

The RSL How to Guides

Conducting Internal Verification of Vocational Qualifications

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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 to the assessor) vocational qualifications cannot be conducted.

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.

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 Internal Verifier?

The role of the internal verifier is to:

- Plan, track and verify assessment to ensure an adequate audit trail.
- Develop and support assessors in both their assessment practice and their career.
- Manage and improve the quality of vocational qualification delivery, including standardising assessment practice within the centre.
- Keep and maintain records of quality assurance activities which are available for auditing by the awarding body.

Assessment and Internal Verification Plan

At the start of each academic year, centres are required to produce an Assessment and Internal Verification plan where they outline dates for assessment and internal verification of assessment decisions. For more information about writing an Assessment and Internal Verification plan, please refer to [HTG Writing an Assessment and Internal Verification Plan](#). You can also find a [template](#) in the '[Templates](#)' section of the '[Help and Support](#)' site (to be renamed 'Resources.')

The Essentials of Internal Verification

Internal verification of RSL vocational qualifications should cover the following:

1. Verification of all assignment briefs produced by the centre.
2. Sampling learner work.
3. Conducting standardisation activities
4. Overseeing the continuous professional development of assessment staff.

1. Verification of all assignment briefs produced by the centre.

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

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.

One assignment brief per qualification, and the accompanying internal verification paperwork, will need to be supplied for external quality assurance prior to submission to learners, within the timescales identified in the [Key Dates Calendar](#).

Verification of assignment briefs needs to confirm:

1. The accuracy of the qualification and unit details
2. The deadlines are clear and realistic.
3. The clarity and accessibility of the language and layout used.
4. Inclusion of all assessment criteria in each task.
5. If the briefs allow the learner to demonstrate all learning outcomes of the unit.
6. If the briefs allow the learner to demonstrate all levels of attainment.
7. If the briefs allow the assessor to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainment?
8. If the briefs allow each learner to generate evidence that can be authenticated and that is valid and sufficient.
9. That it is clear what evidence is required.
10. That the briefs are comparable¹ (throughout the centre)

All assignment briefs need to contain evidence that they have been internally verified. The way in which this is recorded is at the centre's discretion.

Remember, good practice dictates that not only do assessors use the assessment criteria and suggested evidence in the specification but that they also incorporate vocational context into their assignment briefs to provide motivation for their 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](#) (to be renamed 'Resources') or click [here](#).

2. Sampling Learner Work

All centres are required to provide an internal verification sampling plan, identifying the points at which learners work will be sampled. All units must be subject to internal verification of assessment decisions.

All centres are also 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. RSL do not prescribe a particular approach for sample sizes centres as long as the strategy is robust and allows the internal

¹ Comparability refers to the consistency of assessment demands across a centre and across any level.

verifier/s to accurately agree assessment decisions and highlight any areas for development. If you wish to use the RSL External Quality Assurance Sampling Methodology for learner sizes for the sample, please find the sampling strategy at the back of the centre handbook.

The internal verification strategy should form part of the Quality Assurance policy for your centre. If you wish to use an RSL template for the [Quality Assurance policy](#) document, this is available in the '[Templates](#)' section of [Help and Support](#) and can be adapted for your centre. The internal verifier should be able to evidence what has been sampled through the completion of a report. This needs to identify²:

- Date of verification and date of assessment.
- Name of verifier and assessor.
- Evidence sampled.
- Judgement made by the internal verifier on assessor decisions.
- Actions that have to be taken before the units can be deemed as complete.
- Development points for the assessor.

It is essential that there is evidence of internal verification of assessment decisions for each unit within your sample for External Quality Assurance. Your EQA will select a number of learners who have been internally verified as part of their sample, 100% of the sample does not need to be internally verified. If internal verification is not evident within your sample, then your External Quality Assurer will be unable to agree the grading decisions within your centre and you will be required to provide an extended second sample. If there is still no evidence of internal verification provided, this could prevent certification for the learners.

For more information on the External Quality Assurance process, please refer to [HTG Submitting Work for External Quality Assurance](#) and the [Vocational Centre Handbook](#).

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](#) or click [here](#).

3. Conducting Standardisation Activities

Standardisation is:

- A way to ensure consistent assessment decisions across assessors, across learners and across the organisation.
- A way in which to support the development of assessors and teaching staff in the delivery of qualifications and inform SMART target setting and constructive feedback to learners.

Standardisation is conducted:

- through regular meetings

² This is not an exhaustive list but guidance on the minimum that any internal verification report should include.

- through professional discussion
- through internal verification sampling
- through observation of teaching and assessment practice.

The frequency and type of standardisation are dependent upon a number of issues:

- How big your centre is (i.e. how many sites etc..)
- How many assessors are in the centre
- How many internal verifiers the centre has

Standardisation can be put on in a number of different ways. You need to choose the way(s) that are right for your centre:

- Through a standardisation meeting in which good practice is discussed.
- Through marking work set outside a meeting and providing written feedback.
- Through delivery of information on best practice.
- Through observation of assessment activities and feedback.

As a basic minimum, centres should aim to ensure that each assessor has access to standardisation at least twice in any academic year. RSL will need to see evidence of your standardisation activities at least once by the date identified in the [Key Dates calendar](#).

For 20/21, RSL will provide a standardisation pack for conducting these activities.

Please refer to [HTG Conducting Standardisation](#) for more detailed information on conducting standardisation activities within your centre.

4. Overseeing the Continuous Professional Development of Staff

Each centre must decide who is responsible for the continuous professional development of the team delivering RSL qualifications. This may be the internal verifier or another department.

RSL recommends that the internal verification activity, in part, encompasses professional development activities. Assessors could be allocated, where possible, to Internal Verifiers to allow a supportive relationship in which the assessor can develop.

Areas for development must be identified through sampling activities and observation of assessment practice and an up-to-date record of must be kept by the centre. This should include assessor's CV's (or documentation to demonstrate their competence in assessment of RSL vocational qualifications), authenticated certificates and Continuous Professional Development records.

Please refer to [HTG Continuous Professional Development](#) for more detailed information on the requirements for Continuous Professional Development.

Further Reading:

RSL Vocational Centre Handbook - <https://www.rslawards.com/vocational/deliver-qualifications/>

[RSL Key Dates Calendar \(Performance Tables\)](#)

[RSL Key Dates Calendar \(Non-Performance Tables\)](#)

[HTG Submitting Work for External Quality Assurance.](#)

[HTG Writing an Assessment and Internal Verification Plan.](#)

[HTG Conducting Standardisation](#)

[HTG Continuous Professional Development](#)

FAQs for Internal Verification

1. Who can be the internal verifier for a qualification?

Ideally the internal verifier would be a subject specialist with experience in vocational qualification delivery, assessment and internal verification.

2. Does the internal verifier need to be a subject expert?

Ideally, yes. However, there may be instances where this is not possible (one-person departments, for example) so the internal verifier could be a person who is not a subject specialist but is experienced in vocational qualification delivery, assessment and internal verification.

3. What level of experience would you expect an IV to have?

This will depend upon the centre and who your staff are. Ideally, your internal verifier will be a teacher with significant experience in vocational education in the specialist subject. However, this may not always be possible. Stated above are options for who is appropriate to be an internal verifier. Members of staff who are not directly related in assessment of learners are unlikely to be appropriate internal verifiers (for example, exams officers.) The internal verifier needs to have sufficient knowledge of conducting assessment in order to be able to make judgements on the standard of the learner work and the rigour of assessment. For this reason, a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) is unlikely to be an appropriate person to conduct internal verification. Working alongside an experienced internal verifier, however, would be excellent CPD for the member of staff.

4. We are a two-person department. Can we internally verify each other's assignment briefs and assessment decisions?

Yes, as long as they are not assessing the same learners for the same unit. For example, if one assessor was assessing 327 Understanding Recording Techniques and another was assessing 328 Understanding Live Sound Design, it would be perfectly fine for them to internally verify each other's assignment briefs and assessment decisions. If they were both delivering and assessing Unit 327 Understanding Recording Techniques to the same group of learners, they would not be able to internally verify each other's assignment briefs and assessment decisions.

5. Can I internally verify my own assessment?

No. The purpose of internal verification is to quality assure assignment briefs and assessment decisions and you cannot be impartial about your own work. Internal verification must be conducted by a person who is independent of the assessment that has taken place.

7. How do I internally verify if I am a one-person department?

If you are one-person department, you will need to make appropriate provision for a separate internal verifier to conduct the internal verification for your department. The most appropriate person will depend on the staffing within your centre. If there is another member of staff with expertise in running vocational qualifications in the centre, they may be the appropriate internal verifier. If this expertise is not available in your centre, you may wish to make a partnership with a local centre who are also running RSL qualifications. You can find a map of centres currently delivering RSL qualifications on our main website here - <https://cloud.rslawards.com/vocational/delivery-centres>

8. How do I conduct standardisation if I am a one-person department?

Standardisation should be conducted between all assessors and internal verifiers delivering, assessing and internally verifying on the programme. As stated above, centres should have a minimum of one assessor and one internal verifier to run. You can also create links with local centres delivering RSL qualifications to conduct standardisation on a wider scale.

9. How often should internal verification take place?

Every unit must be subject to sample for internal verification and this must be completed in a timely manner and prior to grades being returned to learners. This time frame is down to centre policy (and should be in your Quality Assurance policy) and should be close enough to the assessment to ensure learners received grading and feedback in sufficient time to allow them to resubmit if necessary. Internal verification should also take place after resubmission. Internal verification should be planned for in the Assessment and Internal Verification plan and your External Quality Assurer will advise if the time frame is too long between assessment and internal verification.

10. How much learner work should be internally verified?

As a basic minimum, centres are required to sample every level, every qualification and every unit. As a guide every learner needs to be part of the QA process at some point, however, this need not be sampling. RSL do not prescribe a particular approach for sample sizes to centres as long as the strategy is robust and allows the internal verifier/s to accurately agree assessment decisions and highlight any areas for development. If you wish to use the RSL External Quality Assurance Sampling Methodology for learner sizes for the sample, please find the sampling strategy at the back of the centre handbook.

When selecting a sample for internal verification, it is recommended that the sample is taken from across the grade boundaries i.e. pass, merit and distinction to ensure a robust internal verification strategy.

12. Does everything have to be internally verified?

Every unit must be subject to sample for internal verification but only a sample of learners is required per unit. You do not have to sample all learners. The only exception to this is if you have a cohort of 3 or fewer, you would be expected to sample all learners to ensure a sufficient range of grades can be seen. This would still apply even if all learners had achieved the same grade.

13. Do resubmissions need to be internally verified?

Yes, a sample of the resubmissions should be internally verified.

14. How do I document that internal verification has taken place?

Your centre can design your own method of documenting that internal verification has taken place. The expectation would be that this is a separate document which the processes which have taken place, the decision made and any actions. It is important that any actions are completed and signed off to demonstrate a robust audit trail. If you wish to use an RSL template for this process, please refer to the 'Templates' section on Help and Support where there are templates for the verification of assignment briefs and assessment decisions.

15. How much feedback do I need to provide as an internal verifier?

The internal verifier should complete a report following internal verification of assignment briefs or assessment decisions. This is completed after review of each piece of evidence. In the action points/feedback section, areas of good practice and areas for professional development should be identified for the assessor and this can be fed back directly to the assessor. All feedback should be constructive in nature and support the assessor to resolve issues identified.

This system identifies all evidence collection methods that are used to prove competence and the range of these will be indicated by ticking the appropriate box. This allows easy verification of the fact that a wide range of assessment methods is being employed by the assessor as well as the validity, authenticity, sufficiency, reliability and currency of all evidence presented.

Internal Verifiers should be encouraged to provide feedback to learners as well as assessors on the progress of their portfolios in order to help maintain motivation and commitment.

16. Will I be penalised at External Quality Assurance if they see that assessment decisions were disagreed by the internal verifier?

No. Internal verification is intended to be a supportive process within the centres and if an internal verifier is recognising where there are discrepancies in assessment decisions and setting actions which are followed up, this would be considered to be a robust process.

Where this would be considered to be an issue are in the following circumstances:

- The assessment decisions are disagreed by the internal verifier but are not amended by the assessor and signed off again by the internal verifier.
- Where an assessor consistently makes incorrect assessment decisions but there is no action plan in place to support the assessor to improve their assessment practice.

Appendix 1: RSL VQ IV of Assignment Brief Form

RSL VQ IV of Assignment Brief Form

Assignment Brief Details	
Centre Name	
Centre Assessor/s	
Centre Internal Verifier/s	
Qualification Title	
Unit Number and Name	

Assignment Brief	
Questions	Please provide feedback in the boxes below recognising both good practice and areas for development
Are the Qualification title, unit number and unit name identified and accurate?	
Are the name of the centre and the assessor clearly identified on the brief?	
Are clear deadlines for assessment given? i.e. date set, deadline for submission and resubmission dates where applicable.	
Is the time frame achievable for all learners?	
Is there a relevant vocational scenario that will interest learners?	
Are the tasks written in an accessible way for learners?	
Are the assessment criteria alongside each task?	
Are the grading criteria available on the assignment brief?	

Do the tasks allow learners to achieve all levels of attainment?	
Does the brief allow each learner to generate evidence that can be authenticated?	
Is it clear what evidence needs to be submitted and how it is to be submitted?	
Are there links to related resources (if appropriate)	
Does the assignment generate evidence that is valid and sufficient?	
Are there opportunities for employer involvement identified?	
Overall, is the assignment fit for purpose?	

Overall decision (please indicate one)	
Brief agreed	
Brief not agreed	

Immediate Actions	Date to be completed
Recommendations for Future Development / Good Practice Identified	

Completed by (print name and signature and Date		
Actions signed off (where applicable) Signature and Date		

Appendix 2: RSL VQ IV of Assessment Decisions Form

RSL VQ IV of Assessment Decisions Form

Qualification Title	
Unit Number and Name	
Assessor	
Internal Verifier	
Assignment Title	

Learner Name	Overall Unit Grade	Grade Awarded per Assessment Criteria/Learning Outcome	Is the assessor's decision accurate?	Moderated grade if applicable

Comments sample, including actions arising from the sample.

Please include areas of good practice and areas for development (if relevant) If grades have not been agreed, please explain why not.

Can all the learner's work be attributed to them?

If not, please describe the issues found

Assessment Decisions	Yes	No
Can the assessment decisions be agreed?		

Action Plan

Immediate term (must be completed in order to agree the grades)				
Date	Justification	Action Required	By When?	Date Action Completed

Medium/ Longer term (are not need immediately but recommended for future development)				
Date	Justification	Action Required	By When?	Date Action Completed

Internal Verifier Name	
Signature	
Date	