TQT) attached to each qualification should be used as a benchmark for estimating the time required for a candidate to complete their qualification post-enrolment.

A list of regulated qualifications, awarded by SQA (indicating TQT) can be found on the [SQA website](#).

There are some exceptions to this requirement, such as those qualifications of a short duration with a low TQT. Any entries for these qualifications can take place before to or on the day of assessment.

SQA will monitor compliance with this requirement via its external quality assurance activities and through central monitoring of centre data.

#### **Verification planning for each centre**

To fully accommodate Ofqual's CASS requirements, our approach to sampling has been augmented. We have provided more detail on the unit sampling of Ofqual qualifications and the period of time by which all units must be sampled.

The requirement to sample the work of all assessors and internal verifiers overtime has been given more prominence.

Based on the above, the sampling approach adopted by SQA centrally and by EVs, will filter through to centres via pre-event planning discussions and documents including agreed and completed visit plans.

## **Important reminders**

### **Retention period**

You are required to retain candidate evidence for one year from the date of final certification of the qualification which allows us to sample certificated candidate evidence where applicable.

### **Indirect claims status**

For our existing centres who wish to offer new Ofqual qualifications, we will continue to apply indirect claims status. This means that we will carry out qualification verification prior to your candidates being certificated.

To avoid disruption to certification timescales we will engage with you early in your delivery to agree suitable timescales for verification to take place.

Your indirect claims status will be reviewed regularly, taking a holistic approach to quality assurance, and we will notify you when you are able to move to direct claims status.

### **Candidate address**

We have introduced two additional fields to SQA Connect Candidate Services:

- candidate email address
- candidate telephone number

If you require certificates to be sent to your centre address you will no longer have to provide the candidate's home address as long as at least one of the new fields are populated.

The new fields can be completed when registering a candidate for the first time or when you make an update to a candidate's registration details. You must provide a valid email address and/or telephone number that belong to the candidate. We will not accept a centre's email address or telephone number.

Where monitoring carried out by SQA identifies that a candidate's email address and/or telephone number are not being used as described above, centres will be required to rectify the situation immediately.

### **Assessor/verifier details**

You are required to regularly maintain the details of assessors and verifiers directly on [SQA Connect](#). The CASS Ofqual user manual is available in the user guides section of [SQA Connect](#).

You must also notify assessors/verifiers that their personal data is being collected and for what purpose.

**More information**

The CASS e-learning course is available on the [SQA Academy](#).

If you need any further CASS related information, please contact your SQA Regional Manager.