

Systems Verification

Key Messages 2022

This time last year we couldn't have imagined that we would still be facing many of the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we fully appreciate that many centres have faced a multitude of difficulties and obstacles over this time.

On the other hand, it has also been extremely uplifting and inspiring to learn how you have risen to these challenges, and adapted your methods and approach to continue delivering SQA qualifications to your customers and candidates during the pandemic. We have seen and heard so many good examples of innovative practice from virtual verification visits.

In our Key Messages of 2021, we outlined the support and measures we had worked on up until January 2021, with some of our plans in progress. We are now happy to update this.

Over the past year we have worked to continue and improve our support for you by:

- Going live with the Centre Hub, where you can now upload your systems and qualification verification evidence.
- Delivering six Systems Quality Assurance Solutions webinars. These continue to be available to all on our website.
- Publishing the updated Systems Verification Criteria: Guidance for Centres in March 2021.
- Publishing the new Systems Approval and Verification: Support Materials in March 2021.
- Taking part in the week-long Quality Network Event, delivering a webinar on quality assurance.
- Devising a new SQA Co-ordinator Induction Guide for centres — to be published soon.
- Continuing to carry out systems verification for centres, on a reduced criteria model, remotely.
- Gradually re-introducing face to face visits as circumstances have allowed for centres that are happy for us to do so.
- Approving 80 new centres over this time, and an additional 840 qualifications approvals.

Centre statistics

Since 2016, the number of centres reporting high or broad confidence from their systems verification has in the majority increased year on year:

- 2016–17: 27%
- 2017–18: 23%
- 2018–19: 34.7%
- 2019–20: 41.8%
- 2020–21: 56.7%

Another really positive statistic to note in this year is that 71% of the centres that were issued with an evidence report achieved full compliance on their first submission of amended evidence.



Top 6 non-compliant criteria

All that said, the same six criteria remain as 'repeat offenders', requiring actions after system verification. This year's top six (the previous year's are in brackets) were:

- 1 1.5 Malpractice (1.5 Malpractice)
- 2 6.2 Candidate entries/Data Management (6.2 Candidate Entries/Data Management)
- 3 6.1 Candidate GDPR/Data Management (4.8 Appeals)
- 4 4.8 Appeals (6.1 Candidate GDPR/Data Management)
- 5 3.6 Complaints (3.6 Complaints)
- 6 3.5 Assessment Arrangements (3.5 Assessment Arrangements)

Tips for maintaining effective data management

Over the past two years, data management has continued to be an area of non-compliance for some of our centres, and with the added challenges brought by the pandemic, some have found this more difficult to keep on top of.

Here are our 'top tips' for data management:

- Watch the SQA Webinar 'Making SQA Connect work for you'.
- Ensure that data cleansing is a regular activity and that whoever is responsible for this has the time, resources and information to do it.
- Communicate with your assessors and candidates regularly to determine their situation and whether achievement is on track or circumstances have changed.
- Result, withdraw or extend candidates to ensure that their expected end date data is compliant.

How to achieve and maintain a High Confidence outcome

- Use the [SQA Systems Verification Criteria: Guidance for centres](#) in tandem with the [Systems Verification and Approval support guidance \(sqa.org.uk\)](#) to ensure that your current policies and procedures meet SQA requirements.
- If your centre delivers regulated qualifications, ensure you take note of the 'Additional requirements for regulated qualifications' paragraph under each criterion eligible (1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 3.6, 4.7, 4.8, 6.3 and 6.4) and incorporate this into your policy and practice.
- Be aware of the regularly non-compliant criteria (such as Malpractice) and ensure that you're aware of all updates or amendments to these — which may mean changes to your policies.
- Remember — review regularly, update where required, and share.

The future

We are very much looking forward to visiting you in person once again and witnessing the work that you do in your centres. In the meantime, please don't feel you have to wait until we make contact with you. If you have any queries at all, feel free to contact us — it's always good to hear from you.