

Systems verification key messages

April 2026

This year's key messages from our Quality Enhancement Team explains what systems verification is and why it matters to you and to us. We'll share data on the results of systems verification over 2025 and tips on how to improve your outcomes. It also features what centres have said about systems verification.

Becoming Qualifications Scotland

As previously communicated, Qualifications Scotland replaced SQA and became operational on 1 February 2026. This is when we officially launched the brand and started to issue Qualifications Scotland certificates.

As Qualifications Scotland, we'll remain dedicated to our partnerships across the UK and internationally. Learners and educators are at the heart of this change, and our qualifications will continue to provide meaningful pathways for career development and lifelong learning.

We have created a brand toolkit to help you prepare your own web pages and materials:

[Qualifications Scotland Approved Centre marketing toolkit.](#)

Systems verification focuses on your documented policies and procedures. We don't expect you to have these all updated to refer to Qualifications Scotland immediately, but you should do this the next time your documents are scheduled for review.

Key Messages from 2025 systems verification outcomes

We quality assure our centres through qualification and systems verification. Systems verification looks at every aspect of being an approved Qualifications Scotland centre, covering management, resources, learners, assessment and data.

Systems verification outcomes

There is good news about systems verification: over 2025, we engaged with 286 centres and 79% gained a 'High Confidence' outcome at the first attempt, meeting all our systems quality

assurance criteria. This is compared to 68% in 2024. In most cases, just a few quality assurance criteria were responsible for non-compliance, so let's take a closer look at these.

The top reasons for non-compliance were issues with policies and procedures for malpractice, complaints, roles and responsibilities, appeals and data management. Here's what to do to avoid them:

- Use the correct definition of malpractice used by Qualifications Scotland. Check your reporting responsibilities and record retention timescales.
- Include the correct escalation routes in your complaints policy for learners taking qualifications that are regulated by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales.
- Ensure that your documented roles and responsibilities cover all requirements — including sub-contracts and partnership agreements.
- Check the escalation routes for learners who want to appeal, as these differ between regulated and non-regulated qualifications, and internally or externally assessed qualifications.
- Monitor your candidate data, looking for entries that are out of date.
- Ensure that you have provided us with contact details for candidates — you must put the candidate's email and phone number in Connect when you register them if you enter the centre address and not the candidate's home address.

Most of the time, you can easily ensure compliance by following the 'Qualifications Scotland's essential requirements' section in the Systems Verification Criteria: Guide for Centres or by referring to Systems Approval and Verification: Support Materials.

You can find all our quality assurance documentation on our [quality assurance documents and videos](#) web page. Use the drop-down menu for 'systems verification' to find our updated Systems Verification Criteria: Guidance for Centres and our Systems Approval and Verification: Support Materials.

You can also use these direct links:

- [Systems Verification Criteria: Guidance for Centres](#)
- [Systems Approval and Verification: Support Materials](#)

Recent updates to requirements

We updated our Systems Verification Criteria: Guidance for Centres in November 2025. You must compare your own policies and procedures with these updates if you haven't already, and

implement any changes needed to remain compliant. The change log in the document can support your review. You must demonstrate that you meet our essential requirements as a Qualifications Scotland Approved Centre in our regular systems verification activities.

There are significant updates:

- in relation to external assessment, which apply to centres offering National Courses
- in criterion 3.5, which covers supporting learners to access assessment through agreed assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Required actions

Sometimes centres are given required actions so that they meet our systems quality assurance criteria. If you are given required actions, you must submit evidence of how you have addressed each of them on or before the agreed date. If you miss agreed deadlines, we might impose sanctions on your centre. These range from entry in an action plan to address the agreed required actions, through to suspension or removal of centre approval.

Please remember that your systems verifier is on hand to offer advice and guidance. Our aim is the same as your aim: for your centre to be running smoothly with efficient and effective systems that make your job more straightforward and meet our quality criteria.

Advice from centres

Many centres get a fully compliant 'High Confidence' report during systems verification. Here is advice from some of these centres. (References to SQA pre-date 1 February 2026.)

From Dawn Andrews, HSC Futures:

'For us, our focus is on maintaining high confidence and to do this we:

- Have clear and detailed job descriptions for our team that outline roles and responsibilities
- Have regular team meetings and subject specific standardisation meetings
- Keep on top of any changes / updates and share information with the team at the earliest opportunity
- Regularly review our company policies, version controlled and clear recorded details of updates
- Use resources provided by SQA to ensure our processes and polices align with theirs and key requirements are met
- Use information included in Key Message publications from SQA as part of our internal quality assurance processes

- Request, analyse and act on feedback from our clients

Systems Verification is a crucial Quality Assurance process to validate that we meet SQA's requirements and expectations of being an Approved Centre. It gives us the opportunity to demonstrate:

- How we run our Centre
- Our internal quality assurance processes
- Our policies and procedures and how they align with SQA's
- How we deliver qualifications
- How we support our candidates
- How we listen to and action feedback

The main benefits to us are:

- Peace of mind that we are doing what is expected of us to maintain Centre approval
- The opportunity to demonstrate and evidence what we do and how we do it
- Having the continued support from SQA's experienced Quality Assurance staff
- Receiving a documented verification report that is clear and highlights areas of improvement (if necessary) and areas of good practice that we may have overlooked / not considered, ourselves.'

From Lesley Lowrie, GOSTA Training:

'As a training centre the team at GOSTA Training have always appreciated the input from the Systems Team at SQA. The Systems Verifiers that have visited our centre over many years of delivery have always been very keen to conduct the visit in a calm but efficient manner, also giving advice if appropriate. It gives clear indication that the systems you have in place as a company are valid and reliable, meeting the standards set by SQA and ensure the delivery of training is carried out efficiently. It is paramount that each person within the training centre has a full knowledge of each of the processes required to operate to a high standard.

The main benefit for us would be the efficient operation day to day running of the company. Each person knows what their responsibilities are, and they always have access to the Procedures Manual which gives clarity of each work situation, if in any doubt.

GOSTA Training is delighted to say that we have had many all green, High Confidence reports but never take this for granted. We're constantly looking at what we do and how we do it is so important. We will always strive to improve our systems. Setting up robust systems will take time initially but once completed the value outweighs the set-up element.'

From Paula Kane, MACs:

'The system verification ensures that as a centre we are adhering to and keeping abreast with all SQA standards and practices and that my centre is fully compliant. It allows me as the centre manager to ensure all relevant paperwork and standards are disseminated to my staff and the best quality Is provided to my candidates both internally and externally.

The benefits for me and my centre are:

- Prepared for every eventuality
- Always up to date and relevant SQA and MACS Childcare Centre paperwork in place
- Support and guidance given during system verification
- Ensures that all standards are adhered to and most relevant paperwork is available
- Systems and personnel are available to support when required

Through continual reflection, standardisation and [work with] key personnel within my centre, we keep up to date and have key deadlines and reflection to adhere to. As the centre lead I oversee and navigate what is required and ensure professional practice at all times.'

Top tips for new centres: 'Stay prepared, focused and have continual review dates and deadlines to ensure you are always adhering to professional practice.'

From Elizabeth Wilson, East Renfrewshire Council:

'It lets us know the systems, procedures and policies we have in place are robust and effective to allow us to deliver a high quality service to our candidates.

It is good to be able to talk to the Systems EV and discuss any new procedures or policies we have to implement.

Another benefit to the system EV is the reassurance it gives us that we are working to a high standard.'

[We have achieved two consecutive 'All green High Confidence' reports] 'by keeping up to date with all SQA requirements, having regular meetings with input from all staff and ensuring we follow the requirements laid down by SQA.'

Top tip: 'Take the time to read the Systems Verification Criteria. When mapping evidence for the EV visit treat it like you would when cross referring to ensure you have fully covered all the criteria.'