RSL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS QUALITY HANDBOOK 2024/25

Contents

Last updated: February 2025

Purpose

This handbook is intended to provide advice and guidance for centres delivering RSL Vocational Qualifications. This document is aimed at teachers, assessors and internal verifiers and includes key details about quality assurance processes.

We have a separate VQ Exams Officer Handbook which covers aspects such as registrations and is aimed at exams officers. This can be found on our website here - https://www.rslawards.com/centre-handbook-moderation-information/

External assessment (controlled conditions) information has been removed from this handbook as this refers to internal assessment processes. Supporting documentation for external assessment (controlled conditions) will be uploaded with the external assessment briefs

Supporting policies are available on our website here - https://www.rslawards.com/policies-regulations/

Changes for 24/25

There have been some changes in terminology and new requirements added for this year.

Lead Internal Verifier (LIV)

- The first new requirement is that centres will need to nominate a Lead Internal Verifier, or Lead IV, per qualification delivered. For a lot of centres, this will be something they are already doing and will require no change to their current quality assurance processes. For others, this may be a new role within the centre.

- We are introducing this role as we are finding more and more centres are nominating people as Quality Representative who are not involved with the delivery of the qualification. This means the role that is meant to be responsible for overall quality monitoring is not fulfilling its purpose. There is additional guidance for this role in this handbook so centres are clear on the requirements

- For more details about the Lead Internal Verifier, please see this video

Standardisation in the key dates calendar

- We have included standardisation in the key dates calendar this year. Previously, this should have been completed prior to the centre visit but we were finding inconsistencies with this. Introducing a window into the key dates calendars means it is clear to centres when they must complete their standardisation activity. This needs to be completed in all years of delivery.

Change in RSL roles

- There are some changes to RSL roles and terminology this year. The External Quality Assurer (EQA) role and Senior Quality Assurer (SQA) roles have been split into the following roles:
    - The Centre Quality Assurer (CQA) This role is responsible for the centre visit only, rather than both the centre visit and moderation. This ensures the focus of the visit is clearly on quality assurance.
    - We have a new role this year of VQ Centre Monitoring and Compliance Manager. They will also be conducting centre visits, alongside CQAs and the Head of Quality (VQ). This role will also be able to answer any centre queries which come to the VQ inbox to do with delivery and quality assurance processes. They will be a point of contact and consistency for centres throughout the year.
    - For moderation, EQA becomes Standards Verifier (SV.) This is because they are verifying the standard and differentiates the role from the CQA role.

- Splitting the EQA role out in this way also means that delivery staff in centres will be able to apply for Standards Verifier roles. Previously, the need for an EQA to complete both centre visits and moderation meant it was difficult for a member of staff working in a centre to do the role. The change to just conducting moderation will hopefully open this opportunity for centre staff who wish to develop their skills in this area.

Conflicts of Interest

As an awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA, RSL must establish and maintain an up-to-date record of all conflicts of interest and monitor and manage these.

A conflict of interest exists in relation to an awarding organisation where:

a. Its interests in any activity undertaken by it, on its behalf or by a member of its group, have the potential to lead it to act contrary to its interests of the development, delivery and award of qualifications in accordance with the awarding organisation's conditions of recognition.
b. A person who is connected to the development, delivery or award of qualifications by the awarding organisation has interests in any other activity which have the potential to lead that person to act contrary to his or her interests in that development, delivery or award in accordance with the awarding organisation's conditions of recognition.
c. An informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of these situations was the case.

It is the responsibility of all staff in a centre to declare all conflicts of interest. Any undeclared conflicts of interest and instances where assessment has taken place where a conflict of interest exists may be investigated in line with RSL's VQ Malpractice Policy.

As a condition of centre approval, centres must either adopt the RSL policy template for Conflicts of Interest, (which can be found in the Help and Support section of the RSL administration site) or provide their own conflicts of interest policy.

Centres are responsible for identifying and declaring conflicts of interest to RSL throughout the academic year by completing the template at the end of the policy and uploading the declaration to the RSL administration site, using the heading 'Conflict of Interest Declaration' s. A response from RSL with mitigations will be uploaded against it. Conflicts of interest will also be checked at the centre visit by the Centre Quality Assurer.

Key Dates Calendar

The RSL key dates calendar outlines all processes which need to be met by centres to successfully deliver RSL qualifications. The key dates calendar is updated each academic year and is available on our website here and from the Help and Support section of the RSL administration site.

There are two versions of the key dates calendar:
• qualifications WITH external assessment
• qualifications WITHOUT external assessment.

The key dates calendar is purposefully structured as a tick list to allow the key dates to be ticked off throughout the academic year. This year we have also released a version in a which is grouped into activities so centres can easily see all the dates associated with a particular process. For example, all the dates associated with the moderation process are grouped together.

When planning delivery, centres need to take the key dates into account. For example, sufficient internally assessed units need to be completed by the date for moderation. The final date for inputting grades is the date at which all final grades need to be input, so all assessment, resubmission attempts and internal verification will need to take place prior to this date to ensure the grades can be entered by the deadline.

We recommend centres print and/or save a copy of the key dates calendar to refer to regularly. If dates change during the academic year, an email will be sent to the centre's quality representative.

For a video explaining the key dates calendar and changes for this year, please follow the relevant link below:
Qualifications with external assessment
Qualifications without external assessment

Tips for Key Dates Calendar Submissions

The key dates calendar must be adhered to by every centre, annually. If dates are missed without sufficient reasoning, an investigation may be conducted into the centre.

The key dates calendar may include new tasks annually, based on Ofqual / CCEA / Qualifications Wales' direction or a change to process. Read the most up-to-date version carefully — do not make assumptions based on previous year's key dates.

Use the headings indicated for each task when uploading documents. If the incorrect heading is used, the document may be missed and your centre may risk being noted as non-compliant with the key dates calendar.

At the start of the year, we recommend discussing with your team who is responsible for each of the key dates. It is very easy to assume somebody else has completed a task, especially when everyone is busy. This is particularly important where more than one qualification suite is delivered within a centre.

Centre Roles

Each centre will need to demonstrate that there are appropriate staffing levels available within the centre which will include

- A nominated Quality Representative (QR)
- A nominated Lead Internal Verifier per qualification (new for 24/25)
- At least one assessor
- At least one internal verifier
- At least one exams officer (or nominated person for making registrations)

If a centre is a one-person department, an appropriately qualified internal verifier could be found within another department within the centre. If this is not possible, then an arrangement could be created with a local centre also delivering RSL qualifications.

Each centre must nominate a quality representative (QR) as the main point of contact with RSL once approved and a Lead Internal Verifier per qualification delivered. One person can hold multiple roles. For example, the Quality Representative could also be the Lead Internal Verifier as long as they hold appropriate qualifications and expertise to complete the role e.g. teaching qualification.

The requirements of the roles are outlined in the next pages.

Quality Representative
- first point of liaison with RSL on all issues including registration, certification, assessment, quality assurance and the moderation of work   - supports the Lead Internal Verifier with the quality assurance activities and adherence to RSL policies and procedures   - responsible for disseminating information and contacts to the correct members of staff I the centre e.g. passing Standards Verifiers details to the Lead Internal Verifier   - ensures that any remedial actions required by RSL are implemented within agreed timescales   - signs and supplies RSL with the Annual Self-Assessment Review

Lead Internal Verifier

- each qualification being delivered in the centre must have a nominated Lead IV, identified in the Annual Self Assessment Review
- acts as the point of accountability for the quality assurance and standard of these qualifications
- should be involved in the assessment and delivery of the qualification and have a good understanding of the units being delivered
- responsible for ensuring the assessment and internal verification team undertakes standardisation
- support assessment and internal verification within your subject area
- ensure the assessment and internal verification plan is fit for purpose
- meet with the Centre Quality Assurer for the centre visit
- plan the sample with the Standards Verifier
- monitors progress of all learners on the qualification
- maintains up to date records of sampling activity and ensures that these are available for the purposes of moderation
- ensures that any remedial actions required by RSL are implemented within agreed timescales
- for a video explaining the role of Lead IV, follow this link

Assessor

- designs, adapts and delivers assessment materials such as assignment briefs
- makes judgements about a learner's performance in relation to the assessment and grading criteria in accordance with the centre's assessment plan
- maintains an appropriate audit trail for the delivery, judgement and feedback in relation to RSL standards
- maintains an accurate record of learner achievement
- manages the resubmission and resits in relation to their learners
- assessors and learners must confirm in writing that the evidence presented is authentic and that the assessment was conducted in accordance with the assessment requirements of the qualification — this could be a signed learner declaration
- centres are required to ensure that assessors have subject expertise and are suitably qualified
- attends periodic standardisation meetings convened by the centre to improve practice and discuss standardisation of judgements

Internal Verifier

- regularly samples evidence of assessment decisions made by all assessors across all aspects of VQ assessment to monitor and ensures consistency in the interpretation and application of standards
- maintains up-to-date records of sampling activity and ensures that these are available for the purposes of external quality assurance
- monitors and supports the work of assessors within the centre
- internal verifiers may not internally verify evidence they have assessed and must be familiar with the content of RSL vocational qualifications and their delivery as well as subject specific knowledge

How To: Plan and run a centre visit

Key information

What is a centre visit?

Centre visits are a quality assurance activity; they play a fundamental role in ensuring centres continue to deliver quality provision and ensuring RSL can support your staff to deliver high standard learning experiences. Centre visits are designed to be supportive activities that explore the ways in which qualifications are delivered and managed and how this can be improved.

At the beginning of October, centres will be allocated a Qualification Monitoring Level (QML), which determines what type of centre visit will be carried out. The QML is based on the centre's activity in the previous year and the outcome of their Self-Assessment Review (SAR). This will be communicated to centres by the Centre Quality Assurer (CQA) when they contact the centre.

All types of centre visit will last approximately 1.5 - 2 hours.

Who conducts the centre visit?

Centre visits are conducted online by an RSL Centre Quality Assurer (CQA), VQ Centre Monitoring and Compliance Manager or Head of Quality (VQ). The Quality Representative for the centre will receive an email from either the VQ Centre Quality Assurer, VQ Centre Monitoring and Compliance Manager or Head of Quality (VQ) introducing themselves, confirming the type of centre visit and an agenda. Centres arrange their visit directly with this person.

What are the types of centre visit?

New centre visit

This is for centres who are new to RSL in the current academic year. The purpose of the visit is to ensure centres understand everything they need to successfully deliver RSL qualifications. It is also an opportunity for centres to ask questions of the CQA.

Monitoring visit

This is intended as a discussion between the centre and the CQA about the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of the qualifications being delivered. The aim is to continue to develop best practice, consider areas for refinement and development in terms of delivery, and to provide support to the centre with any improvements they wish to make. The CQA may bring particular areas they wish to discuss.

Enhanced centre visit

This visit is similar to the monitoring visit but also includes more detail about the areas which mean the centre is having an enhanced visit rather than a monitoring visit.

All visits will cover:
- Previous quality activities
- Quality assurance processes
- Internal assessment and moderation
- Assessment and internal verification plan(s)
- Assignment brief(s)
- External assessment (controlled conditions) where applicable
- Comments, actions and recommendations

Cancelling a centre visit

Up to two working days prior to the confirmed date, a centre visit can be cancelled and rearranged for a later date. If the visit is cancelled by the centre with less than two working days' notice, or if the centre is unable to facilitate the visit as agreed, a late cancellation fee of £100 will be incurred by the centre.

Enforced centre visits

In addition to the three types of centre visit listed above, there may be occasions when an enforced centre visit is required, for example, when the moderation process identifies an enforced centre visit as the third stage in the moderation process, where malpractice is found, or where certification has not been possible and additional moderation or investigation is needed. If an enforced centre visit is required, the centre will be charged an enforced centre visit fee which must be paid prior to the visit taking place. The agenda for the visit will vary dependent on the reason for the visit and will be communicated to the centre prior to the visit. Fees can be found on the main RSL website here under Administration and Additional Fees.

Feedback

During the centre visit you will receive supportive guidance on ways in which your centre can improve, and feedback on the strengths that the CQA has identified. You will receive a formal written record of the visit within 10 working days. The report will be uploaded to the RSL administration site. A SMART action plan will be included to address any areas for improvement identified during the visit. Deadlines will be included for completion of these actions.

How to prepare for the centre visit (for all visit types)

Overview

When your centre visit is confirmed, you will be sent an agenda and guidance documentation about what you need to provide. The below is a brief summary.

All visits are remote, so please make sure you have checked the technical requirements in advance of the meeting, including your microphone and camera.

Prior to the visit

The following documents must be uploaded to the Documents section of the cloud.rslawards.com site prior to the meeting, ready to be reviewed by the CQA as part of the visit:
- Assignment Brief (One assignment brief to be reviewed per qualification being delivered)
- Assessment and IV plan

The CQA will provide feedback on these documents through the centre visit report. It is therefore important

that these documents are uploaded and ready for review prior to the visit.

During the visit

The following will need to be available for the centre visit:

- Staff involved in the delivery of RSL qualifications
  - The Lead IV must be available for the duration of the visit
  - The Quality Representative must be there for at least the start of the visit
  - It is useful for any members of staff who are involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of the qualifications to participate in the visit, even if they are only able to attend for a short period of time. This will allow the CQA to have a fuller picture of the centre and give staff the opportunity to ask the CQA questions

- The CQA will be looking to see the centre's understanding of quality assurance processes and procedures and how these are applied in the centre. This could include asking about particular policies such as appeals, asking for clarification of how standardisation is conducted or how learner evidence is stored. There will be more specific guidance sent through with the visit agenda.

How To: Write an Assessment and IV Plan

Key information

Assessment and internal verification (IV) plans

An assessment and internal verification (IV) plan must be written prior to the start of the academic year to ensure assessment is planned appropriately and sufficient time given to each unit. This is a written plan of how and when you intend to deliver RSL qualifications. A sample for moderation will be selected based on the information in your assessment and IV plan, so these dates must be kept up to date. Your plan will include dates for assessment, internal verification and resubmissions for all of the units you are delivering. You must ensure you are delivering the correct number of units, including the correct core units, as listed in the syllabus specification, in order to achieve the full qualification. All of our syllabus specifications can be found under VQ Syllabuses on the RSL website. The Lead IV is responsible for ensuring the plan is fit for purpose.

How to structure an assessment and IV plan

Timetabling internal assessments

The key dates calendar (available from Key Documents/Forms on the Help and Support page and main website) contains external assessment dates, the deadline for submission of final grades and the moderation window. These dates must be taken into account when planning internal assessment. We recommend that internal assessments are set throughout the full academic year, however, you are free to timetable your internal assessment at any time within the key dates calendar.

Allocating time for each unit

You will need to thoroughly read the units you are delivering in order to assess how much time you will need to allocate to the teaching and learning of skills and for the assessment period. The nature of the unit will also dictate the length of time for assessment. For example, a rehearsal unit cannot be conducted in two weeks as that will not allow sufficient time for a valid rehearsal process. In order to plan assessment, consider term dates and the length of time required for the assessment to take place. You will also need to plan sufficient time for internal verification and resubmission attempts where necessary.

Scheduling external assessment

For qualifications which include an externally assessed unit, we recommend that the externally assessed unit should be conducted in the second year of the course where possible. This ensures learners have had a year of skills development and an understanding of vocational qualifications prior to taking the external assessment. This approach does not work if the course is being conducted over a year or with the larger size qualifications such as an Extended Diploma, where two external assessments are sometimes needed.

Including externally assessed units in the assessment and IV plan

If you are conducting a qualification with external assessment, include the externally assessed unit within your plan using the key dates calendar. This will allow you to see the whole qualification in one document and ensure that you do not plan other deadlines during the controlled external assessment window unless absolutely necessary. As the marking for external units is conducted by RSL, you do not need to include any information about external assessment in your plan for after the submission deadline although you may choose to include the resit date as you would for an internal resubmission deadline.

How to format and check an assessment and IV plan

RSL templates

We provide two [assessment and IV plan templates](), which centres can use for their assessment and IV plans (the templates are on different sheets within the same spreadsheet). We recommended that centres use one of these templates as they are formatted to contain all of the required information. This will provide a version which can be given to learners to see how their year is structured. We also require the dates to be entered into the cloud.rslawards.com site (see more details below.)

Template 1 (assignment-driven)

This template is best suited to centres that will be assessing units in a fragmented way (completing units through multiple assignments). Each row will contain the details for one assignment. These assignments can be called whatever you like, as long as it is clear what unit and assessment criteria the assignment is assessing.

Template 2 (unit-driven)

This template is best suited to centres that assess complete units in one assignment. Each column will contains the details for a complete unit, which makes it easier to track assessment by unit.

Checking assessment and IV plans

After completion, it is important to check that enough units are included within the plan for the number of credits required, and if your are using Template 1, to check that all the assessment criteria for each unit have been included within the plan. It is the responsibility of the Lead IV to ensure the assessment and internal verification plans are fit for purpose.

How to make changes to an assessment and IV plan

Reasons for amending an assessment and IV plan

As you progress through the academic year, you may find that you need to amend the plan that was written prior to the start of the year. Reasons for this could include, but are not limited to:

- A change of teacher in the centre, which means you are no longer able to deliver a unit you had intended to
- A number of activities that had not been prepared for at the start of the year are planned later in the term and impact upon assessment dates (i.e. residential trips)
- A natural disaster that means you have missed several weeks of teaching
- Once the assessment starts, the teacher realises that learners will need longer than they had originally planned for

Amending an assessment and IV plan

You can amend an assessment and IV plan at any point throughout the year, as long as grades can be submitted by the published deadline and work submitted for moderation within the window. If you do amend the plan, please ensure the revised dates are entered via the 'Cohorts' section of the cloud.rslawards.com site. The Lead IV should be the point of sign off for any changes to ensure the plan is still fit for purpose.

How to submit assessment and IV plan dates

Assessment & IV Plans dates are entered directly to the site through the 'Cohorts' section of the site. To submit these dates, please visit the 'Cohorts' section of the site and click 'Submit Assessment & IV Dates' next to the cohort you wish to add dates for.

The following fields need to be submitted on this section of the site.

1. Unit number

    As per the specification documents.

2. Unit name

    As per the specification documents.

3. Assessment criteria met

    The assessment criteria targeted by each assignment. For this plan the numbers of the criteria are sufficient (e.g. 1.1, 2.1).

4. Hand out date

    The date the assignment brief will be given to learners. This is the date from which learners will produce evidence towards the assessment.

5. Deadline

    The date on which learners will submit their evidence for marking.

6. Marking deadline / results

    The date by which you will complete the marking of the learner work.

7. Internal verification

    The date by which you will complete internal verification of a sample of learner work.

8. Resubmission deadline

    The date on which learners will submit their evidence for a resubmission (RSL guidelines are for one resubmission for internal assessments). Rules around the timescale for resubmissions will be dictated by centre policy.

9. Marking deadline / results for resubmissions

    The date by/on which you will complete the marking of the learner's resubmitted work.

10. Internal verification of resubmissions

    The date by which you will complete internal verification of a sample of learner's resubmitted work.

11. Assessor name

    The name of the person who is setting and assessing the assignment.

12. Internal verifier name

    The name of the person who will be internally verifying the assessment decisions.

How To: Write Assignment Briefs

Key information

Assignment briefs

Assignment briefs are written within the centre to provide a summative assessment of an individual unit. They are formal assessment documents and are therefore not part of the teaching/learning for any unit (i.e., the skills and knowledge learners need for the assessment must be taught prior to the assignment brief being given to learners). Assignment briefs demonstrate what the learners must do in order to achieve a unit — this means that they must be clearly written to allow learners to understand exactly what they must do in order to achieve.

When should assignment briefs be written?

Ideally all assignment briefs will be written at the start of the academic year, to ensure that your planning is completed prior to the start of teaching. There must be sufficient time for internal verification to take place (allowing for any changes that may need to be made) prior to being given to learners. One assignment brief per qualification will be subject to quality assurance as part of the centre visit.

How often should assignment briefs be reviewed?

Assignment briefs must be reviewed annually. Updating the briefs annually ensures that all the information and resources are up to date (and reflects any changes to the unit specification) and the brief still meets the needs of the learners. The vocational scenarios should also be updated. Learner feedback is important in this process, so the way the tasks are written can be made as accessible and engaging as possible. The Lead IV is responsible for ensuring this takes place and that the briefs are fit for purpose.

Evidencing employer involvement (Level 3 PT qualifications)

For Level 3 Performance Tables qualifications, employer involvement must be evidenced as part of the delivery of the qualification. One of the ways that this can be evidenced is by working with industry professionals to write the assignment briefs.

What must assignment briefs contain?

Assignment briefs are formal assessment materials, that give context to the work the learner is conducting for the assessment. They are usually written by the tutor who will be assessing the unit, who will use the information within the unit specification as the basis for an engaging and accessible assignment. RSL provide an assignment brief template, which can be found in the 'Templates' section of the Help and Support page, but centres are free to design their own assignments as long as they meet all of the following requirements:

1. **Qualification title, unit number and name**

   As in the syllabus document and unit specification.

2. **The name of the centre and the assessor for the unit**

   This provides the audit trail both for the centre and for RSL.

3. **The date set and the deadline for submission**

   These are the formal dates of assessment, which should reflect the dates as identified in your Assessment and IV Plan. Remember that the centre will need a policy to deal with late submissions of work and accurate dates should be given. Ensure that sufficient time is given to teaching and learning prior to the setting of assessment and that sufficient time is given to allow learners to achieve all the criteria, but not so long that they get bored and/or the assessment becomes part of teaching and learning.

4. **The tasks, laid out in accessible way for your learners**

   Although the specifications for each unit include ideas for activities and assessment, each centre is encouraged to provide vocational context to these ideas in order to engage their learners and make the tasks relevant.

5. **The assessment criteria alongside each task**

   It is vital that learners understand which assessment criteria each task relates to in order to support them in their achievement. This provides a useful reference for those seeking clarification of what they need to demonstrate and should always be included. Remember that the assessment criteria is everything the learner must do to pass the unit.

6. **Links to related resources** (if appropriate)

   You may want to provide specific websites or other resources to get your learners started with research or point them in the right direction to the resources they will need to undertake their assessment. Your vocational scenario may well have an impact on the resources which you direct your learners towards.

7. **Grading criteria**

   The assignment needs to provide learners with the opportunity to achieve at all levels. In order to provide that opportunity, learners need to be aware of what is required to achieve at each level.

8. **Submission checklist**

   Learners need a clear idea of what is being asked of them, what individual pieces of evidence are required for submission and a method of ensuring authenticity. You may choose to include this as a list or an actual checklist, depending on the method your learners respond to best.

9. **How work is to be submitted**

   There are many ways of getting learners to submit work for assessment, which may include physically handing in the work or you may have an electronic submission system.

How to write a vocational scenario

What is a vocational scenario?

A vocational scenario is a situation that is likely to occur in an environment that the learner wishes to work in. These are usually hypothetical, as the reality of being able to fulfil the scenario in a real-world perspective can be difficult. For example, learning about Health and Safety in a classroom environment and asking learners to write a general report about Health and Safety is unlikely to be particularly exciting for learners. Asking them to create a risk assessment for a local performance venue or recording studio, however, is more interesting as this is an environment in which they may wish to work one day. As long as your assignment brief allows learners to meet all of the assessment criteria, there are no restrictions to the vocational scenario which you choose.

Why vocational context is important

The aim of vocational qualifications is to prepare learners for working in a specific industry. The use of a vocational scenario within your assignment briefs will help to engage the learner within the assignment and allow them to see how the work they are studying will prepare them for the career they hope to go into. Using a vocational scenario allows learners to frame their response to the brief and makes their work far more interesting.

Making your vocational scenarios relevant

Consider your geographical area when creating the scenario. Is there anything interesting going on locally within the subject which you can use to engage your learners? For example, if you are in Newcastle, using a local theatre or recording studio as the inspiration for an assignment is likely to be more interesting than a venue in London, as this is immediately accessible to learners.

How to set tasks

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes (LOs) are the knowledge or skills that a learner will have gained from completing the unit, as such they tend to lend themselves towards tasks (i.e. if the unit has three LOs, setting three tasks will usually be the most logical way to structure the assignment brief).

Assessment criteria

All assessment criteria (AC) must be passed in order to achieve a pass for the unit. This includes all parts of an AC, for example, if within AC 1.1 there is a 1.1a, 1.1b and 1.1c, a learner must include all of these within their evidence. Tasks should be written in a way which makes it explicit to learners what they need to do in order to achieve all assessment criteria (the minimum required to achieve a pass). As such, assessment criteria will always form the basis of the tasks in the assignment brief.

Grading criteria

Grading criteria are used to assess the level of competency that the learners demonstrate. It is considered good practice to use the distinction grading criteria within tasks to stretch and challenge learners. For example, if an AC requires a learner to write an evaluation and the distinction criteria asks for a 'comprehensive' evaluation, the start of the task could be phrased as 'write a comprehensive evaluation' rather than just 'write an evaluation.' This allows students to recognise that they will need to write more than a few lines in order to achieve a high grade. While not all students will achieve a distinction, writing the task in this way allows them to aim for it.

Evidence types

One of the positives of vocational qualifications is that they tend not to prescribe a particular approach for meeting assessment criteria. Unless an AC states how the work must be presented, or the skills can only be evidenced in one way (such as the use of a DAW), there is a degree of flexibility in the way assessment criteria can be evidenced. For example, rather than asking a learner to write an evaluation, they could give a PowerPoint presentation or take part in a viva voce, which can be videoed as evidence. While this allows you to capture a range of learning styles, you should also keep in mind the learner's development, particularly if they are planning to progress to higher education, where they will be required to write essays.

Evidence limits

Evidence limits for all internally assessed units reflect a "recommended evidence amount" for each unit. This is to offer learners and tutors guidance on the amounts of evidence that should be produced for each unit. The guidance for learners exceeding or falling under the recommended evidence is left to centre policy to enforce, however learners should be advised that far exceeding the recommendation does not in any way imply the learner will achieve a higher mark. Providing evidence amounts far below or over the guidance may result in actions following moderation.

Presenting information within assignment briefs

As assignment briefs will contain a lot of information, how this information is structured and presented will play a key role in making it accessible to all learners. Useful rules are to give the most important information at the top of each task and to break up passages of text within tasks with descriptive subheadings.

How To: Conduct Internal Assessment

Key information

What is internal assessment?

Internal assessment is a form of assessment in which the centre takes responsibility for setting the assignment through the writing of an assignment brief, marking and internally verifying the work submitted by learners. This form of assessment needs to be taken under specified conditions. Assessment is separate process to teaching and learning. A sample of internally assessed work is subject to moderation by RSL. For more information on moderation, refer to How to produce evidence for moderation.

Which units are internally assessed?

Except for the externally assessed core units in the qualifications with external assessment, all units are internally assessed.

How to manage internal assessment

Each individual centre needs to define its strategy for the delivery of internal assessment. RSL can provide advice and guidance on this. This must include the following:

- Policy on the creation of assignment briefs (content, deadlines, quality assurance checks etc) (please refer to the guide how to write assignment briefs for more details.
- Policy on how unit assessment will be undertaken (combined with other units or singly); if you intend to combine units in assessment, learners should be able to achieve all criteria in each unit. Note that evidence that is being submitted to RSL for moderation must be presented by unit and not by assignment.
- Rules on resubmissions (number, capping, late submissions etc).
- The conditions that internal assessment will be conducted under.
- The quality assurance of the internal assessment process.

If you wish to use an RSL template for the Assessment Policy document, one is available in the 'Templates' section of the VQ Help and Support page that can be adapted for your centre.

How to conduct internal assessment

Preparing for internal assessment

There are seven main stages to conducting internal assessment:

1. Planning dates for assessment and internal verification
2. Writing and internally verifying the assignment brief
3. Supporting learners prior to the assessment
4. Setting the assessment to learners and facilitating the assessment
5. Marking the learner work
6. Internally verifying the assessment decisions
7. Facilitating, assessing and internally verifying resubmissions (where applicable)

1. **Planning dates for assessment and internal verification**

   This should take place before the academic year starts to ensure sufficient time is given to allow learners to achieve all the criteria.

2. **Writing and internally verifying the assignment brief**

   For each internally assessed unit, an assignment brief will need to be written and internally verified prior to being given to learners.

3. **Supporting learners prior to the assessment**

   Tutors should ensure that their teaching covers all assessment criteria, enabling learners' ability to achieve a pass or above in each individual assessment. We expect that centres will add stretch and challenge into their sessions to support learners to be able to achieve a distinction in assessment. Tutors must also ensure that learners understand how the assessment will take place.

4. **Setting the assessment to learners and facilitating the assessment**

   The teaching and learning for an assessment should take place before learners sit the assessment. It is acceptable for teaching to take place during the assessment period if there is an area that the teacher feels needs greater clarity but the skills needed for the assessment should be taught prior to the hand out of the assignment brief.

   During the assessment period, the learner must demonstrate their individual response to the assignment brief and work must be authenticated by the use of a learner declaration. Where learners need to work in groups, they must be able to individually evidence their contribution to ensure that assessment can be conducted. The individual contribution of the learner must meet all assessment criteria in the specification.

   Feedback can be provided to the learner during completion of internal assignments but must not constitute coaching or teaching to ensure that the work can be authenticated.

5. **Marking the learner work**

   The length of time allocated for marking learner work should be identified in your centre's assessment policy. RSL do not specify a time period in which learner work should be marked and returned to learners. However, if the length of time between the learner work being submitted and then returned to learners would be considered excessive (i.e. more than a month), this would not allow the learners to receive feedback on their assessment in a timely manner. For learners to access a resubmission attempt, a long gap between their initial submission and the receipt of feedback could impact on their ability to improve their work.

   It is expected that centre's record their assessment decisions and feedback to learners in a way which is accessible to the learner. If centres wish to use an RSL template for feedback, this can be found in the [Templates](#) section of the Help and Support site.

6. **Internally verifying the assessment decisions**

   A sample of assessment decisions for every unit must be internally verified prior to the return of grades and feedback to the learner. The sample size will be dictated by the centre's Quality Assurance policy. If there are any actions following internal verification, these must be actioned and signed off prior to the return of feedback to learners.

7. **Facilitating, assessing and internally verifying resubmissions (where applicable)**

   Following the return of feedback to learners, a resubmission opportunity must be made available to all learners. Centres need to have a policy concerning resubmission of work from learners:
   - Do all learners get the chance to resubmit or just those who gained an Unclassified in assessment the first time?

- How do you deal with late submissions of work? (Some centres choose to cap these submissions at a pass)
How many resubmissions do you permit? (Open ended resubmissions are not good practice)

Resubmission of internally assessed units

- Learners must be offered a resubmission opportunity for each internally assessed unit. The resubmission should be completed in a timely manner to ensure the learner has the best opportunity to improve their grade. If a resubmission attempt was not offered or taken up in the first year of a two-year course, it can be given in the following academic year. This would be at the discretion of the teacher and if deemed appropriate.
- If the learner has already taken a resubmission opportunity and wants to resubmit the unit at a later stage in the course to improve their grade, this is permitted but they must retake the whole unit to a new assignment brief. This would be at the discretion of the teacher who is confident the learner can achieve an improved grade. There must also be sufficient time available to retake the unit without impacting achievement in other units.
- Retakes must be included in the assessment and IV plan for the year. There is no cap on the number of learners who may be offered a retake.
- If a retake opportunity is given, centres should contact us prior to the moderation deadline to ensure we have full information about units available for moderation. If we are not contacted until the grading deadline, the unit could be subject to moderation at a charge to the centre.
- The unit could be selected as part of the moderation sample for the current year, even if moderated in the previous year.

Storage of Learner Work

- Centres must retain evidence of learner work for a minimum period of 6 months following certification of the learner, unless any other specific agreement has been made in writing with RSL.
- Centres must retain 20% of all learner work, including a sample of each grade category, examples of each type of assessment method, examples covering each tutor/assessor and evidence of assessment and internal verification for a minimum of 5 years following certification.

Learning outcome combinations

Grading RSL qualifications

RSL qualifications are awarded based on the attainment level across all completed units within the qualification pathway. Individual units are graded based upon the learning outcomes that are found within them. Learning outcomes are each made up of one of more assessment criteria, the level of attainment for each assessment criteria is derived by applying the grading criteria to the learner evidence.

The following tables show how the learner's unit grades are calculated from the learning outcome grades. The same calculation can be applied at assessment criteria level to calculate the learner's grade for each learning outcome.

As an example: If a unit has 3 learning outcomes and the outcomes have been graded as P1, M2 and D3, the overall grade is a Merit.

Total Learning Outcomes or Assessment Criteria: 1			
Total Passes	Total Merits	Total Distinctions	Unit Grade
1	0	0	Pass
0	1	0	Merit
0	0	1	Distinction

Total Learning Outcomes or Assessment Criteria: 2			
Total Passes	Total Merits	Total Distinctions	Unit Grade
2	0	0	Pass
0	2	0	Merit
1	0	1	Merit
1	1	0	Merit
0	0	2	Distinction
0	1	1	Distinction

Total Learning Outcomes or Assessment Criteria: 3			
Total Passes	Total Merits	Total Distinctions	Unit Grade
2	1	0	Pass
3	0	0	Pass
1	1	1	Merit
1	2	0	Merit
2	0	1	Merit
0	2	1	Merit
0	3	0	Merit
1	0	2	Distinction
0	0	3	Distinction
0	1	2	Distinction

Total Learning Outcomes or Assessment Criteria: 4			
Total Passes	Total Merits	Total Distinctions	Unit Grade
3	0	1	Pass
3	1	0	Pass
4	0	0	Pass
0	3	1	Merit
0	4	0	Merit
1	1	2	Merit
1	2	1	Merit
1	3	0	Merit
2	0	2	Merit
2	1	1	Merit
2	2	0	Merit
1	0	3	Distinction
0	0	4	Distinction
0	1	3	Distinction
0	2	2	Distinction

Total Learning Outcomes or Assessment Criteria: 5			
Total Passes	Total Merits	Total Distinctions	Unit Grade
3	2	0	Pass
4	0	1	Pass
4	1	0	Pass
5	0	0	Pass
2	1	2	Merit
2	2	1	Merit
2	3	0	Merit
3	0	2	Merit
3	1	1	Merit
0	3	2	Merit
0	4	1	Merit
0	5	0	Merit
1	2	2	Merit
1	3	1	Merit
1	4	0	Merit
2	0	3	Distinction
1	0	4	Distinction
1	1	3	Distinction
0	0	5	Distinction
0	1	4	Distinction
9	2	3	Distinction

Total Learning Outcomes or Assessment Criteria: 6			
Total Passes	Total Merits	Total Distinctions	Unit Grade
0	6	0	Merit
0	5	1	Merit
0	4	2	Merit
0	0	6	Distinction
0	1	5	Distinction
0	2	4	Distinction
0	3	3	Distinction
1	5	0	Merit
1	4	1	Merit
1	3	2	Merit
1	0	5	Distinction
1	1	4	Distinction
1	2	3	Distinction
2	4	0	Merit
2	3	1	Merit
2	2	2	Merit
2	0	4	Distinction
2	1	3	Distinction
3	2	1	Merit
3	1	2	Merit
3	3	0	Merit
3	0	3	Merit
4	1	1	Pass
4	0	2	Merit
4	2	0	Pass
5	1	0	Pass
5	0	1	Pass
6	0	0	Pass

How To: Provide Feedback

Key information

Why is feedback important?
Providing feedback to learners is fundamentally important throughout both teaching and learning, and following formative and summative assessment. Effective feedback allows learners to recognise their strengths as well as their areas for development. Remember you can provide formative feedback to your learners to allow them to improve, but you can't let them have open ended resubmissions either before or after the deadline you have set for submissions of formal assessments. You must have a resubmission policy in place which limits the number of times a learner can submit their work.

How to provide feedback

What are the key areas in learner feedback?
Feedback on assessment must include:
- Areas the learner has done well in
- Areas they need to improve in
- The grade they have achieved and why

How should feedback be written?
Feedback must be individualised to each learner and written in an accessible way. Each individual learner should be able to read the feedback given, understand it, and be able to apply it to future work. Remember that feedback will also be reviewed by both your internal verifier and Standards Verifier, who will use the feedback to reinforce the judgements made.

We expect all RSL centres to provide feedback that:
- is supportive and developmental — remember that feedback should be about improvement as well as achievement
- is linked to the assessment criteria
- uses grading criteria descriptors to make it clear which grade the learner has achieved and what is needed to achieve the next grade up
- provides opportunities for 'Stretch and Challenge' — just because a learner has reached a distinction does not mean that they do not need any developmental feedback; they may have reached the highest grade available but there are likely to be areas in which they can further develop, whether that is in performance skills, research skills or presentation of work
- provides useful feedback as to how the learner can improve, while not spoon-feeding them
- is written in a way that learners understand, so they can use the feedback in future assignments

Additionally, while marks are not dependent on spelling or grammar, it is good practice to provide feedback on spelling and grammar to help prepare the learner for further and higher education, or the workplace.

How to document feedback

What are the key areas in learner feedback?

Feedback must be documented for all pieces of learner work that are formally assessed, leaving an audit trail for each individual learner within each unit. RSL provide a template for this document, which can be found in the 'Templates' section of the Help and Support page, but centres are free to use their own feedback sheets to meet the needs of their learners.

Feedback sheets must contain the following information:
- Learner name
- Unit number and title
- Assessment title (as per the assignment brief) and number, where applicable
- Date of assessment
- Type of assessment (formative or summative)
- Written feedback on the evidence seen, which is:
  » Linked to the assessment criteria
  » Uses the grading criteria descriptors
  » Motivational and developmental
  » Precise and easy to follow
- The grade given for the work
- Details of any resubmission required and the relevant deadline

How To: Conduct Internal Verification

Key information

What is Internal Verification?
Internal verification is an essential part of the delivery and assessment of vocational qualifications. Without an appropriate internal verification process and at least one dedicated internal verifier (who is separate from the assessor) vocational qualifications cannot be conducted. From 24/25, centres will also need to nominate a Lead Internal Verifier (LIV) for each qualification delivered in the centre.

Internal verification refers to the quality assurance of assignment briefs and assessment decisions as well as the standardisation and, in some cases, continuous professional development (CPD) of staff. Internal verification ensures the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions between assessors and ensures that assessors are consistent in their interpretation and application of the standards of each accredited qualification.

The internal verifier acts as an auditor and reviews the audit trail from assessment planning to the final assessment decision on each unit. They are concerned with checking that the assessor has tested the validity, reliability, currency, sufficiency and authenticity of the evidence presented against the standards as a measure of quality assurance. Internal verification must be completed for both the initial submission of learner evidence and the resubmission.

In this way the internal verifier can highlight assessors' need for support and identify good and bad assessment practice, which can be used in subsequent standardisation procedures, professional development, further visits or professional discussion. It should also be noted that this process needs to identify other possible issues which may arise such as plagiarism, slow progress etc.

What is the role of the Lead Internal Verifier?
This person acts as a point of accountability for the quality assurance of these qualifications. The Lead IV will need to train or standardise assessors and internal verifiers to ensure they understand national standards. This activity should also be repeated later in the year to ensure consistency. In addition, they should sample the assessment and verification decisions across all qualifications they are responsible for, ensuring that activity is completed in line with their plan and that standards are applied consistently.

Only one Lead IV can be registered per programme. This is to ensure there is a single point of accountability for the quality assurance of that programme. If there are several different pathways within then same area, for example music performance and music technology, the same member of staff could be Lead IV for both pathways or the responsibility could be split if staffing allows for that.

Where centres are delivering creative and performing arts qualifications, there will need to be a distinct Lead IV for dance and acting. This could be the same person if appropriate but may be different dependent on the staffing.

There could be a different Lead IV for different levels, if appropriate. For example, there could be one Lead IV for Level 2 Music Performance and a different Lead IV for Level 3 Music Performance.

If there is a single assessor for a programme then that person should be the Lead IV as they are the main person in control of that programme. They will need another person to internally verify their assignments and the

assessment decisions. Remember that this person should be included in the standardisation exercise.

The key areas that a Lead IV will have responsibility for are:
- Running standardisation
- The assessment and internal verification plan
- Sampling other assessors and internal verifiers
- Meeting with the Centre Quality Assurer for the centre visit
- Planning the sample with the Standards Verifier.

For more details about the role, see this [video](#).

What is the role of the internal verifier?

The internal verifier acts as an auditor, reviewing the audit trail from assessment planning to the final assessment decision on each unit. They are concerned with checking that the assessor has tested the validity, reliability, currency, sufficiency and authenticity of the evidence presented against the standards as a measure of quality assurance. Their role includes
- Planning, tracking and verifying assessment, to ensure an adequate audit trail
- Identifying possible issues at each stage of the assessment process (plagiarism, slow progress etc)
- Identify assessment practice, which can be used in subsequent standardisation procedures, professional development, further visits or professional discussion
- Providing feedback to the assessor

What are the essentials of internal verification?

Internal verification of RSL vocational qualifications should cover the following:

      1.   Verifying all assignment briefs produced by the centre

      2.   Verifying assessment decisions

      3.   Conducting standardisation activities

How to IV assignment briefs

What proportion of assignment briefs needs to be internally verified?

100% of all the assignment briefs produced in your centre need to be internally verified before they are given to students. If there are actions required following internal verification, these will need to be completed and the actions checked by the internal verifier prior to giving the briefs to learners. If you wish to use an RSL template for internal verification of assignment briefs, you can find one in the 'Templates' section of Help and Support site: RSL VQ IV of Assignment Brief Form.

What does internal verification of assignment briefs need to confirm?

The internal verifier needs to confirm all of the following:

1. The qualification and unit details are accurate

2. The deadlines are clear and realistic

3. The language and layout are clear and accessible

4. All assessment criteria are included in each task

   Remember, good practice dictates that assessors also incorporate vocational context into their assignment briefs to provide motivation for their learners alongside the assessment criteria.

5. The briefs allow the learner to demonstrate all learning outcomes of the unit

6. The briefs allow the learner to demonstrate all levels of attainment

7. The briefs allow the assessor to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainment

8. The briefs allow each learner to generate evidence that can be authenticated and is valid and sufficient

9. That it is clear what evidence is required

10. The briefs are comparable throughout the centre (i.e. the assessment demands across the centre and across any level are consistent)

How often do assignment briefs need to be reviewed and internally verified?

All assignment briefs should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they are as up to date and vocationally relevant as possible. This will also allow for updates based on any new specifications that may be issued or additional guidance. Assignment briefs must be internally verified each academic year, even if they have been internally verified the previous academic year. This is to ensure that all key information such as deadlines are reflecting the current academic year and the information is relevant to the current year group.

How should the internal verification of assignment briefs be documented?

All aspects of this internal verification process must be documented and signed off by the internal verifier to demonstrate a robust internal verification process.

How to IV assessment decisions

What proportion of learner work needs to be internally verified?

RSL do not prescribe a particular approach for sample sizes as long as every unit that your centre is delivering is sampled and the sampling strategy is robust, allowing internal verifiers to accurately agree assessment decisions and highlight any areas for development. If you wish to use the RSL Moderation Sample Size Matrices for learner sizes for the sample, you can find this on our website here: www.rslawards.com/vocational/centre-handbook-and-moderation-information. If you wish to use an RSL template for internal verification of assessment decisions, you can find one in the 'Templates' section of Help and Support site: RSL IV of Assessment Decisions.

What does internal verification of assessment decisions need to confirm?

The internal verifier should be able to evidence what has been sampled through the completion of a report. At a minimum, this needs to identify:

1. Date of verification and date of assessment

2. Name of internal verifier and assessor

3. Evidence sampled

4. Judgement made by the internal verifier on assessor decisions

5. Actions that have to be taken before the units can be deemed as complete

6. Development points for the assessor

How often does learner work have to be internally verified?

All centres are required to have a sampling strategy which identifies the strategy for selection of work for internal verification and how the centre will respond to the identification of risk / poor practice as well as good practice. The internal verification strategy should form part of the quality assurance policy for your centre. If you wish to use and adapt an RSL template for the Quality Assurance policy document, this is available in the 'Templates' section of the Help and Support site: Quality Assurance policy.

How to internally verify feedback

The internal verifier should take the following into account when internally verifying learner work:

1. Is the assessment criteria and grading criteria language used in the feedback?

    Remember that the assessment criteria are the minimum required to achieve a pass and the grading criteria is then used to assess the competency. Use grading criteria language to reinforce the grade achieved as well as how the grade could be improved (if not at a distinction).

2. Does the language of the feedback match up to the grade awarded?

    For example, if a learner receives feedback telling them the standard of their work is excellent but they have received a pass grade, this can be confusing for the learner, as 'excellent' implies they should be achieving a higher grade. Feedback must be motivating but in situations such as these, praise the effort of the learner rather than the outcome.

3. Does the feedback reinforce how the learner achieved the grade?

    Use the grading descriptors and the appropriate wording in your feedback, citing where evidence can be found.

4. Are opportunities for Stretch and Challenge given?

    Does the feedback allow learners to achieve at all levels? If a learner has achieved a distinction, has the assessor identified developmental feedback for them?

5. Is there excessive tutor input?

    While feedback needs to be clear and allow learners to make improvements to their work, spoon-feeding learners and giving extremely specific instructions about how to improve their work is not acceptable. For example, telling a learner to use more examples within their work is a good example of supportive feedback but directing them where to find specific examples to include is too much input.

6. Is the feedback individualised to each learner?

    Learners are unlikely to engage with feedback which they feel has not been written to them personally.

How To: Produce Evidence for Moderation

Key information

What is moderation?

The process of moderation is designed to check the decisions made by assessors and flag any discrepancies or issues with a centre's ability to maintain the standards required by RSL. Standards Verifiers will check a range of learner evidence and internal verification documentation to ensure that the decisions made by assessors are fair, accurate and reliable, and internal quality assurance processes are robust. Each qualification, and qualification pathway, with learners registered on will be subject to moderation. Centres are required to produce evidence for moderation throughout the length of the qualification (i.e. if a course is run over two years, they will be expected to provide evidence in both years).

How does the moderation process work?

A sample of specific units and learners will be requested via the cloud.rslawards.com site by the end of the moderation window in Term 2. The specific dates for the current academic year are given in the Key Dates calendar (available from [Key Documents/Forms](#) on the Help and Support page of the RSL administration site). If the intention is to certificate in the current academic year, centres need to ensure that there will be sufficient completed units available for moderation by this deadline. Having reviewed this sample, if an RSL Standards Verifier (SV) cannot be confident that learners are being assessed to the national standard and/or that appropriate quality procedures are in place based on the sample provided, the centre will be required to produce a second sample.

What determines the moderation sample size?

Moderation sample size matrices can be found from: [rslawards.com/vocational/centre-handbook-and-moderation-information](#). The sample size for each qualification suite is determined by:
- The size of the qualification
- The number of learners

Are there any exemptions to the published moderation sample size matrices?

There are some instances where RSL's discretion may be applied in choosing a sample for moderation. This will apply to Level 3 qualifications only. Examples where a different sample size could be chosen are as below:
- Where a centre is delivering several sizes of qualification at the same level with all students in one class. For example, if a centre is delivering the Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma for in the Creative Music Industry but also has students registered on the Level 3 Certificate and Level 3 Extended Certificates in the Creative Music Industry. If all students are in the same class and sitting the same assignments, there is possibility that all learners would be part of one sample (each of the qualifications would not need to be sampled - this would also rely on certification happening in the same year for these cohorts).
- Where a centre is delivering more than one pathway (e.g. business and composition) but the assessment and internal verification staff are the same across both pathways. In this instance, the sample may be a core unit and an optional unit from each pathway to complete the sample rather than three units from each pathway. Where centres are creating bespoke pathways for learners, more units may be selected to take up to the minimum sample size of learners.

Related guides
[VQ Quality Handbook](#)

Additional support
Please direct any queries about producing evidence for moderation to vocational@rslawards.com

How to set dates for a moderation sample

Samples are generated for your centre through the cloud.rslawards.com site by your allocated Standards Verifier. In order for them to do this, you will need to agree and enter grade input and sample upload dates for each qualification your centre delivers. These dates need to reflect when a cohort's units will be completed in full and adhere to the sample sizes outlined in the sample size matrix for the qualification being delivered.

Agreeing a date for moderation
Moderation can take place anytime within the summative moderation window, the exact dates of which are listed within the Key Dates calendar. At the start of the summative moderation window, you will be allocated a Standards Verifier (SV) who will agree a date for when sampling will take place. These agreed dates are then submitted by your centre to the 'Sampling Dates' section of the cloud.rslawards.com site. Your allocated SV will be responsible for moderating your sample and sharing feedback. If there are multiple qualification suites within a centre, an SV will be allocted per qualification suite.

Steps for setting sampling dates on the cloud.rslawards.com site

1.	To access the sampling dates for each individual cohort, hover over your name on the top-right corner and select 'EQA Sample Requests'. On this screen, you will see a link to 'Sampling Dates'
2.	In the Sampling Dates section, you will be presented with the cohorts for the current year and the qualifications your centre delivers. To select your dates for sampling, select the 'Edit Dates' link
3.	On this page, you will be asked to select the dates for two fields

Input grades deadline

To upload work against a learner, tick the box next to the learner, choose 'select files' to choose the appropriate files, and add any notes necessary

Submission of evidence date

You will see a 'success' page with the option to upload more samples; if you do not see a 'success' page, the samples have not uploaded successfully

How to prepare a moderation sample

Each qualification suite will be allocated an SV who will contact the QR at the centre. Centres must ensure that they are storing work correctly throughout the year to make this process easier.

Which learners and units will be selected for sampling?
The sample will include units for moderation that allows a comprehensive overview of how internal assessment and internal verification are conducted within the centre. The selection of learners and units is based on a number of factors that include:
- All bands of attainment that are achieved (i.e. a range of Pass, Merit and Distinction learners)
- A range of learners across the qualification
- Range of assessors (where more than one unit is selected)
- Range of types of assessment i.e. practical based units, theoretical units (where more than one unit is selected)

How and when will you receive the sample request?
Your SV will agree dates with you for when the sample will be submitted. The submission date will need to be entered into the cloud site (see page 3 for details about how to do this)

An 'EQA Sample Request' will be generated through the RSL administration site. You will receive notification of the selection of units and learners via an automated email from RSL.

What is to be included in the sample?
The sample must be summative (i.e. complete units) and include any resubmission attempts (once moderation has taken place, no further assessment can take place on the selected unit). Internal verification of a sample of these assessment decisions must have been completed prior to moderation. The sample will consist of the following, for all selected units and learners:
- Assignment brief and internal verification documentation for that brief
- Learner work and accompanying assessment feedback sheet
- A signed learner declaration of authenticity per learner in the sample
- Internal verification of assessment decisions paperwork
- Lead IV declaration - this is new for 24/25 and one must be uploaded per sample.

How to label learner work
All work must be clearly labelled with the learner name, unit number and relevant assessment criteria.

Work must be uploaded against each individual learner. Do not upload all learners against one learner especially in a zip file as this can take SVs hours to download and may delay moderation.

If there is video evidence, you must provide adequate identification documentation to ensure that the SV is able to clearly identify the learners. Photos are useful but please remember that students can look very different in their school or college ID to how they look under stage lights and in costume. Good practice would be to provide a photo of the learner along with specific identifying factors in the video (i.e. what they are wearing, what hairstyle or hair colour they have) and specific times that they appear in the video, where they are stood on stage etc. The easier you make it for the SV to identify the learners, the easier they will find it to quality assure the work.

How to submit a moderation sample

The request for a sample for summative moderation will be generated through the RSL administration site. You will receive an automated email that will tell you which units and learners have been selected for the sample. You will then need to upload work against each learner. All work must be clearly labelled with the learner name, unit number and relevant assessment criteria. Please do not upload work for the whole group against each learner.

	Steps for uploading documentation for a moderation sample
1.	Select **EQA Sample Requests** from the user dropdown menu
2.	If there is an EQA Sample Request generated for your centre, you will see the sample request here
3.	Click **View** next to the sample request to see the units and learners requested for the sample
4.	Click the **Upload Samples** button on the right hand side *The unit number will also appear in the button. For example: Upload CAPA 304 Samples.*
5.	To upload work against a learner, tick the box next to the learner, choose 'select files' to choose the appropriate files, and add any notes necessary
6.	Click **Upload Samples**
7.	You will see a 'success' page with the option to upload more samples; if you do not see a 'success' page, the samples have not uploaded successfully
8.	To review the overall status of the sample, click **View EQA Sample Request**
9.	To review all sample requests, click **View All EQA Sample Requests**

How to use external links to learner evidence

You do not have to upload all learner work directly to the RSL administration site. You can use external links to learner work under the following conditions:

1. **The work must be timestamped**
   The timestamp must be visible to the SV and fall before the deadline date for the sample to be provided. If the timestamp shows that work has been edited or uploaded after the agreed date, or if the timestamp is not visible, this will be queried by the SV.

2. **The work must be accessible**
   The link must provide access to all evidence needed by the SV to conduct their work. If a password is required to access the files, this must be available. If the work is not accessible, this will be queried by the SV.

3. **The centre must store the learner work**
   In accordance with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance, centres are responsible for the storage of internally assessed learner work. This must be stored securely and be made available should the awarding organisation or educational regulator (primarily Ofqual) wish to review it. Learner work must be stored for a minimum of 3 years following certification.

How to submit external links to learner evidence

Links to work must be uploaded to the RSL administration site against the learner — see How to submit a moderation sample. Please do not upload links for the whole group against each learner.

What are the outcomes for the first moderation sample?

What determines the outcomes of the moderation sample?

When moderating the work of the centre, SVs are looking for:

- Whether the learner work meets the required standards
- Whether there has been sufficient feedback
- Whether the internal assessment policy been adhered to (late submissions, capping resubmissions etc)
- Areas of strength and areas of weakness (i.e. not meeting a specific assessment criteria across the centre can potentially be a sign of issues in teaching content)
- Robust quality assurance processes

What outcomes are possible?

Once your SV has reviewed the moderation sample, there are three possible outcomes:

1. Released
2. Second sample needed
3. Partial sample agreed

   1. **Released**

      - The SV is confident that your centre is assessing learners to the national standard and that adequate quality assurance procedures are in place
      - There may be non-essential actions within the report which will need to be applied for the next academic year but this does not impact upon certification for this year
      - A second sample is not required for this cohort

   2. **Second sample needed**

      - The SV cannot be confident that learners are being assessed to the national standard and/or appropriate quality procedures are in place based on the sample provided
      - A second sample will be required; the deadline for this will be identified by the SV (in consultation with RSL)
      - If the SV judges that the learners have been disadvantaged based on practice within the centre, they can authorise a further resubmission on the basis that the original assessment decisions were invalid; this will be clearly stated on the report

   3. **Partial sample**

      - For learners who are not certificating in the current academic year, a partial sample could be taken.
      - This applies for qualifications with a sample size of 2 units
      - For qualifications with a sample size of 2 units, ideally one unit would be moderated in each year of the qualification
      - Should the sample be agreed, the report would be marked as partial agreed and the remaining unit moderated in the second year of the qualification
      - If the sample is not agreed, the second sample process would be followed

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How to prepare a second sample

Under what circumstances are second samples required?

If the SV cannot be confident that learners are being assessed to the national standard and/or appropriate quality procedures are in place based on the sample provided, your centre will be required to produce a second sample. Reasons for the SV requesting a second sample include:

- Disagreement with any assessment decisions
- No evidence of internal verification in the initial sample
- Evidence of ineffective internal verification in the centre i.e. the internal verifier has agreed incorrect assessment decisions
- Any elements which may impact upon the achievement of the learners such as plagiarism/use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

What is the purpose of the second sample?

The second sample must show that the centre has reviewed all learner work in light of the feedback from the SV, not just the initial sample. If the centre has already allowed a resubmission attempt and the SV judges the learners have been disadvantaged by assessment practice within the centre, the SV can authorise a further resubmission attempt.

What will the second sample include?

- The sample must show the centre has reviewed all learner work in light of feedback from the SV, not just the initial sample. This should include amending grades in the system and updating relevant paperwork.
- If the second sample is due to moderated grades, the SV will ask if the centre will accept the moderated grades or if they wish to resubmit additional work to support the original assessment decision.
- If the centre chooses to resubmit evidence, the second sample will include the learners from the original sample with additional supporting evidence **plus** additional learners for the affected unit (amount as per sampling methodology) chosen by the SV **plus** additional unit and learners (amount as per then sampling methodology) chosen by the SV.
- If the centre chooses to accept the moderated grades, RSL will amend the grades in the system and these learners will not need to be resubmitted. The second sample will include additional learners for the affected unit (amount as per then sampling methodology) chosen by the SV **plus** an additional unit and learners (amount as per the sampling methodology) chosen by the SV.

What are the outcomes for the second sample?

Once the SV has reviewed the second sample, there are three possible outcomes:

1. Released
2. Centre visit required
3. Partial agreed

1. Released

- If the SV can be confident that the appropriate actions have been taken by the centre based on the action plan from first sample, they will be able to release the report for this cohort based on the second sample; this will be reflected in their report. There may still be actions which will need to be applied for the next academic year
- Cohort's report is released for this academic year (subject to external assessment results (where applicable) and any subsequent deadlines, where relevant) and additional sampling is not required.

2. Centre visit required

- If the SV is still not confident that the centre is appropriately assessing and/or internally verifying learner work in line with the national standards, then this cohort will still not be released at this stage
- If this is not released, the Senior Subject Expert (SSE) for the subject area will conduct a centre visit to endeavour to resolve the issues and ensure learners are not disadvantaged
- There may be low level sanctions imposed and an action plan will be created, which links to the sanctions policy; this will be monitored by RSL

3. Partial agreed

- Where a second sample was agreed, the outcome is now partial agreed. If the SV is confident that the appropriate actions have been taken by the centre based on the action plan, they can agree the partial sample for this cohort.
- The centre will be subject to additional moderation in the second year of the qualification.

When might further moderation be required?

Following the grade input deadline, RSL will conduct a statistical analysis of all grades submitted by centres in order to analyse grading trends over time in the centre and grading trends nationally for the qualification. If grades fall outside of the usual trends and this is not supported by the justification or moderation for that cohort in the centre, further moderation could be needed. In this case, you will be contacted by RSL with clear instructions for next steps. The dates for this are included within the key dates calendar

How To: Use the RSL Administration Site

Key information

The RSL administration site

The RSL administration site is based at <u>cloud.rslawards.com</u>. It is the online system for all RSL administrative processes. This guide will cover all processes on the system apart from registering learners. Each centre has their own area within the site, which they need a login to access.

The administrative processes conducted through the RSL administration site include:
- The submission of all centre documentation for quality assurance purposes including assessment and internal verification plans
- Submission of samples of internally assessed work for moderation
- Submission of all learner work and associated documents for controlled external assessment
- The release of controlled external assessment briefs for the current academic year
- The release of grades for the controlled external assessment
- Registration of learners on the correct qualification
- Input of grades for internally assessed units
- Generation of learner progress reports

How to navigate the system

Signing in to the site
- Once your account is set up, you can sign in to the RSL administration site by going to the RSL website (<u>rslawards.com</u>), selecting 'Sign-in' from the top menu bar and clicking on **VQ Sign-in**. Once you are signed into the RSL administration site, you will be on a page called 'My Secure Area'.

User dropdown menu

Once your are signed in you will see a dropdown menu in the menu bar with your username. From this menu you can access all of the pages that are available for your account. This menu will be referred to as the 'user dropdown menu' throughout the RSL How To Guides.

User dashboard

Each user has a 'dashboard', which includes links to frequently used pages and news and updates from RSL. This dashboard can be reached by clicking on **Vocational Tools** from the 'My Secure Area' page or by clicking on **Dashboard** from your user dropdown menu. This page will be referred to as the 'dashboard' throughout the RSL How To Guides.

How to set up user accounts

Site access

In order to access your centre's site on cloud.rslawards.com, each member of staff will need a login. When going through centre approval, the main centre contact (quality representative) will be given a login for the site. There are two types of access allocated:

1. Tutor
2. Centre administrator / quality representative

Adding a centre administrator / quality representative account

If a member of staff needs centre administrator access, they can create an account at cloud.rslawards.com/create-account. Forward the email address used for your account, along with the name of your centre, to vocational@rslawards.com and we can link the account to your centre on the system. You will not be able to see the details of your centre until this has been processed. Centre administrators and quality representative have the same access rights within the site. The only difference is that each centre needs to nominate one quality representative as the main point of contact and this is logged within the site by RSL Head Office.

Adding a tutor account

A quality representative / centre administrator can add a tutor for their centre by following the below steps. The only difference in tutor access is that they don't have access to the 'Billing' section of the site or the ability to add another member of staff as a tutor.

Steps for adding a tutor account for your centre	
1.	Select **Staff** from the user dropdown menu OR Click **View Staff** from the dashboard
2.	Click **Add New Tutor**
3.	Enter the tutor's first name, surname and email address
4.	Tick the confirmation box, confirming their access level for the site
5.	Click **Add Tutor**
6.	If the tutor account has been added, you will see a 'success' page, with the option to add another tutor, or to view the tutor's details; if you do not see a 'success' page, the tutor account has not been added

How to upload and view documentation

Uploading documents

You will be required to submit documentation (such as assignment briefs to be reviewed at a centre visit) through the RSL administration site. The guidance below does not apply to the submission of learner work for a summative moderation sample or the controlled external assessment. See the sections How to upload documentation for a moderation sample

	Steps for uploading documents
1.	Select **Documents** from the user dropdown menu OR Click **View Documents** from the dashboard
2.	You will be on a 'Submission System' page, where you will see any documents that have been previously uploaded
3.	Click **New Submission** from the 'Options' menu
4.	Select the correct document type, following the guidance in the Key Dates calendar (available from Key Documents/Forms on the VQ Help and Support page)
5.	Upload the files
6.	Select the assessment year that the documents apply to (most likely to be the current year)
7.	Optional: Add notes for the person who will be looking at the document *We recommend using notes to provide context as to why documents have been uploaded and, if needed, to specify which documents are contained with zipped files.*
8.	Click **Upload Documents**
9.	If your document has uploaded, you will see a 'success' page, with the option to submit more files, view this submission or view all submissions; if you do not see a 'success' page, the documents have not uploaded

How to view responses to documents

If you are a centre administrator or quality representative, when there is a document available for you to view (such as a response to your assignment briefs) you will receive an email notification telling you to login to view the document. You will find the new document uploaded against your original document on the 'Submission System' page. Clicking on **View** next to the document will bring up a page where you can view and download the submission and responses.

How to input grades for internally assessed units

You will only be able to input grades into the system for internally assessed units in the current academic year. Any externally assessed unit grades will be input at RSL Head Office and made available on the date in the Key Dates calendar.

There are two ways that you can input learner grades:

1. Single learner grading
2. Bulk learner grading

Steps for inputting learner grades individually

1.	Select **Learners** from the user dropdown menu OR Click **View Learners** from the dashboard
2.	Select the qualification and/or unit you wish to grade OR Leave the search fields blank to search for all your learners
3.	Click **Search**
4.	Search results are presented as a table with learner name, qualification, grade and two options to click: 'Learner' and 'Registration'
5.	Click **Registration** to view the learner's registration page
6.	On the 'Registration' page you will see a section called 'Units', with a list of each unit that the learner is registered on and two options to click: 'View' and 'Upload'
7.	Click **Grade** to bring up a table with the learning outcomes for the relevant unit
8.	Input a grade for each learning outcome and enter the date graded using the dropdown provided
9.	Optional: Enter the types of evidence that the learner completed *We recommend entering evidence types as this simplifies the moderation process for our EQAs.*
10.	Click to confirm whether the learner has been internally verified for the unit (this will allow your EQA to select an appropriate sample if needed for this unit)
11.	Click **Submit Unit Updates** to complete the process
12.	If the learner was graded, you will see a 'Success' page, with options to return to the learner's registration or search for another learner; if you do not see a 'Success' page, the documents have not uploaded
13.	On the 'Success' page you will also see a section called 'Other Learners Registered on the Same Unit', from here you can grade the remaining learners for this unit, following the steps above

Bulk learner grading

This tool allows you to grade multiple learners on the same unit. You can input any details that all the learners share first, then input each learner's individual grades. We advise that you don't leave your computer inactive during the grading of multiple learners as this may cause our system to sign you out partway through the process and you will lose any progress. The bulk grading tool is not available on mobile devices.

	Steps for inputting multiple learner grades
1.	Select **Bulk Grade** from the dropdown menu
2.	You will see a dropdown menu with all of the units that are included in your centre's qualification programmes
3.	Select the unit that you wish to grade
4.	Click the tick box if you want to exclude learners on the unit who have already been graded
5.	Click **Next**
6.	Enter the date graded using the dropdown provided, if this is consistent across all learners
7.	Optional: Enter the types of evidence that the learners completed, if this is consistent across all learners *We recommend entering evidence types as this simplifies the moderation process for our EQAs.*
8.	Click **Next**
9.	You will now see a page for the first learner (their name will be stated in bold at the top of the page); the table will contain any dates or evidence types entered in the previous step
10.	Input a grade for each outcome
11.	Input the date graded (if not entered previously)
12.	Indicate whether the learner has been internally verified for the unit *This will allow your EQA to select an appropriate sample if needed for the unit.*
13.	Click **Next**
14.	Continue grading learners as per steps 10 to 13 *At the top of the page you will see a 'Grading Progress' heading, which shows you how many learners are registered on this unit and how many you have graded so far.*
15.	Once you have graded all of the learners on the unit you will see a 'success' page with the option to **Bulk Grade Another Unit**; if you do not see a 'success' page, the grades have not been successfully updated

How to generate and view reports

The RSL administration site can generate reports, which give an overview of the progress of learner registrations.

Steps for generating and viewing reports

1.   Select **Reports** from the user dropdown menu

2.   This will show you various options for generating reports:

- **Certificate** — This lists all certificated learner registrations and units for the chosen assessment year (for final end-of-year results use the Validated Learner Registrations report)
- **Internal Verification** — This lists the total number of internally verified units and the percentage of learners for each unit which have been internally verified
- **Learner Registrations** — This lists all non-withdrawn learners registered for the given assessment year, including those that are not finishing their qualification in that year
- **Unit Progress** — This lists a unit's progress for the chosen assessment year, detailing all learners that are registered onto a given unit in a given year, the learning outcomes that they have completed, their unit grade (if graded), and whether they are internally verified
- **Validated Learner Registrations** — This lists all learners that have finished their qualification in the given assessment year and have had their final grade validated and finalised

3.   Click on the **View** button to the right of each report option to choose it

4.   For your chosen report, you will see a dropdown list of assessment years

5.   Choose the assessment year and click Generate Report to create the report

6.   The report will be shown as a table with all the relevant learners and information listed

7.   You can then download the report as a CSV spreadsheet file; the 'Validated Learner Registrations' report can also optionally be downloaded as a PDF document that lists all the learner qualification grades with RSL branding.

Glossary of Vocational Qualifications Terminology

General	
Vocational Qualifications (VQs)	Qualifications that are designed to prepare learners to work in a specific industry. The qualifications are predominantly internally assessed and quality assured within the centre. All qualifications are subject to moderation.
Key Dates calendar	The calendar provided annually by RSL that outlines the key tasks that need to be completed throughout the academic year to ensure centres can be certificated and when they need to be completed. The key dates calendar can be found on our main website and in the 'Key Forms/ Documents' section of the Help and Support page.
Annual Self-Assessment Review	A web form that needs to be completed annually by the quality representative for the centre, reflecting on the centre's previous performance and updating details for the current academic year.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL is defined as an opportunity for learners to present performance or accredited knowledge evidence that comes from a period prior to their registration. This is evidence of earlier learning and achievement towards part of a qualification. For example, if a learner has started a vocational qualification elsewhere (a BTEC, or the first year of a different RSL qualification etc) and wishes to transfer their previous progress.
Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS)	A process which covers the arrangements awarding organisations must have in place to scrutinise assessment judgements made by schools, colleges and training providers (centres) offering their qualifications.

Specifications	
Syllabus Document	The documents produced by RSL for each qualification. These show the units available, the combinations in which they can be taken for each pathway and how grades are calculated.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	The number of hours the learner spends being taught or supervised, rather than studying alone.
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	The number of guided learning hours plus an estimate of the number of hours a learner will spend on activities outside of the classroom, such as preparation.
Unit	Vocational qualifications are comprised of several units. Each unit covers a distinct area of competence and can be certified separately as a certificate of unit credit.
Unit Specification	The document containing information about the specified unit. Each unit has its own unit specification that contains the aims of the unit, learning outcomes, assessment and grading criteria, and guidance on the delivery and assessment of the unit.
Core Unit	Units that are mandated as needing to be passed to achieve the qualification. The core units will vary depending on the qualification and pathway chosen.

Staff roles in centre	
Quality Representative (QR)	The main point of contact between RSL and the centre. These contact details must be kept up to date. All communication from RSL will be sent to this person and they must take responsibility for disseminating information to the appropriate staff members.
Lead Internal Verifier (LIV)	The member of staff with overall accountability for the quality assurance processes in the centre
Assessor	The person(s) in the centre undertaking the assessment process. This often includes writing the assessment briefs and assessment and internal verification plan, as well as marking the work itself. The assessor and internal verifier cannot be the same person for the same unit.
Internal Verifier	The person(s) responsible for quality assuring assessment through internal verification of assessment decisions. The assessor and internal verifier cannot be the same person for the same unit.
Exams Officer	The person(s) responsible for making learner registrations.

Staff roles at RSL	
Centre Quality Assurer (CQA)	A quality specialist who will conduct the annual centre visit.
VQ Centre Monitoring and Compliance Manager	A member of head office staff who can support with questions about delivery. They will also conduct centre visits.
Standards Verifier (SV)	A subject specialist assigned to your centre to conduct your centre's moderation of learner work.
External Assessor	A subject specialist who conducts the assessment of the controlled external assessment.

Key internal processes	
Internal Assessment	The process of making judgements against specified criteria to meet national standards of competence based on evidence produced by a learner. Internal assessment is conducted within the centre.
Resubmission	The opportunity given to learners to improve upon their first submission.
Internal Verification (IV)	The process of quality assurance within a centre, which requires an internal verifier to review a sample of marked learner work against the assessment and grading criteria. The internal verifier agrees or disagrees grades and provides feedback to the assessor. Internal verification must take place on the initial submission as well as resubmissions for each unit.
Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions	A document completed by the internal verifier, which outlines their internal verification decisions and feedback to the assessor for learner work. It will also include an action plan, where applicable.
Assignment Briefs	Assignment briefs written within the centre, or adapted from RSL exemplars, to provide a summative assessment of an individual unit. Assignment briefs demonstrate what the learners must do to achieve a unit.
Internal Verification of Assignment Briefs	A document completed by the internal verifier which outlines their internal verification decisions and feedback to the assessor for assignment briefs. It would also include an action plan where applicable.
Assessment and Internal Verification Plan	A written plan of how and when you intend to assess RSL qualifications, including choice of core units, optional units/pathways etc. It includes dates for assessment, internal verification and resubmissions.
Standardisation	Refers to the practice of forming an academic consensus among the staff who are assessing and internally verifying within the centre.
Learner Declarations	A declaration signed by a learner on submission of work to declare the work is their own. For internal submissions, centres can use their own template.
Feedback Sheets	A template completed by centres which outlines the grades achieved by the learner and provides feedback on their assessment.

Moderation	
Sampling	The selection of units and learner work to provide a robust overview of the assessment and quality assurance processes within a centre.
Sample Size	The sample size refers to the number of units and the number of learners to be selected for a moderation sample. This depends on the size of qualification and the number of learners on the qualification
Partial Sample	If learners are not certificating in the current academic year, a partial sample may be taken. This could involve looking at one unit in the first year.
Summative Sample	A sample is selected of summative units, including resubmission attempts, and quality assurance paperwork. This is reviewed by your Standards Verifier and either signed off or a second sample selected.
Second Summative Sample	If the Standards Verifier cannot be confident that learners are being assessed to the national standard and/or confident that appropriate quality procedures are in place based on the sample provided, your centre will be required to produce a second sample.
Centre Visit	Each RSL centre is required to have an annual centre visit from a Centre Quality Assurer to check processes in place and provide support.
Enforced Centre Visit	A chargeable visit from RSL in response to an identified issue. Reasons for an enforced centre visit include malpractice investigations and still not meeting standards following a second sample for moderation.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

For details, refer to the RSL Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy and Special Considerations Application Form.

Appeals

Centres need to have in place their own policy and procedure to be able to deal with appeals from learners against internal assessment, verification or standardisation. Should an appeal be made about internal assessment or verification procedures this will be referred by RSL back to the centre.

For more detail, refer to the RSL VQ Complaints, Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

Complaints

RSL takes all enquiries and complaints seriously. We are committed to continuous quality improvement and in meeting the expectations of our centres and their learners as well as the requirements set by our regulators. We investigate all complaints in line with the RSL Complaints Policy.

All policies are available on our website here - https://www.rslawards.com/policies-regulations/