

Qualification Verification: Group Award Guidance for Centres





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Introduction

This guidance document outlines the approaches for group award verification activity. You should use this guidance with the [Qualification Verification Guidance for Centres](#) document available on SQA's website. For session 2024–25, we have added more product types to the qualifications we verify under the group award verification approach. We will be using our group award method to verify:

- ◆ Higher National (Self-Regulated)
- ◆ Professional Development Awards (Self-Regulated)
- ◆ National Progression Awards (Self-Regulated)
- ◆ National Certificates (Self-Regulated)
- ◆ Foundation Apprenticeships (Self-regulated)
- ◆ National Workplace (Other)
- ◆ SVQs (Other)
- ◆ Customised Awards (Other)

Our approach varies slightly depending on product type, and details of the key differences are provided in the sections below.

Another key change for session 2024–25 is the introduction of generic criteria for verification activity relating to Higher National, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates and Foundation Apprenticeships. More information on the generic criteria and how we will implement it is provided in the section below (named 'generic criteria') and in the [Appendix](#).

Section 1: Planning for all product types

We ask that you create a Microsoft Teams channel for group award verification. We will provide names and email addresses (via email) of the quality assurance team members to be added. Ideally, please follow this naming convention for the Teams channel: *COLLEGE NAME* SQA Group Award Verification.

This channel will be used to share your allocations, exchange information, and provide a forum for discussion for any questions or queries you may have. Please create a new Teams channel within the Teams site for each new session, ie:

SQA Group Award Verification 2023–24
SQA Group Award Verification 2024–25

Allocation information will be shared via a 'Group Award Selection Template' which we will upload to the Microsoft Teams channel. The process for completing this template is as follows:

Step 1: We will provide information on the group award(s) selected.

Step 2: You will provide delivery information for the group award(s).

After Step 2, our planning approach will be different based on qualification type. You can click on the link below to take you to the information relevant for each qualification type:

[Higher National, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates, Foundation Apprenticeships](#)

[SVQs, National Workplace, Customised Awards](#)

Section 2: Higher National, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates, Foundation Apprenticeships

Allocation planning

The process for our self-regulated qualifications will remain the same as session 2023–24. Following from Step 2, when you provide your delivery information, we will proceed to:

Step 3: We will select units to be verified, based on the information provided.

Step 4: You will provide further information on the units selected and the candidate lists for each of these units.

Step 5: You will also receive an automated email from our Quality Assurance Management System as each external verifier (EV) accepts their allocation for your centre. Once allocations have been accepted by EVs, we will provide the EV name(s) and event ID(s) for the activity.

There is a 'summary' tab which provides an overview of all group awards selected and will be updated after each stage of completion. If you inform us that you are 'not running' a group award that has been selected, we will record this here.

Generic criteria

To enhance the verification of group awards we have introduced a refined approach which consists of generic criteria being reviewed by the primary EV only, in instances where there is more than one EV involved in the group award activity. Details of the generic criteria and EV responsibility can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Activity planning

Further information relating to steps 4 and 5 is detailed below.

Step 4:

- ◆ Upon completing Step 4 within the selections spreadsheet, please upload candidate information to the Files section of the Microsoft Teams channel.
- ◆ Candidate information should include, for each unit selected:
 - SCN
 - Assessor and Internal Verifier name against each SCN
 - Stage of completion

- ◆ If you request that verification takes place prior to the evidence availability date that you provide in the selections spreadsheet, and this could potentially result in partial evidence being provided, your EV will determine if the evidence available will be sufficient before the qualification verification activity can be scheduled.
- ◆ If there are any changes to the candidate information you have provided at Step 4, please ensure you provide an updated candidate list to your EV.

Step 5:

- ◆ Upon completing Step 4, each group award selection will be allocated to an EV. Depending on the qualification make-up, there may be more than one EV involved. In this instance, a 'primary EV' will be appointed. The primary EV will act as the main point of contact for the activity; will liaise with any additional (secondary) EVs; will undertake visit planning; and will review the generic criteria. Secondary EVs will review reduced criteria. Please see the [Appendix](#) for further detail.
- ◆ We will update the 'Group Award Selection Template' (Step 5) with the names of all allocated EVs and their role in the activity on each group award tab, along with QAMS event IDs for each verification group selected as part of the activity (maximum of three verification groups per group award activity).
- ◆ We will share all information provided at Step 4 with the EV(s). The primary (if applicable) EV will liaise with you and any secondary EVs to confirm all remaining visit planning information (date, time, evidence platform, etc.).
- ◆ The visit plan for the group award activity will be generated via the primary EV's QAMS event ID and will be issued once the above details are confirmed.

Graded unit activity

Where a graded unit (GU) has been selected for verification, this will be included as part of the overall group award verification activity. If the delivery of the GU is taking place later in the session, we will undertake verification of this separately. This will be confirmed when you provide us with candidate SCNs and their stage of completion.

Where GU verification is separated, this will be treated as an independent activity with its own QAMS event allocation. It will no longer be included within the overall group award verification activity and the standard verification process will apply. This will ensure that GU verification does not delay overall group award verification activity.

Review of evidence

During the visit planning process, you will have agreed date(s) and method(s) of evidence submission. Each EV will review the evidence for their verification group. When the reviews are completed, the primary EV will liaise with all EVs to agree the format of the virtual feedback session.

Feedback session

- ◆ Feedback activity for the full Group Award will take place during one event, where possible.
- ◆ The primary EV will chair the virtual event.
- ◆ All EVs, where possible, will attend the virtual event.
- ◆ The primary EV will feedback on behalf of any EV who cannot attend.

- ◆ The primary EV will feedback on outcomes against category of criteria and any potential sanctions.
- ◆ The primary EV will complete the outcome of summary form and email it to the SQA Co-ordinator.

Reporting

- ◆ Each EV will complete a Quality Assurance report (one report per event ID detailed within the selections spreadsheet).
- ◆ Each report will be issued to the centre after the virtual feedback event.

SQA Centre Hub

For Centre Hub users, the Hub has been set up for each group award activity and will be arranged in the following way:

- ◆ A folder will be set up for each Event ID within the GA in the centres' Qualification Verification folder, with the naming convention: 'Group Award Name Event ID XXXX'.
- ◆ Each verification group sub folder will have the standard hub folders relating to the criteria: 2. Resources, 3. Candidate Support, 4. Internal Assessment and Verification.
- ◆ Evidence specific to each of the verification groups should be placed within the respective verification group Event ID folder.

Centre platforms

For centres using their own platforms, please ensure EVs are provided with access to the relevant evidence for their verification group.

Section 3: SVQs, National Workplace and Customised Awards

Activity planning

The process for SVQs, National Workplace and Customised Awards qualifications will follow on from Step 2 as detailed below:

Step 3: We will allocate to an EV and once allocations have been accepted, we will provide the EV name and event ID for the activity.

Undertaking the activity

Following Step 3, the information you have provided will be given to the EV and you will receive an automated email from our Quality Assurance Management System advising you of this selection. The EV will then begin the visit planning process with you, including:

- ◆ Advising you of unit/Group Award selections
- ◆ Agreeing dates
- ◆ Methods of evidence submission (for virtual verification)
- ◆ Obtaining Assessor/Internal Verifier information
- ◆ Requesting candidate lists

If you request that verification takes place prior to unit completion, and if this would result in partial evidence being provided, your EV will determine if the evidence available will be sufficient before the QV activity can be scheduled.

Review of evidence will be undertaken against the event ID and feedback sessions will take place as per our standard qualification verification process. Once your verification activity has taken place, you will receive your quality assurance report from QAMS.

Section 4: Accepted methods of evidence

Please note our preferred methods of submitting evidence:

- ◆ SQA Centre Hub (this is not a mandatory requirement)
- ◆ Centre platforms: Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, Canvas, Moodle, other e-portfolio platforms

We cannot accept information shared using WeTransfer, Dropbox or any other third party platforms.

Ongoing support

We are committed to supporting centres through their group award verification activities. If you have any questions regarding your activity, please do not hesitate to contact your QA Logistics Officer or email gav@sqa.org.uk to get in touch with the Qualification Verification Team.

Appendix: Higher National, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates and Foundation Apprenticeships

Quality assurance criteria by role

Quality assurance criteria	Primary EV	Secondary EV and/or Primary EV (if additional VGs allocated)
2.1 Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)*	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)*
2.4 There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; reference, and learning and assessment materials.	Yes — for all units selected	No
3.2 Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.	Yes — for all units selected	No
3.3 Candidates must have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and revise their assessment plans accordingly.	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)
4.2 Internal assessment and verification procedures must be implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)
4.3 Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)
4.4 Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)
4.6 Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA requirements.	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)	Yes — for their allocated unit(s)
4.7 Candidate evidence must be retained in line with SQA requirements.	Yes — for all units selected	No
4.9 Feedback from qualification verifiers must be disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.	Yes — for all units selected	No

*where the qualification stipulates assessor or internal verifier qualification requirements