



Systems Approval and Verification: support materials

First published 2014, Version 3.0 May 2025

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
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Change log: Version 3.0 May 2025

This version replaces the previous publication Systems Approval and Verification: Support Materials v2.0, published in March 2021.

Location of change

Writing roles and responsibilities

Minor updates and re-ordering throughout.

Data management roles and responsibilities updated.

Role and responsibilities of the invigilators for closed book assessments and examinations added.

Information on partnerships added.

Writing malpractice procedures (criterion 1.5)

Minor change to layout of definition of malpractice.

Statement on artificial intelligence added.

Writing procedures for equal opportunities for assessment (criterion 3.4)

This section added.

Writing procedures for assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments

This section has been substantially re-written, including further explanation of the use of reasonable adjustments to assessment approaches in internal assessment and specific process for assessment arrangements in external assessments for National Courses.

Writing procedures for internal assessment and verification

This section added.

Writing procedures for security of assessments

Information added on sending and storage of assessments electronically.

Exemplar 1: Data management flowchart

Re-formatted and minor revisions.

Exemplar 2: Assessor/internal verifier induction flowchart

Updated to include only SQA requirements — centres can add other topics specific to them.

Exemplar 3: Candidate induction flowchart

Updated to include only SQA requirements — centres can add other topics specific to them.

Writing roles and responsibilities

Criterion 1.4: The roles and responsibilities of those involved in the administration, management, assessment and quality assurance of SQA qualifications across all sites must be clearly documented and disseminated.

Detailed, documented roles and responsibilities provide clarity for:

- the person or people undertaking the role
- someone who is new to the role
- all members of staff in the centre who are involved with the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA qualifications
- the management team in your centre

SQA quality assurance personnel (such as the approvals and verification teams, qualification verifiers, systems verifiers)

You must document the roles and responsibilities for those involved in:

- the management of processes for delivery of SQA qualifications (SQA Co-ordinator)
- data management for SQA qualifications
- assessment of SQA qualifications
- internal verification of SQA qualifications
- invigilation of SQA qualifications
- sub-contracts or partnerships for the delivery of SQA qualifications

The management of processes for delivery of SQA qualifications

For most approved centres this will be the responsibility of the centre's SQA co-ordinator. Having an effective SQA co-ordinator is essential to being a successful SQA centre.

You must identify one person to undertake this role and ensure that they understand what is required and are given sufficient authority. This person will be responsible overall and must be the single contact for SQA. You must provide us with:

- the centre co-ordinator's own company email account and phone number or
- a specific mailbox for receipt which will be monitored/checked daily

The responsibilities of the SQA co-ordinator are listed below. These can be split between different members of staff and/or included in a procedure, but you must allocate all the responsibilities.

Responsibilities as the single point of contact for SQA

- Be the first point of contact between your centre and SQA
- Liaise between SQA quality assurance staff verifiers and your assessors/internal verifiers to arrange verification visits when notified by SQA
- Ensure SQA quality assurance verifiers and staff and regulatory personnel have access to relevant information, records, evidence, candidates, staff and premises as requested
- Circulate the subsequent quality assurance report to appropriate personnel
- Ensure that any required actions and development points identified in a quality assurance report are discussed and acted upon within agreed time scales
- Seek permission from SQA if you intend to deliver SQA qualifications or customised awards at alternative or satellite sites, including a blended approach using remote delivery and assessment, in another country or nation, including other nations in the UK
- Notify SQA of issues of concern, such as breaches in the security of assessment materials published on SQA's secure site, or suspected centre malpractice
- Notify SQA of any changes that may affect your centre's ability to meet quality assurance criteria including:
 - change of premises
 - change of head of centre, owner or SQA co-ordinator
 - change of name of centre or business
 - change of contact details
 - outcome of internal or external investigations
 - removal of centre or qualification approval by another awarding body
 - lack of appropriate assessors or internal verifiers

- changes to your centre's arrangements for secure storage of SQA examination materials and candidate evidence (if applicable)

Quality assurance responsibilities

- Ensure policies and procedures are documented, reviewed and updated in line with SQA requirements; legislative changes; and in line with internal centre decisions
- Ensure any new and revised policies and procedures are version controlled and made available to staff
- Ensure initial and ongoing reviews of resources for all qualifications
- Ensure candidates have equal access to resources across assessment sites
- Maintain the password for the SQA secure site and only provide access to relevant assessors and internal verifiers
- Report any breach of security of assessment materials from the secure site to SQA immediately

Responsibilities to support centre staff

- Make information received from SQA available to staff and candidates
- Ensure that current versions of all documents are used
- Enable internal verifiers and assessors to meet on a regular basis to standardise and share best practice

Data management for SQA qualifications

SQA has specific requirements for the data management role, which are listed below.

In many cases data management responsibilities are also undertaken by the SQA co-ordinator. If this applies in your centre, you may combine the roles.

If data management will be undertaken by another person or other people, you must identify who will undertake the role and ensure that they understand what is required.

You must allocate all the responsibilities listed below.

Responsibilities when registering candidates

- Gather candidates' personal details (full name, date of birth, gender, address, telephone number, email address)
- Inform candidates that their personal information will be sent to SQA and provide them with the web address for SQA's Privacy Statement
- Register new candidates with SQA
- Allocate Scottish Candidate Numbers (SCN) via SQA Connect to candidates who have not previously undertaken SQA qualifications
- Register candidates at their own home addresses or, if you use your centre address for receipt of certificates, provide alternative contact details (personal email address, mobile telephone number) and obtain permission from the candidate to open their certificate

Responsibilities when making candidate entries

- Gather information about which SQA qualifications candidates should be entered for
- Check your centre is approved to offer these qualifications
- Check awards are not in their lapsing period before making candidate entries (*regulated qualifications only*)
- Check the finish date for the qualification and if there is any replacement qualification if the finish date is approaching
- Submit candidate entries on SQA Connect as soon as possible after their induction
- Make unit and group award entries, including appropriate estimated completion dates

Responsibilities when submitting candidate results

- Gather information on candidates' results, and update SQA Connect with these
- Ensure that individual candidate entries and results are not submitted at the same time, except in the case of courses of very short duration (1–3 days)
- Ensure that candidates seeking certification for a full SVQ, a Workplace Core Skill unit or the assessor / verifier units are entered for the award at least 10 weeks before a claim for certification is made ('10-week rule')

- Ensure that all data passed on by IVs and assessors is processed and results are submitted to SQA according to your centre's data management policy

Responsibilities when undertaking data cleansing

On SQA Connect:

- Withdraw unit and group award entries for individual candidates when past their completion date and not resulted as a pass or fail
- Extend unit and/or group award completion dates where candidates have been granted an extension
- Where applicable, reinstate candidates' home addresses on SQA Connect after certification

Responsibilities for retention of candidate assessment records

- Retain candidate assessment records, securely and in a retrievable format, in line with SQA awarding body requirements: [Retention of candidate assessment records table](#)

Assessment of SQA qualifications

The staff who will be delivering SQA qualifications must understand their specific responsibilities for assessing the SQA qualifications under their remit. You must document the roles and responsibilities of assessors. We recommend you include all the responsibilities listed below.

The staff who act as internal verifiers must understand their specific responsibilities for internally verifying the SQA qualifications under their remit. You must document the roles and responsibilities of internal verifiers. We recommend you include all the responsibilities listed below.

Responsibilities when supporting candidates

- Prepare candidates and recognise when they are ready for assessment
- Explain to candidates how and when assessment and re-assessment will be carried out
- Identify the prior achievements and development needs of candidates

- Maintain regular contact with candidates so that their progress can be monitored and support can be provided

Responsibilities when undertaking assessment

- Familiarise oneself with qualification requirements and conditions of assessment and standardise with colleagues
- Apply the assessment requirements and conditions described in the qualification's unit/group award specification or assessment strategy
- Make valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair assessment decisions
- Provide written and verbal feedback to candidates on their assessments
- Standardise assessment judgements with colleagues

Responsibilities for supporting and promoting quality assurance

- Maintain own experience, qualifications and, where applicable, CPD to meet the unit/group award specification or assessment strategy requirements
- Hold (or achieve within 18 months, unless an alternative timescale is stipulated in the assessment strategy) an appropriate assessor award (*If applicable, regulated qualifications only)
- Provide candidate evidence and assessment records to internal verifiers as required for sampling
- Respond to feedback from internal/external verifiers and address any action points
- Participate in reviews of the assessment and internal verification process and planning improvements
- Submit accurate information on candidate entries and results for qualifications/units to data management staff
- Retain candidate evidence, securely and in a retrievable format, in line with SQA awarding body requirements: Evidence Retention Requirements tables

Internal verification of SQA qualifications

Responsibilities for supporting and promoting quality assurance

- Maintain own experience, qualifications and, where applicable, CPD to meet the unit/group award specification or assessment strategy requirements
- Hold (or achieve within 18 months, unless an alternative timescale is stipulated in the assessment strategy) an appropriate verifier award (*If applicable, regulated qualifications only)
- Define the approach to internal verification, including sampling
- Internally verify centre-devised assessment (Note: SQA strongly advises that you also submit centre-devised assessments to SQA for prior verification.)
- Check assessment requirements and conditions are applied (as described in the qualification's unit/group award specification or assessment strategy, including those requiring special assessment arrangements)
- Participate in reviews of the assessment and internal verification process and planning improvements
- Respond to queries from and provide support and guidance to assessors
- Authorise submission of results once internal verification, according to sampling plan, has been successfully completed
- Provide internal verification records to SQA external verifiers as required for sampling
- Respond to feedback from external verifiers and address any action points
- Internally verify any proposed assessment arrangements or reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs of candidates
- Retain candidate assessment and verification records, securely and in a retrievable format, in line with SQA awarding body requirements: [Retention of candidate assessment records table](#)

Responsibilities for ensuring standardisation

- Collaborate with assessors and other internal verifiers to ensure a shared understanding of the qualification requirements and conditions of assessment

- Collaborate with assessors and other internal verifiers to ensure that assessment approaches are valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair
- Participate in or lead standardisation activities and ensure that standardisation activities have taken place

Invigilation of closed book assessments and examinations (if applicable)

Some qualifications include 'closed book' assessments or examinations, including those conducted using SOLAR (Scottish OnLine Assessment Resources, SQA's digital assessment platform for approved SQA centres). Invigilators are responsible for ensuring that candidates correctly complete the necessary documentation and that conditions of assessment are properly implemented.

The invigilator must:

- declare any conflict of interest in terms of relationships to candidates or personal interest in the outcome of the assessment and not invigilate in these circumstances.
- be trained to ensure the assessment is carried out in accordance with the specified instructions.

Responsibilities for checking the identity of candidates

If the candidates are not known to the invigilator or supervisor, you must make sufficient identity and security checks before the examination or assessment to ensure the candidate is who they say they are:

- a) You must ensure that candidate identity is checked against one of the following forms of photographic identification:
 - photo card driving licence
 - valid passport
 - valid identity card from within the EU
 - military identity card
 - government identity card

- Security Industry Authority card

Other forms of identification (such as PASS card, or Young Scot card) may be considered.

- b) Candidates must be informed, within their joining instructions, that they must bring a permitted form of identification.
- c) A copy of the identification documentation must be retained for six months after the candidate's completion date.

Responsibilities for managing assessment conditions

- Ensure that the security of assessment papers, online assessments and other materials are maintained before, during and after the assessment takes place
- Ensure that the seating in the examination room is arranged in such a way that there is no possibility of collusion or interference
- Ensure they are able to see all of the candidates at all times during the examination
- Ensure that all displays of material that may be of assistance to candidates in answering questions are removed
- Ensure that candidates cannot access applications or devices that may be of assistance to them in answering questions or generating evidence
- Where appropriate, ensure that the status of the internet connection is sufficient to allow candidates to access online assessments
- Ensure that agreed assessment arrangements for individual candidates are implemented properly for the assessment
- Deal appropriately with any disruption to the assessment

Sub-contractors for delivery of SQA qualifications

Sub-contractors

A sub-contractor is an individual, but not an organisation, who has agreed to provide a centre with assessment or internal verification services. They must meet any qualification

requirements for acting as assessors or verifiers to comply with centre, awarding body and (where applicable) regulatory body requirements.

A sub-contract agreement provides your centre and the sub-contractor with a clear understanding of each other's responsibilities. It provides both parties with a level of protection, whilst being clear that the sub-contracted assessors or verifiers are not centre employees.

The responsibilities listed below are suggestions only and do not comprise a definitive list. It is likely that there are other contractual terms and conditions that will be agreed, such as remuneration, start and end dates, size of caseload, confidentiality and disciplinary procedures. SQA will not comment on these other types of arrangements as, although necessary for you and the sub-contractor, they are not related to our quality criteria.

These responsibilities could be incorporated into a specific agreement, contract or other document(s), such as an assessor or verifier induction checklist. Whatever type of document is used, it is important that both parties sign to agree their points of responsibility and that you retain a copy.

Centre responsibilities

We (the SQA approved centre) will provide you (the sub-contractor) with:

- a role descriptor confirming your role and responsibilities
- a set of operational procedures and centre communication contacts
- induction to our procedures and a named contact to provide you with support and answer any queries you may have
- an allocation of candidates (for assessment) or assessors (for internal verification), on an ongoing basis
- feedback through the performance review process and through routine internal verification records

Sub-contractor responsibilities

You will be expected to:

- undertake induction to our procedures and apply all centre policies and procedures
- make regular contact with your allocated candidates or assessors; provide advice and support; make assessment or verification decisions; and provide feedback on progress and achievement
- undertake relevant continuing professional development (CPD) and maintain associated records in line with sector assessment strategy requirements
- take part in team/standardisation meetings and 1:1 review meetings
- communicate with candidates and colleagues on a regular basis, completing administration records and forms

Partnership arrangements for delivery of SQA qualifications

Partnership arrangements for delivering of SQA qualifications are between the SQA approved centre and another organisation. You must have a formal, signed partnership agreement stating clearly what responsibilities each partner has. This will vary between different types of partnerships, but you must define roles and responsibilities, including which partner will:

- hold approval for the qualification and enter the candidates (this partner will have responsibility for quality assurance and communication with SQA)
- register the candidates (if not already registered with SQA)
- have responsibility for gathering and processing candidate personal data for entry and resulting purposes (including which party is responsible for informing candidates, or their guardians, of the data exchange and processing in line with UK GDPR legislation)
- carry out training
- provide ongoing support to the candidates
- assess the candidates
- internally verify assessment approaches and judgements
- liaise with SQA over external verification
- send results to SQA
- deal with any appeals, complaints or reports of malpractice
- manage the facilities and resources

Writing malpractice procedures

Criterion 1.5: Suspected candidate or staff malpractice must be investigated and acted on, in line with SQA requirements.

In your introduction, make clear what is meant by malpractice

Your procedures must cover both candidate and centre malpractice and state that all concerns of possible malpractice (by candidates or centre staff) will be taken seriously.

You may wish to include this information within a broader assessment policy. If you deliver qualifications with external assessment, you may have a separate section or separate procedure on malpractice in external assessment.

More information is available in:

[Malpractice: Information for centres](#)

[Malpractice policy and procedures for SQA Qualifications regulated by Ofqual and / or Qualification Wales](#)

Definition of malpractice

Your policies and procedures for malpractice must use the following definition:

‘Malpractice means any act, default or practice (whether deliberate or resulting from neglect or default) which is a breach of SQA requirements, including any act, default or practice which:

- compromises, attempts to compromise, or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any SQA qualification, or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of SQA or any officer, employee or agent of SQA

'Malpractice can arise for a variety of reasons:

- Some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage in an examination or assessment (deliberate non-compliance).
- Some incidents arise due to ignorance of SQA requirements, or carelessness or neglect in applying the requirements (maladministration).'

It is necessary to investigate any suspected instances of malpractice, whether they are intentional or not, to protect the integrity of the qualification and to identify any wider lessons to be learned.

Examples — candidate malpractice

You may wish to include examples of candidate malpractice.

You should consider the list below and include examples which are relevant to the qualifications you offer and your methods of delivery:

- breaching the security of assessment materials in a way which threatens the integrity of any exam or assessment — including the early and unauthorised removal of a question paper or answer booklet from the examination room
- breaching the defined conditions of an assessment (for example by completing work outside of controlled conditions)
- collusion — working collaboratively with other candidates beyond what is permitted
- copying from another candidate
- frivolous content — producing content that is unrelated to the assessment
- misconduct — inappropriate behaviour in an assessment room that is disruptive or disrespectful to others. This includes talking, shouting, or aggressive behaviour or language in the examination room.
- offensive content — content in assessment materials that includes vulgarity and swearing that is outwith the context of the assessment, or any material that is discriminatory in nature (including discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010). This should not be read as inhibiting candidates' rights to freedom of expression.

- personation — assuming the identity of another candidate, or a candidate having someone assume their identity during an assessment
- plagiarism — failure to acknowledge sources properly, or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own
- prohibited items — possessing items that candidates must not have with them at their allocated seat in the examination room because they can give an unfair advantage, including (but not restricted to):
 - mobile phones
 - electronic devices such as an MP3 player, iPod, tablet, smartwatch or any other device that is web-enabled or stores information
 - books, notes, sketches or paper
 - pencil case
 - calculator case
 - calculator or dictionary (except in specified assessments) — unless approved by SQA as part of an assessment arrangement.

Examples — centre malpractice

You may wish to include examples of centre malpractice.

The following are examples of centre malpractice (SQA reserves the right to consider other instances of suspected centre malpractice which may undermine the integrity of our qualifications):

- managers or others exerting undue pressure on staff to pass candidates who have not met the requirements for an award
- deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates
- excessive direction from assessors to candidates on how to meet national standards
- failure to assess internally assessed unit or course assessment work fairly, consistently and in line with national standards
- failure to comply with SQA requirements in the preparation, quality assurance and submission of estimated grade information

- failure to apply specified SQA assessment conditions in assessments, such as limits on resources or time available to candidates to complete their assessments, including any amendments to permitted conditions
- misuse of assessments, including repeated re-assessment contrary to requirements, or inappropriate adjustments to assessment decisions
- failure to recognise and apply appropriate measures to manage potential conflict of interest in assessment or quality assurance
- failure to apply appropriate processes to ensure fairness in the provision of assessment arrangements
- failure to comply with SQA requirements in relation to appeals processes
- insecure storage, transmission or use of assessment instruments, materials and marking instructions, resulting in a breach of assessment security
- failure to comply with requirements for safe retention of candidate evidence, and safe and accurate maintenance of assessment and internal verification records
- failure to comply with SQA's procedures for managing and transferring accurate candidate data
- failing to register candidates within a qualification's accreditation period
- making late registrations to the awarding body for qualifications in their lapsing period
- requesting late certification of learners after the certification end date
- for all SQA qualifications, failure by a centre to promptly notify, investigate and report concerns of potential centre malpractice to SQA
- failure to promptly notify SQA of a finding by another awarding organisation of centre malpractice, maladministration or an equivalent or similar finding
- withholding information about circumstances that may compromise the integrity of any SQA qualification or the credibility of SQA
- failure to notify SQA promptly if another awarding body removes approval from the centre, regardless of the reason given for this withdrawal
- failure to take action required by SQA or to co-operate with an SQA investigation into concerns of malpractice
- for qualifications subject to regulation by SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales, failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report to SQA concerns of potential candidate malpractice

Artificial intelligence

SQA's current position is that learners cannot submit AI outputs as their own work. This constitutes plagiarism, one of the forms of candidate malpractice. You can find the most up-to-date advice from SQA here: [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in assessments](#).

Reporting of malpractice

You must describe how suspected malpractice can be reported within your centre.

Describe how staff in your organisation can report suspected malpractice:

- by candidates
- by other members of staff

Also describe how candidates can report suspected malpractice:

- by other candidates
- by members of staff

Indicate who suspected malpractice should be reported to.

Reporting to SQA

You must report suspected malpractice to SQA.

Your procedures should state the following requirements:

'Any suspected cases of centre malpractice must be reported to SQA as soon as we have carried out an initial screening exercise to establish the nature of the concern. This includes any concerns where we take the view that no further action is necessary.

'We must inform SQA of any investigation carried out by an awarding body, industry body, funding agency or regulator which may or may not affect our delivery of SQA qualifications. We must also promptly bring to SQA's attention any findings

of centre malpractice or maladministration communicated to us by another awarding or industry body. We must notify SQA promptly if another awarding body removes approval from our centre, regardless of the reason given for this withdrawal.

'SQA expects us to bring candidate malpractice concerns for internal assessments to their attention only if:

- *the concern came to our centre's attention after submission of internal assessment marks*
- *the concern relates to candidate malpractice for a qualification regulated by SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales*
- *a candidate affected by a malpractice decision, who has exhausted their right of appeal within our centre, wishes to exercise their right of appeal to SQA; or*
- *there are other exceptional circumstances, eg we believe that the malpractice case involves a criminal act (if the malpractice involves a criminal act the matter must also be reported to the police)'*

Investigating possible malpractice

You must describe who will undertake investigations and how these may be managed:

State that your organisation will take all concerns of possible malpractice seriously, and any investigation will be fair, robust and in proportion to the nature of the concern. SQA *Malpractice: Information for Centres* includes standards for devolved investigations which explain our expectations of centres when carrying out investigations.

Explain how this will be done, for example:

- Who will conduct investigations (eg head of relevant department, independent manager, quality manager)?
- How will investigations be conducted (eg reviewing assessment evidence and records, seeking a second opinion from an IV, interviewing other candidates or members of staff)?

Communicating the outcome of the investigation

You must describe how the outcome of an investigation will be communicated:

- You should communicate the outcome in writing to the candidate or member of staff under investigation. You may wish to state a timescale for this.
- Describe how you will communicate the outcomes of investigations to other interested parties (such as assessor, tutor, head of department, data management staff dealing with results, line manager of member of staff)

Available measures for proven malpractice

You must describe the types of measures which may be applied if malpractice, for both candidates and staff, is proven:

- You should give examples of potential actions, which may vary in the level of severity depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the malpractice, eg ranging from having to resit one assessment to exclusion from a course.
- It may be appropriate to move to candidate or staff disciplinary procedures at this stage.
- Candidates involved in an investigation of malpractice (whether candidate or centre malpractice) must not be resulted for the assessments in question until the investigation is completed, the outcome decided, and any appeal concluded.

Actions taken in cases of proven malpractice

You must describe what actions you may take if malpractice is proven:

- Any actions to be taken as a result of malpractice being proven through investigation should be specified clearly in the written feedback on the outcome of the investigation.

Appeals against malpractice decisions

You must describe how candidates or staff can appeal a malpractice decision (internally and to SQA):

- Candidates and staff should have the right to appeal any malpractice decision made against them within the centre.
- State how and to whom, within your centre, appeals should be submitted. Include realistic timescales for this.
- Describe how appeals will be dealt with within your centre and how the outcome will be communicated. Include realistic timescales for this.

In addition, where malpractice is investigated by SQA, decisions can be appealed. We recommend you use the following standard wording in your procedure:

‘We have the right to appeal a decision where a case of reported malpractice by our centre has been confirmed through investigation by SQA.

‘We also have the right to appeal a decision in the case of suspected malpractice by a candidate reported by our centre to SQA.

‘Candidates have the right to appeal to SQA where:

- SQA has conducted an investigation and the candidate disagrees with the decision
- our centre has conducted an investigation, the candidate disagrees with the outcome and has exhausted our centre’s appeals process
- SQA has asked our centre to conduct an investigation and the candidate disagrees with the outcome and has exhausted our centre’s appeals process

‘For regulated qualifications only:

- Our centre and our candidates have the right to request a review by the appropriate regulator (SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales) of the awarding body’s process in reaching a decision in an appeal of a malpractice decision’

Please refer to: [The Appeals Process: Information for Centres](#)

Recording malpractice

You must describe what records will be kept and for how long.

You must keep records of investigations of suspected malpractice and the outcomes of these. Your procedures should state the following requirements:

‘Where an investigation of suspected malpractice is carried out, we will retain related records and documentation for three years for non-regulated qualifications and six years for regulated qualifications. Records will include any work of the candidate, and assessment or verification records relevant to the investigation.

‘In the case of an appeal to SQA against the outcome of a malpractice investigation, assessment records will be retained for six years.

‘In an investigation involving a potential criminal prosecution or civil claim, records and documentation will be retained for six years after the case and any appeal has been heard. If there is any doubt about whether criminal or civil proceedings will take place, we will keep records for the full six year period.’

Writing procedures for conflicts of interest in assessment

Criterion 1.6: No-one with a personal interest in the outcome of an assessment is to be involved in the assessment process. This includes assessors, IVs and invigilators.

Introduction

In your introduction:

- State that a personal interest in the outcome of an assessment amounts to a conflict of interest, which poses a risk to the integrity of the assessment.
- Indicate that all staff must take responsibility for reporting any personal interest, and that your organisation will take steps to address this. This includes assessors, IVs, and invigilators (that is, staff supervising assessments under controlled conditions).
- Describe how you will communicate this information to staff and any sub-contractors.

You should keep records of acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of this information by new staff, such as contracts or signed induction checklists. Make existing staff aware of this procedure through your established mechanisms for disseminating policies and procedures and keeping them updated.

Procedures for declaring conflicts of interest

Staff should make a declaration if they are related to or have a private relationship, or close professional or business relationship with a candidate, and are currently deployed to:

- set assessments that this candidate will undertake
- make assessment judgements on this candidate's evidence
- internally verify assessment decisions on this candidate's work
- invigilate an assessment which this candidate is sitting

Staff are also required to make a declaration if they are related to or have a private relationship with another member of centre staff involved in the internal verification of assessments. For example, where the assessment decisions of an assessor are to be internally verified by a relative.

Conflict of interest also applies where an individual stands to make a personal financial gain from the outcome of the assessment, as opposed to payment to the centre through normal business practices.

Describe how staff in your organisation should report conflicts of interest, for example to their line manager, or to the quality manager or SQA co-ordinator.

You may wish to provide a form for this (see example on following page).

Procedures for addressing conflicts of interest

When a conflict of interest is reported, your centre must decide on a suitable way to address the conflict of interest, if you feel that this is required. Possible actions might include:

- moving the candidate to another group
- changing assessor, IV or invigilator
- including the candidate in samples for verification
- having the assessment marking supervised or re-marked

The decision and agreed action must be recorded.

Record keeping

Copies of documentation, including details of the action taken to address the conflict of Interest, should be retained for a year after completion of the assessments in question.

The following example shows the type of information which should be included on a declaration-of-interest form. You may adapt this for use in your organisation.

Name of assessor, internal verifier or invigilator	
Name of candidate (if applicable)	
Candidate number (If applicable)	
Qualification	
Unit(s) involved	
Assessment(s) involved	
Nature of conflict	
Signature of assessor, internal verifier or invigilator	
Date	
Senior Management review and declaration	
I have reviewed the above declaration and noted the issue raised but have decided that no action is required.	Y/N
I have reviewed the above declaration and have decided that, to mitigate the risk of this declared conflict of interest in assessment, the following action will be taken:	Y/N
Signature of senior manager: Position: Date:	

Writing procedures for equal opportunities for assessment

Criterion 3.4: Policies and procedures must give SQA candidates equal opportunities for assessment.

Protected characteristics

State that, within the constraints of available resources and current legislation, you will ensure that no-one is discriminated against because of any of the protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race and ethnicity
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation

Access to assessment

State that this includes equal opportunities for assessment for all SQA candidates. This could include assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments to assessment approaches (see next section), but there may also be other adaptations you might make in relation to other protected characteristics.

Writing procedures for assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments to assessment

Criterion 3.5: Individual candidates' requirements for assessment arrangements must be discussed, identified, implemented and recorded.

The principles behind centres' procedures for assessment arrangements will be consistent, but there are elements of the process which will vary according to the type(s) of qualification that your centre delivers.

For learners who are disabled, as defined under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, assessment arrangements such as those listed above might be the 'reasonable adjustment' required to compensate for a substantial disadvantage, but there may be other unique adjustments that need to be considered to meet their individual needs in assessments.

For colleges, employers and training providers SQA will review your procedures for managing assessment arrangements during systems verification.

Introduction

- State your commitment to providing assessment arrangements for learners who have an identified difficulty, whether this be physical (including medical or sensory), behavioural, or a mental health or learning difficulty.
- State your commitment to applying the four key principles which underpin our model for the provision of assessment arrangements.
 - The purpose of assessment arrangements is to give disabled learners and those with additional support needs an equal opportunity to demonstrate their attainment in an assessment.
 - In doing so, we are providing an assessment environment that allows them to show the skills, knowledge and understanding they have achieved, without compromising the integrity of the assessment.

- To determine the assessment arrangements that a learner may need, you must first identify the difficulties the learner faces in assessments.
- Assessment arrangements should reflect, as far as possible, the learner's usual way of learning and producing work.

Informing staff of their roles and responsibilities

In this section of your procedure, describe how you ensure that all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to the quality assurance of assessment arrangements, and of the deadlines they need to meet.

If you are delivering an SQA qualification in partnership with another organization, you must define the responsibilities of each partner.

Identifying the learner's assessment need

In this section of your procedure, describe your usual practice for identifying the individual needs of learners, and how you record the evidence of their need.

You do not require learners to have a confirmed diagnosis of a disability for an assessment arrangement to be put in place. However, there must be an identified difficulty.

You might identify the candidate's need through discussion at the enrolment or induction stage, or as part of your application process. Bear in mind that some candidates will not disclose their needs immediately, so it is important to consider how you will recognise requirements for assessment that become apparent as the candidate progresses through their award.

Evidence of candidate needs may take many forms — for example: reports, assessments and minutes of meetings, or information from professionals such as medical practitioners. Describe how you will keep this evidence — for example, in a specific form or template, or in the candidate's portfolio or individual learning plan.

Make clear:

- whose responsibility it is to complete this form or record
- how and where it is securely stored
- that it is shared only with those who need access to the information it contains.

Determine the most appropriate reasonable adjustment or assessment arrangement

In this section of your procedure, you must explain how you will determine what arrangement is appropriate to put in place to meet the identified needs of the candidate.

Internally assessed qualifications (including regulated qualifications)	External assessment in National Courses
<p>The qualification may have flexible assessment strategies which allow you to use different methods of assessment to generate candidate evidence. This must allow the candidate to demonstrate competence they have acquired, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. Methods of assessment may vary, so the candidate may have different requirements in different assessments.</p> <p>Where the assessment method is specified in the qualification assessment strategy, you could put in place specific assessment arrangements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extra time• adjustment to start time• readers or scribes• text readers for candidates with dyslexia.	<p>The assessment method will be determined in the course specification so you cannot use a different method.</p> <p>You can put in place specific assessment arrangements. You should consider the support the learner will need for each subject. Methods of assessment may vary, so the candidate may have different requirements in different subjects at different levels.</p> <p>If you are in any doubt about arrangements that could be put in place for a learner, either during their course or during assessments, please contact the assessment arrangements team.</p>

Your procedure should say what records you will keep of the arrangement put in place for each candidate, and how the arrangement was determined to meet the candidate's identified needs.

You should also say how you will obtain agreement from the candidate to implement the reasonable adjustment or assessment arrangement, and keep a record of this. If the learner is considered not to have a general understanding of assessment arrangements, their parent, carer or guardian must also be involved in the discussions about the assessment arrangements being provided.

Verify the candidate's need for a reasonable adjustment

In this section of your procedure, you should describe the verification process in your centre, who is involved, and how this step will be recorded.

Internally assessed qualifications (including regulated qualifications)	External assessment in National Courses
Before they are put in place, reasonable adjustments should be verified by an appropriate member of your assessment team. This could be another competent assessor or an internal verifier. You must keep records of verification decisions and rationales for these.	Your decisions on assessment arrangements for individual candidates should be subject to internal verification, with records kept of the verification decisions and rationales for these. You may verify every assessment arrangement or use a defined sampling approach to this where you have large numbers of candidates.

Head of centre or delegated manager authorisation

In providing a reasonable adjustment, your centre is acknowledging that it has met its responsibilities in terms of quality assuring the appropriateness of the adjustment. Your head of centre or the person who has responsibility for your centre's internal quality assurance systems must provide final authorisation for reasonable adjustments.

Use this section of your procedure to describe who will provide this authorisation and how it will be recorded.

When to contact SQA

Your process should explain when you need to contact SQA and who has responsibility for this.

Internally assessed qualifications (including regulated qualifications)	External assessment in National Courses
<p>You only need to contact SQA to request a reasonable adjustment in an assessment if the arrangement changes the published assessment requirements in any significant way.</p> <p>For example, you should contact SQA to request the use of a scribe in a unit assessment which directly assesses written communication. If you are in any doubt about whether the reasonable adjustment significantly impacts on the standards, contact us for advice as soon as possible, and before the learner undertakes the assessment. Requests for reasonable adjustments and advice should be sent to qualification.development@sqa.org.uk</p> <p>If your centre offers qualifications regulated by Ofqual or Qualifications Wales you must use Form VQ/IA to make your request and retain a copy of the completed form for your records.</p>	<p>If you are in any doubt as to the specific arrangements that could be put in place for a learner, either during their course or during assessments, please contact the assessment arrangements team.</p> <p>Assessment arrangements are requested through SQA's Assessment Arrangements Request (AAR) system. Those involved in submitting AAR requests should be familiar with the updated Assessment Arrangement Requests System: A guide for centres (BA8137). This can be found on SQA's secure website under NQ, then Assessment arrangements.</p>

Writing complaints procedures

Criterion 3.6: Candidate complaints must be handled in line with a documented complaints procedure which meets SQA requirements.

Introduction

- Explain that your organisation values feedback, including complaints (for example, complaints give you valuable information you can use to improve your service provision and customer satisfaction).
- Describe how you will tell the candidate about the complaints procedure (for example through induction, handbooks, student advice centre, or administration office).

Types of complaint you will deal with

Explain that the complaints procedure should not be used for challenging assessment decisions — your centre's appeals procedure should be used for this. There may be other cases (for example appeals against admissions decisions, bursary or other financial awards) where alternative processes should be used, and you should state these.

You may wish to have other mechanisms to deal with feedback that does not require a response, for example a suggestion box, email or online form.

It may be appropriate to use your staff grievance procedure as your complaints procedure, if all candidates are employees of your centre, but the escalation stages identified below would still apply.

The stages of complaints

Stage 1: Informal complaint

Indicate who candidates can complain to in your organisation. There must be at least two people they can complain to (not just their assessor, as it may be the assessor they are complaining about).

Include reasonable timescales for:

- submission of the complaint by the complainant (from the date when the issue arose)
- dealing with the complaint and responding to the complainant

Explain what will happen with their complaint; for example, will it be logged or recorded?

Stage 2: Formal complaint

Explain that formal complaints may be made verbally or in writing, including face-to-face, or by phone, letter or email. You should make clear that you understand some people may need help or advocacy when raising their complaint, and that they should contact you (by their preferred method) to ask for help or guidance in how to make their complaint.

Identify who candidates should submit formal complaints to, include their phone number, email and/or postal address.

Candidates should be able to move directly to a formal complaint if the matter is very serious or if they feel unable to raise the matter with staff informally.

Include a reasonable timescale for submission of the complaint by the complainant (from the date when the issue arose).

You should state that you will acknowledge every complaint and give a realistic timescale for this.

You should state that you will investigate every complaint and provide a formal written response, and give a realistic timescale for this.

You should state who will investigate complaints, for example a senior manager for the relevant area, an independent manager, or a dedicated complaint handling manager.

Internal review stage

You may wish to include an internal review stage for candidates who are not satisfied with the response that they receive to a formal complaint, for example to the head of centre, or

the board of management, governors or trustees. It is **not a requirement of SQA** to include this stage.

You may wish to set a time limit for escalating complaints; for example, within one calendar month of receiving a written response to a formal complaint.

Identify who the escalated complaint should be submitted to, including their contact details.

You should state how the escalated complaint will be handled (for example, a review of documents, or a meeting to discuss the complaint), and that a formal written response will be sent, and give a realistic timescale for this.

Information from complaints

State what you will do with information from complaints. For instance, you might say that you will log all complaints, analyse trends and responses, and provide quarterly or annual reports to a relevant committee or board.

Independent external review of complaints

You must also provide candidates with information on other bodies that they can complain to, such as SQA, or the local authority for schools.

If your centre falls under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, you must also, as part of statutory requirements, include information for candidates on escalating complaints to the SPSO. It is then the SPSO's role to determine whether an individual complaint is one that they can consider (and to what extent). All centres under jurisdiction must signpost to the SPSO in their final response to a candidate.

Complaints to SQA

For assessment-related complaints, candidates must be informed that they have the right to escalate their complaint to SQA. However, it must be clear that disagreement about academic judgement will not be handled through the complaints procedure and must be processed through the appeals procedure (see criterion 4.8).

We recommend you use the following standard wording:

‘For assessment-related complaints, candidates of SQA qualifications may also have the right to complain to SQA awarding body. SQA will only consider your complaint if you have already exhausted all stages of [insert your organisation’s name]’s complaints procedure and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which we handled your complaint, or you believe that we have unreasonably failed to apply the procedure correctly.

‘SQA may consider complaints about:

- assessment — in the broadest sense, including the conduct of, preparation for, and environment for, assessment
- dissatisfaction with the way in which the centre handled the complaint

‘SQA will not consider complaints about:

- academic judgement (use the Appeals or Post-results Services)
- the wider experience of being a candidate (eg support services, funding, facilities [you may wish to insert your own examples])

[SQA’s Customer Complaints and Feedback web page](#)

Regulated qualifications

You must also inform all candidates working towards regulated qualifications (including all SVQs) that they have the right to ask the relevant regulator (SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales) to look at their complaint if they remain dissatisfied after your final response has been issued.

You must make it clear that this does not apply to candidates on non-regulated qualifications. Do not include this ‘Regulated qualifications’ section if your centre does not deliver regulated qualifications.

Writing internal assessment and verification procedures

Criterion 4.1: Internal assessment and verification procedures must be documented, monitored and reviewed to meet SQA requirements.

Your internal verification procedures must include details of your activities and responsibilities at the three distinct stages of: pre-assessment, during assessment and post assessment.

Introduction

Explain that internal verification is a crucial element of quality assurance and that it ensures that all candidates entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified standard.

Stage 1 (pre-assessment)

- Describe how you check assessment instruments for validity, currency and fitness for purpose, including SQA-devised assessments.
- Describe how you submit centre-devised assessments to SQA for prior verification, where appropriate.
- Describe how you ensure that all assessors and internal verifiers in your team have a common understanding of the standards required, even when assessments have been published by SQA.
- Include details of how you record verification activity at this stage.

Stage 2 (during assessment)

- Describe how and when you internally verify candidate evidence.
- Include your schedule of assessor and IV meetings and how these are recorded.
- Describe how you record standardisation activities.
- Describe how you minimize the risk of plagiarism.

- Provide details of the documentation you use to record assessment and verification activities, and where assessment and internal verification records are retained.

Sampling candidate evidence

Within stage 2, you must also document your sampling strategy.

- Include details of your minimum and maximum sample size.
- Describe the timing of sampling activity.
- You should consider a risk-based approach to sampling, which takes account of factors such as:
 - new or inexperienced assessors and IV's
 - new or revised qualifications
 - revised assessment instruments
 - previous quality assurance reports
 - methods of assessment
 - assessment location
 - mode of delivery
 - outcome of previous internal or external verification
 - participation in standardisation activities

Stage 3 (post assessment)

- Describe how you review and update your assessment and internal verification processes and how this activity is recorded.

Please note, if you operate a rolling programme of assessment, it is possible that some elements of your post assessment reviews and pre-assessment planning could be combined. It is important that your procedure reflects the actual practice in your centre so that it is a useful and practical reference point for all members of your assessment team.

You may also find SQA's Internal Verification Toolkit useful; it can be downloaded from the Internal verification tab on our Quality assurance documents webpage:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/97360.html>

Writing procedures for security of assessments

Criterion 4.5: Assessment materials and candidate evidence (including examination question papers, scripts and electronically-stored evidence) must be stored and transported securely.

This criterion relates primarily to assessments where a candidate would gain an unfair advantage by seeing the assessment in advance when the assessment is carried out under controlled conditions (for example, an HN or SQA Advanced Graded Unit examination). These could be:

- assessments produced by SQA and published on the SQA secure site
- assessments produced within your centre

If you offer qualifications which require assessments to be stored securely, you must have a documented procedure for the management of this. This could be:

- a stand-alone procedure
- part of an assessment policy and procedure
- part of a wider security of assessment procedure, also covering external assessment

Introduction

- Make security of assessments everyone's responsibility.
- State that centre managers and staff will take sufficient steps to protect the integrity of SQA assessments before and after assessment takes place.
- Allocate responsibility for management of security of assessments.
- Describe your methods of storage (electronic, hard copy).
- Describe how you will review your data management procedures regularly.
- Describe how all relevant staff will be made aware of these procedures (including covering them during induction).

Access to SQA's secure site

If you deliver HN or SQA Advanced Certificate/Diploma awards with published assessment exemplars, your SQA co-ordinator will have been given a secure login to SQA's secure site.

You must decide on your approach to using the secure login. Consider, for example, the following different scenarios:

- Only the SQA co-ordinator has access, and downloads assessment exemplars for teaching staff and assessors on request.
- Other members of the quality team and administrative staff have access, in addition to the SQA co-ordinator, and they download assessment exemplars for teaching staff and assessors on request.
- Other identified individuals are given the login details (such as heads of department, managers, administrators) so that they can browse the secure site and download assessments themselves.

If other members of staff are given the secure login, you must consider:

- How do you decide who gets access?
- How and where do you record this?
- How will you ensure that these members of staff understand the security requirements?
- What is the procedure if one of these members of staff leaves?
- How will you make all staff aware that any breach in the security of the assessment materials published on the secure site must be reported immediately to SQA via your SQA co-ordinator?
- How often will you change the password? Who will do this? How will you inform the other members of staff who have access to the login?

Once assessments have been downloaded from the secure site, you must consider the following issues and make all relevant staff aware of your approach:

- If sending electronically, how will this be done securely (for example, by encrypted email, or secure area of a virtual learning environment (VLE) or intranet)?
- If a teacher or assessor is downloading them directly, where will they store them (for example, an encrypted memory stick, personal drive, secure area of VLE or intranet)?
- If they are printed off, how will they be passed on and stored securely (for example, by secure internal mail, put into locked cabinets rather than being left on a desk)?
- How will staff access them for use in assessments, and what will be done with them after the assessment?

Secure storage of and access to internally-devised assessments

The same principles apply to access to and storage of internally-devised assessments as to assessments published by SQA.

If these are held electronically:

- Where are they held (for example, a shared drive, intranet, VLE)?
- How is security protected (for example, by password login)?
- Who has access and who decides this?

If these are held in hard copy:

- Where are they held (for example, centrally with quality team, in administrative offices, in staff work areas)?
- How is security protected (for example, locked cabinets, limited access to keys)?
- Who has access and who decides this?

Transport of assessments and candidate evidence

Transport arrangements within and between assessment sites, or between a central base and an assessment site, must also ensure the security of the materials.

Assessments in use

All staff using assessments must be made aware of the following requirements:

- The assessments must not be left lying in classrooms or workrooms.
- Assessments handed out to candidates to use must be collected back in and either shredded, put into confidential waste, or stored securely again (this would include assessment papers or booklets with the questions embedded in them).
- All candidates must be made aware that taking away assessments, copies or images of assessments is malpractice, and could result in a disciplinary process.
- Staff who give assessments, copies or images of assessments to candidates outwith the assessment process, without good reason or permission, are committing malpractice, which could result in a disciplinary process.
- Any breaches of security of assessment must be reported immediately to the SQA co-ordinator or relevant manager.

Security of candidate assessment evidence

Assessment evidence produced by candidates must also be held and moved securely. This is to ensure that the interests of the candidates are protected and to protect the integrity of the assessment by ensuring that the evidence cannot be tampered with.

You must make arrangements to ensure that candidate assessment evidence in hard copy format is submitted, moved and stored securely.

Where electronic evidence is being used, you must ensure that the evidence submitted by candidates:

- is received securely by the appropriate designated centre staff
- cannot be altered by others — candidates must be able to protect or lock their evidence before they submit it
- is stored securely in a restricted access file throughout assessment and until the completion of the assessment and quality assurance processes.

Electronic assessment evidence should, ideally, be submitted by the candidate and held securely using means such as e-portfolios or VLEs. If it has to be submitted in another way (such as by email or on a memory stick), it should be protected (for instance, encrypted, locked with password access).

Assessors and IVs accessing electronic assessment evidence, including for quality assurance purposes, should use a form of remote signature. As with conventional signatures, assessors and verifiers must be able to signify, in a legitimate way, that they have confirmed assessment or verification decisions. This could be done by the assessor or verifier using a code. This could be an appropriate password, PIN, electronic signature or symbol, or any combination of these. Whatever code is used, it must be secure and only be available for use by the assessor or verifier to whom it belongs, just as a hand-written signature would be.

Retention of candidate assessment evidence

You must retain candidate assessment evidence for the periods set out in the [Evidence Retention Requirements Table](#) on the SQA website.

Writing internal assessment appeals procedures

Criterion 4.8: Internal assessment appeals must be handled in line with a documented procedure which meets SQA requirements.

Introduction

- State that candidates have the right to appeal against the results of internal assessments.
- State the grounds for appeal which will be accepted (for example, if candidates feel they were not treated fairly in assessments).
- State how you will communicate this information to candidates (for example, through induction, handbooks, student advice centre or administration office).

Stages of internal assessment appeal

Stage 1: Informal

Indicate who candidates can appeal to, on an informal basis, against an assessment decision. This is most likely to be their assessor.

Include reasonable timescales for:

- submission of the appeal by the candidate (from the date of receiving the assessment result)
- dealing with the appeal and responding to the candidate

Explain what will happen with their appeal; for example, will it be logged or recorded?

Stage 2: Informal

Explain how candidates should appeal against an assessment decision, if they are dissatisfied with the response from their assessor or feel that they cannot approach the assessor.

It is recommended that the appeal is referred to the IV at this stage. Include reasonable timescales for:

- submission of the appeal by the candidate (from the date of receiving the assessor's response to the informal appeal, or from receiving the assessment result)
- dealing with the appeal and responding to the candidate

Explain what will happen with their appeal, for example, will it be logged or recorded?

Stage 3: Formal

Formal appeals should be made in writing.

- The formal stage of appeals should be to an independent third party who has not been previously involved in the assessment decision.
- Identify the person to address the appeal to, including their email and/or postal address.
- Do you have an appeal form, or do you just accept letters or emails? If you have a form, where can this be obtained?
- Is there anyone who can help with writing an appeal, if necessary?
- Include a reasonable timescale for submission of the appeal by the candidate (from the date of receiving the response to the informal appeal, or from receiving the assessment result).
- You should state that you will acknowledge every appeal and give a realistic timescale for this.
- You should state that you will investigate every appeal and provide a formal written response; give a realistic timescale for this.
- Who will deal with the appeal, for example, a senior manager for the relevant department, an independent manager, a quality manager, or a dedicated appeals committee?

State clearly that, if candidates are undertaking non-regulated qualifications (HNs, SQA Advanced Certificate/Diplomas, NQs), they have **no further right of appeal against internal assessment decisions**. The final decision rests with your centre. SQA will not accept internal assessment appeals.

Regulated qualifications — escalation of appeals

You must inform candidates undertaking regulated qualifications (including all SVQs) that they have further routes of appeal against internal assessment results. You must make clear that this does not apply to candidates on non-regulated qualifications (do not include this section if your centre does not offer regulated qualifications). We recommend you use the following standard wording:

‘If you have gone through all the stages of [insert your organisation’s name] internal assessment appeals procedure and remain dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which we handled your appeal, you can firstly;

- appeal to SQA (the awarding body)

If, after you have gone through the SQA awarding body appeals procedure, you remain dissatisfied, you can:

- appeal to SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales (as appropriate) if you feel that the centre and/or SQA (the awarding body) has not dealt with your appeal appropriately

SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales (as appropriate) cannot overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements but may investigate the effectiveness of our and/or SQA’s appeals process and require corrective action.’

Writing procedures for data management

Criterion 6.1: Candidates' personal data submitted by centres to SQA must accurately reflect the current status of the candidate.

Criterion 6.2: Data on candidate entries submitted by centres to SQA must accurately reflect the current status of the candidate and the qualification.

Criterion 6.3: Data on candidate results submitted by centres to SQA must accurately reflect the current status of the candidate and the qualification.

Criterion 6.4: There must be an effective and documented system for the accurate recording, storage and retention of assessment records, internal verification records and candidate records of achievement in line with SQA requirements.

You must document your data management procedures, but you can choose how to do this. You might use written descriptions covering the stages of data management (see headings below for guidance), or flowcharts and process maps with more detailed work instructions sitting beneath these.

You must make it clear at each stage who has operational responsibility as well as who is responsible for managing and reviewing the effectiveness of your data management processes.

Introduction

State how you will communicate this information to all relevant staff.

Candidates' personal information

You must have a method to capture the following personal information from candidates:

- full name
- date of birth*

- gender
- home address
- email address and telephone number
- Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) (if known by the candidate)

***International centres:** If you have candidates under the age of 16, please contact your regional manager.

In your procedure, explain:

- how you will get personal information from candidates (for example, will they complete an enrolment form on paper or online)? At induction, you should inform candidates that they must let you know if any of their personal details change, and explain how they can do this. **Note:** if a candidate knows their SCN, you can look it up on SQA Connect and update their personal details as necessary.
- when this will happen.
- who is responsible for organising this.

Protecting candidate data

You must comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (from May 2018).

You must inform candidates that their personal data will be sent to SQA for the purposes of entering them for an SQA qualification, of certification, and of maintenance of their record of attainment. You do not have to obtain consent for this processing. Your data exchange statement should not seek permission or consent from candidates. Instead, they should sign to confirm that they understand that their personal details will be shared for these purposes.

You must direct candidates to SQA's [privacy statement](#) so they can read about how SQA will use their information.

In your procedure, explain:

- where you will put information about GDPR compliance (for example, a data exchange statement on your enrolment form or candidate induction checklist)
- where candidate personal information will be stored
- how you ensure it is stored securely
- who is responsible for organising this

Managing registrations, entries and results on SQA Connect

Checking Scottish Candidate Numbers (SCNs)

A candidate will already have an SCN if they have undertaken an SQA qualification at a school, college or training provider. If they know their SCN, ask them to give it to you, for example, on their enrolment form. If they cannot remember it, you can check for an existing SCN on SQA Connect using their personal details.

If a candidate does not have an SCN, you can allocate one to them using SQA Connect.

SQA's system will automatically check for duplicate candidate records during the registration process and you will be notified if a match is found. You must then check whether or not this is the same person.

In your procedure, explain:

- who is responsible for checking SCNs
- who is responsible for allocating new SCNs
- when and how this will be done

Registering new candidates with SQA

You must register any candidates using SQA Connect if they have never been registered with SQA before.

In your procedure, explain:

- when this will be done
- who is responsible for doing it

Unit and group award entries

In your procedure, explain:

- who is responsible for deciding which units and group awards candidates will be entered for, for example, the assessor, IV or manager
- how you decide on the estimated completion date
- who is responsible for checking entry information
- who is responsible for submitting entry information using SQA Connect and how this information is communicated to them, for example, on paper forms or an online system
- who is responsible for checking on SQA Connect to ensure your centre is approved to offer the units and group awards and that the award has not finished or entered its lapsing period. **Note:** this must be done before you start delivering your programme to candidates.
- how you ensure that entries are submitted as soon as possible after the start of the programme and that for qualifications which are verified as group awards rather than as individual units (such as SVQs and Skills for Work courses), the group award entry is made at the start
- how you ensure that entries and results are not submitted at the same time
- if applicable, how you will ensure that you adhere to the 10-week rule: You cannot claim certification for SVQ awards, Workplace Core Skill units and assessor and verifier units within 10 weeks of the entry date of the qualification ('10-week rule'). This does not apply to individual SVQ units or short courses (such as one day courses).

Results

In your procedure, explain:

- who is responsible for recording candidates' results, for example the assessor
- how you submit results, for example, on paper forms or through an electronic system; on a unit-by-unit basis or on completion of the group award
- your system for ensuring that results have been subject to internal verification, for example, an IV's signature on a form, or electronic authorisation by an IV

- who is responsible for submitting results using SQA Connect and when they will do this; you should also explain how the information will be communicated to this person.

Data cleansing

In your procedure, explain:

- who is responsible for cleansing candidate information and communicating changes to SQA
- your system for updating changes to candidates' personal details
- your system to ensure that when candidate entries reach their completion date they are resulted, withdrawn (from both unit and group award entries) or, if you have granted an extension, the completion date is extended (for both unit and group award entries)

Note: If you have a reason to have candidates' certificates sent to your centre address, you must have a documented procedure to describe:

- your system for entering the candidate at their home address
- if you enter the centre address for the receipt of candidates' certificates, how you will ensure you have written permission from the candidate to open their certificate when it is delivered to your centre address, who is responsible for doing this, and where these records will be retained
- your system for changing the address to the centre address before results are entered and who is responsible for doing this; and
- your system for either:
 - reinstating the candidate's home address as soon as possible after receipt of the certificate, or
 - ensuring that other personal contact details (email address, phone number) are entered for the candidate.

Keeping records

Your procedures must meet SQA's minimum retention requirements. SQA's retention requirements may be shorter than for other purposes, such as funding, so you must take all external and internal requirements into consideration in your policy and procedures.

Retention of candidate evidence (relates to criterion 4.7)

You must retain candidate assessment evidence for the periods set out in the [Evidence Retention Requirements Table](#) on the SQA website. This is the minimum timescale — you may choose to hold evidence for a longer period before returning it to candidates or securely destroying it.

In your procedure, state:

- how and where candidate evidence is securely stored
- how candidate evidence is securely transported, if necessary
- how long you retain candidate evidence
- how it is returned to candidates at the end of this period, or securely destroyed, and who is responsible for doing this

Assessment, internal verification and candidate records (relates to criterion 6.4)

You must retain the following records for a minimum of one calendar year* following the completion of qualifications (this is the minimum timescale — you may have reason to hold records for a longer period before securely destroying them):

- a list of candidates registered with SQA for each qualification offered in the centre
- details of candidate assessment, including the name of the assessor, location, date and outcome
- internal verification activity
- certificates claimed

You must store these records in a retrievable format and make them available to SQA quality assurance staff on request.

Note: if you are offering Ofqual or Qualifications Wales regulated qualifications, the minimum retention period for candidate records is six years.

In your procedure, state:

- the records you will retain — ensure you cover the list above as a minimum
- how and where you securely retain candidate records
- how long you retain these records
- how you securely destroy records at the end of this period and who is responsible for doing this

Retention of evidence and records in cases of appeal or suspected malpractice (relates to criterion 1.5, 4.7 and 6.4)

- Following an appeal against an internal assessment result, you must retain records, including all materials and candidate evidence, until the appeal has been resolved.
- Following an appeal to SQA against an internal assessment result in a regulated qualification, you must retain assessment and verification records, and all materials and candidate evidence, until the appeal is resolved, and for six years thereafter.
- Following an investigation into suspected malpractice, you must retain all related records, documentation and evidence for three years for non-regulated qualifications and six years for regulated qualifications.
- Following an appeal to SQA against the outcome of a malpractice investigation, you must retain assessment records for six years.
- Following an investigation involving a potential criminal prosecution or civil claim, you must retain records and documentation for six years after the case and any appeal has been heard. **Note:** If there is any doubt about whether criminal or civil proceedings will take place, you must keep records for the full six year period.

In your procedure, state:

- where candidate evidence and assessment records will be securely retained in a retrievable format

- how long you will retain evidence and records following an appeal or malpractice investigation, ensuring you meet the SQA minimum requirements above
- how you securely destroy evidence and records at the end of this period and who is responsible for doing this

Exemplar 1: SQA Connect data management procedure flowchart

Registration

Learner has a Scottish Candidate Number	Learner does not know their Scottish Candidate Number
Check learner's personal details with them and update if necessary on SQA Connect (including home address, email, phone number)	Check if an SCN has previously been allocated to candidate.
Register with SQA using candidate services within SQA Connect.	Allocate SCN to candidate on SQA Connect
	Check learner's personal details with them and update if necessary on SQA Connect (including home address, email, phone number)
	Register with SQA using candidate services within SQA Connect.

Submitting entries

Is the candidate to be entered for a group award?	Is the candidate to be entered for units only?
Agree group award with candidate.	Agree units with candidate.
Check the lapsing and finishing date of award and constituent units.	Check unit numbers and whether they are still current.
Check if your centre is approved to deliver this group award and required units.	Check if your centre is approved to deliver these units.
Check for replacement award if group award has passed finish date, or is a regulated qualification which has passed its lapsing date.	Check for replacement units if they are finished.
Input group award and mandatory and optional unit entries onto Connect with estimated completion dates (allowing for internal verification and resulting processes to be completed).	Input units entries onto Connect with estimated completion dates (allowing for internal verification and resulting processes to be completed).

Submitting results

Has assessment been completed?	Are assessment results outstanding but the completion dates have passed?
Carry out internal verification of assessment judgements in accordance with your procedures and confirm results.	Review the situation with each candidate and either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extend the completion date on SQA Connect where the candidate is still working towards the qualification with your centre or withdraw the candidate on SQA Connect from any outstanding unit entries and the group award entry, if they are no longer undertaking the qualification.
Submit unit results on SQA Connect. If the qualification is subject to the 10-week rule, you cannot submit results until 10 weeks after the entry date.	Submit results for any units which the candidate has passed on SQA Connect.
SQA will issue certification. Group award certification will be triggered when all the required mandatory and optional units have been resulted as passes.	SQA will issue certification for any units which the candidate has passed, where the candidate has only achieved some of the units within the group award. Note: This will only happen if the group award entry is withdrawn).
Retain assessment, internal verification and candidate records for a minimum of one calendar year following the completion of the qualification.	Retain assessment, internal verification and candidate records for a minimum of one calendar year following the completion of the qualification.

Exemplar 2: Assessor and internal verifier induction checklist

Criterion 2.2: Assessors and internal verifiers must be given induction training on SQA qualifications and requirements.

You must keep records of assessor and internal verifier induction. The format is up to you, and the checklist below is intended as an example of one way you could record that assessors and internal verifiers are fully informed about their role and responsibilities.

The exemplar checklist below covers all SQA requirements for criterion 2.2. It is important that you reflect the practice in your centre. You may wish to use a paper-based or electronic checklist and could supplement this basic list with any additional information you cover during induction.

Induction topic	Confirmed covered in induction
The qualification assessment strategy	
Content of candidate induction received	
Internal verification procedures	
Malpractice policy and procedures	
Conflict of interest in assessment policy and procedures	
Secure storage and transportation of assessment materials	
Retention policy for candidate assessment evidence	
Retention policy for candidate records	

Assessor /IV signature: _____

Date: _____

Exemplar 3: Candidate induction checklist

Criterion 3.1: Candidate induction must include information about the SQA qualification and SQA requirements.

You must keep records of candidate induction. The format is up to you and this is intended as an example of one way you could record that candidates are fully informed about their rights and responsibilities before they start to work towards an SQA award.

The exemplar checklist below covers all SQA requirements for criterion 3.1. It is important that you reflect the practice in your centre. You may wish to use a paper-based or electronic checklist and could supplement this basic list with any additional information you cover during induction, such as health and safety, and access to digital systems.

Induction topic	Confirmed covered in induction
Content and structure of the qualification	
Roles and responsibilities of the candidate, assessor, IV and external verifier	
Guidance and support	
How and when you will be assessed, how you will receive feedback following assessment and opportunities for re-assessment (including the charging policy, if relevant)	
Equal access to assessment	
Assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments to meet additional support needs	
Malpractice policy and procedure, and declarations of authenticity	
How do complain about an assessment related matter	
How to appeal against an internal assessment decision	

Induction topic	Confirmed covered in induction
I understand that my personal details will be shared with SQA for the purposes of entering me for an SQA qualification, certification and maintenance of my record of attainment and that I can read SQA's Privacy Statement at https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/97458.html	

Candidate signature: _____

Date: _____