



Assessment Guidance for Centres

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Introduction

This Assessment Guidance for Centres policy provides guidance to ensure that all assessments are conducted within a centre meets the required standards of validity, reliability and fairness. The policy has been designed to support centres in implementing robust assessment practices to align with qualification specifications and assessment strategies.

Guidance Overview

Assessment must meet all learning outcomes and assessment criteria as described in the qualification specification*/assessment strategy, although the method of assessment may sometimes be adjusted to cater for Learners requiring alternative assessment methods. The qualification assessment strategy provides detailed assessment and evidence requirements.

It is your responsibility to ensure all Learners have fully met the assessment criteria prior to any sampling and claims for certification. If an EQA rejects a sample due to Learners not meeting the assessment criteria, sampling will be rejected and you will be expected to resubmit the work for sampling once the work has been modified and resubmitted.

If Learner work is being consistently incorrectly assessed and internally quality assured then this is considered as malpractice and the centre may face sanctions under the Focus Awards Sanctions Policy.

*Qualification specifications include a statement that encourages users to contact us if they feel there is an aspect of the qualification or its assessment arrangements/support materials that may have unduly affected/discriminated users with a particular characteristic.

Consistency of assessment decisions

The consistency of assessment decisions across learners, sites, and assessors is of primary importance in assuring the quality of assessment within a Centre. Focus Awards ensures that the following mechanisms are in place to assist this:

- Assessors are qualified or working towards current assessor standards:
 - Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocational Achievement or Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment. Note: D32/33 and A1 are also acceptable
- Assessors have relevant subject competency in the units that they wish to assess
- Assessors are observed assessing by qualified IQAs at least once per year
- Standardisation exercises are carried out within the Centre
- Focus Awards issued Assessment Guidance documentation for each qualification
- Centre training days run by Focus Awards include assessment best practice
- External quality assurance activities are carried out at least twice per year for centres delivering Level 2 + qualifications by trained and qualified EQAs.

Judging authenticity

Assessors must ensure that the evidence provided by Learners is valid, current, sufficient, reliable, and authentic:

- Trainers/assessors should ensure that learners sign a declaration that their work is authentic i.e., their own unaided work
- You must implement a Record of Achievement document to record how the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been sufficiently covered. By “signing off” Learners’ evidence using this document the assessors and IQAs are confirming that the assessment evidence submitted by the Learner is authentic and their own unaided work and it is sufficient to meet the stated learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Where a Focus Awards logbook is available, its use is a mandatory requirement.
- Where there is suspicion that the work may not be authentic the assessor should carry out checks to ascertain its authenticity. For example, oral questioning to check that the learner’s knowledge matches the evidence provided.
- Evidence which is deemed to be inauthentic should not be accepted.

Guidance on re-submission of learner assessment

- There is no limit to the number of times that work may be resubmitted by the Learner for assessment
- However, you may wish to operate your own systems and policies for additional support/advice which may be given to Learners who have been unsuccessful on a number of occasions
- There is no limit to the number of times that assessments may be redrafted by the Learner prior to assessment
- Assessors/Tutors may offer some assistance to Learners in completing written work, such as explaining what the questions mean or offering additional guidance when they have previously answered questions incorrectly. However, Assessors/Tutors must not give Learners, or lead them to, the correct answers
- Assessors/Tutors should not add to Learners’ answers in worksheets, etc., where they do not fully meet the required standard. Rather the Learner should be asked to add to their answers themselves until they demonstrate competence.

Use of language and stimulus materials

It is your responsibility as a Centre to provide your Learners with suitable resources and assessment materials to support them in their learning journey. They and the language they use should be suitable and appropriate to their needs. They are only appropriate if they:

- enable Learners to demonstrate their level of attainment
- provide knowledge, skills, and understanding which are required for the qualification
- are clear and unambiguous (unless ambiguity forms part of the assessment)
- are not likely to cause unnecessary offence to learners.

The use of these materials will be reviewed during Centre EQA monitoring visits and in considering whether language and stimulus materials for learning and assessment are appropriate, an EQA will take into account the following:

- the age of Learners who may reasonably be expected to take the qualification
- the level of the qualification
- the objective of the qualification
- the knowledge, skills, and understanding assessed for the qualification
- the qualification contains language or content which could lead a group of learners who share a common attribute or circumstance to experience – because of that attribute or circumstance – an unreasonable disadvantage in the level of attainment that they are able to demonstrate in the assessment.

Please note that for the creation of manuals or textbooks, you must show how each of the learning outcomes has been covered, and for assessment materials you must adopt an evidence referencing system to show how each of the assessment criteria has been covered.

Recording of assessment methods

All relevant forms can be found in the appendices of this policy.

Assessor Observations

This is the most organic approach to gather proof of a learner's ability. What the assessor has observed the learner doing should be explicitly stated, and this should be mapped against the applicable assessment criteria. When an assessor is watching a class of learners, the observations they record in the learners portfolio must be specific to the learner—for instance, what did that specific learner act, say, work, or perform? Within a qualification, there might be situations where observation is inappropriate. When contemplating observation as a possibility, please always keep privacy, dignity, and secrecy in mind.

Focus Awards have logbooks available for many qualifications, these can be located on the Qualitas shop for free download.

Witness Testimony

Here, a different individual reports what the learner has accomplished. Similar to observation, this needs to be unique to the learner and explicit about how it satisfies the evaluation requirements. It is crucial that the witness be able to comprehend what has to be evaluated, what would adequately satisfy the requirements, and how much information they should give the assessor. Writing out exactly what the learner did to meet the requirements—rather than merely saying that the criteria have been satisfied—is a useful way to provide instances of how the criteria have been met. A learner's knowledge should not be asserted through a witness's evidence.

Witness Testimonies should:

- Describe what learner has done while they have been observing, they must have witnessed the activity.
- Not include lists, any skills should be detailed
- Only be completed by witness
- Not be used to evidence the achievement of a whole unit.

Record of oral and written questioning

In responding to the question, the learner should make sure that the verb has been fulfilled. Verbs like "describe," "evaluate," and "analyse," as opposed to the word "list," call for written phrases. Where oral questioning has been used the question and answer's should be recorded by the assessor.

- When carrying out Oral Questioning the assessor should:
- Ensure the questions are related the activity being undertaken
- Use open questions and not questions where the learner can answer simply with yes or no
- Repeat questions within the same assessment
- Consider rephrasing the question to assist the learner to understand what is being asked.

Learner Product

This assessment method is related to anything the learner produces and that can be assessed that is not otherwise listed in this document. 'Learner Product' work must be authenticated and linked to assessment criteria. Examples of 'Learner Product' could include in class tasks, drawings, photographs, questionnaires and interview.

Worksheets

A Centre can produce worksheets to complete assessment criteria. The worksheets must have adequate space for learners to fully complete their responses or tasks. The worksheets must enable learners to meet the requirements of the command verbs of the assessment criteria.

Worksheets can be completed electronically or handwritten by the learner, but handwriting must be clear and legible for review by an Assessor, IQA or EQA. Worksheets should be authenticatable – signed by the learner, Assessor and where required by the IQA.

Assignments/projects/reports

When projects and assignments satisfy the criteria for qualification, they may be used; nevertheless, in order to verify the validity and competency, they should be used in conjunction with other methods of assessment. Every assignment or project needs to have a clear heading, a criteria sheet, and be graded in relation to the evaluation criteria.

Learner and Peer Reports

Learner Reports are reflective reports written by the learners on their own performance in an activity. Peer reports are when a peer writes a report on another learner's performance. All learner and peer reports must be signed and dated by the writer, and clearly relate to the assessment criteria.

Professional Discussion

For the learner to know what will be covered, this should be arranged jointly with them. This isn't supposed to be a Q&A session but rather as a chat. If properly facilitated, the conversation can also lead to competency evidence, where the learner talks about experiences, situations, and actions they have taken. Recording the conversation will reinforce the portfolio's authenticity and is required.

Professional discussions can be recorded using a variety of methods, such as paper-based logging or audio or video recording. It's crucial to get your learner's approval before using an audio or video tape to make sure they feel comfortable with the recording technique.

The assessor must make sure that the evidence arising from the conversation is properly cited to the relevant standards or evidence requirements, regardless of the recording method chosen. To facilitate efficient verification, this is crucial.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Please refer to Focus Awards' Exemptions, equivalences, credit transfer and RPL Policy

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our support team:

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Version History

The version history for this policy is maintained within the Focus Awards Policy Document Control List.

Appendices

Observation Form

Observation Date:		Learner Name:	
Qualification title:			
Unit Number and Title:			
Assessment Criteria Covered	What has been observed and how it meets the assessment criteria		Portfolio reference
Assessor Name:			
Assessor Signature:			Date:

Witness Testimony

Date:	Learner Name:	
Qualification title:		
Unit Number and Title:		
Specific details of the activity being carried out by the learner:		
How the activity meets the requirements of the assessment criteria:		
How and where the activity took place:		
Witness Name:		Job role:
Witness Signature:		Date:
Assessor Name:		
Assessor Signature:		Date:

Oral Questioning Record

Date:		Learner Name:	
Qualification title:			
Unit Number and Title:			
Assessor's Questioning Record			
Assessment Criteria Covered	Questions Asked		Answers provided
Learner Name:			
Learner Signature:			Date:
Assessor Name:			
Assessor Signature:			Date:
IQA Name:			
IQA Signature:			Date:

Professional Discussion

Recording time	Discussion points covered	Assessment Criteria Covered