

# How To Write Assignment Briefs

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## 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 external 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.

### **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. For details on other forms of employer involvement please refer to the guide [How To: Demonstrate Employer Involvement](#)

### **Related guides**

[How to Write and Assessment and IV Plan](#)

[How to Conduct Internal Assessment](#)

[How to Conduct Internal Verification](#)

[Centre Handbook](#)

### **Additional support**

Please direct any queries about writing assignment briefs to [vocational@rslawards.com](mailto:vocational@rslawards.com)

# 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.*

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**2. The name of the centre and the tutor assessing the unit**

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

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**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.*

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**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 (see page 4: How to write a vocational scenario).*

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**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.*

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**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.*

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**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.*

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**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.*

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**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.*

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**10. Evidence of quality assurance**

*This is evidence to show that the internal verifier has reviewed the assignment brief and has agreed that it is fit for purpose. This could be a simple box on the assignment brief which asks for the name of the internal verifier and includes the date when the brief was internally verified. More specific feedback on the internal verification process would be included within the internal verification documents (See page 6: How to Internally Verify Assignment Briefs).*

# How to write a vocational scenario

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 internally verify assignment briefs

## Which assignment briefs need to be internally verified?

100% of all the assignments produced in your centre need to be internally verified. They will be subject to external quality assurance by RSL.

## What steps need to be taken when internally verifying an assignment brief?

Verification of assignment briefs needs to confirm:

1. The qualification and unit details are accurate
2. The deadlines are clear and realistic
3. The language and layout used are clear and accessible
4. All assessment criteria are included within each task
5. The brief allows the learner to demonstrate all learning outcomes of the unit
6. The brief allows the learner to demonstrate all levels of attainment
7. The brief allows the assessor to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainment
8. The brief allows 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 comparable (i.e. there is consistency of assessment demand across a centre and across any level)
11. Evidence that they have been internally verified (the way in which this is recorded is at the centre's discretion)

# External quality assurance of assignment briefs

## **How many assignment briefs are subject to external quality assurance?**

One internal assignment brief per qualification delivered (with accompanying internal verification documentation) will be reviewed by an RSL External Quality Assurer (EQA) as part of the centre visit.

## **Which assignment briefs should be submitted?**

As long as one assignment brief per qualification is submitted, centres are free to choose which assignment briefs they would like to submit. Where there is more than one assessor within a centre, please try and ensure a range of assessors are looked at. If the same assignment brief as a previous year is selected, the EQA may select another to ensure all briefs are looked at for a qualification. We also recommend that assignment briefs for new units (i.e. units not previously taught within the centre) are reviewed by the EQA in order to support the centre delivery of a new unit.