



Health and Care Learning Wales

Assessment and Quality Assurance Centre Guide

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This is Version 1.2 of the Health and Care Learning Wales Assessment and Quality Assurance Centre Guide.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Scope

This document relates to the Wales Health, Social Care, and Child Care suite of qualifications is being offered by City & Guilds and WJEC working as a consortium of awarding bodies (referred to hereafter as 'the consortium'). City & Guilds/ WJEC are the sole provider of a new suite of fundable Health, Social Care, and Childcare qualifications in Wales. This suite is comprised of:

- Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Core
- Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice
- Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice and Theory
- Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice
- Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice and Theory
- Level 4: Professional Practice in Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development
- Level 4: Preparing for Leadership and Management in Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development
- Level 5: Leadership and Management of Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice
- Level 2 Health and Social Care Core
- Level 2 Health and Social Care: Practice (Adults)
- Level 3 Health and Social Care Practice (Children and Young People)
- Level 3 Health and Social Care Practice (Adults)
- Level 4 Preparing for Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care
- Level 4: Professional Practice in Health and Social Care Level 4: Preparing for Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care
- Level 4 Social Services Practitioner
- Level 4 Independent Advocacy
- Level 4 Adult Placements/Shared Lives
- Level 5: Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care: Practice

1.2 Purpose

Quality assurance is a fundamental aspect of delivering these new qualifications. It guarantees the integrity and value of assessments throughout their life cycle. This document outlines the internal and external quality assurance requirements, providing guidance and examples of best practice to support centres delivering these qualifications.

We recognise that the delivery and assessment of these new qualifications may present challenges to centres, so we want to equip centre staff with the tools to undertake effective, robust internal quality assurance and to help them understand the importance of external quality assurance, as well as the rationale that underpins it.

As well as ensuring the validity of qualifications, quality assurance provides tangible benefits to centres, including:

- improved learner experience
- raised learner achievement rates
- increased learner retention rates
- more cost effective programmes
- regulatory requirements are met
- supporting planning and monitoring and self-assessment

1.3 Qualifications

Group	Qualifications	Characteristics
A	GCE Health and Social Care and Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge based • Series based • Externally examined and externally moderated • Centre approval required – must meet all JCQ requirements • Follows WJEC standard centre approval process for General Qualifications
	GCSE Health and Social Care and Childcare	
B	Level 3 Certificate and Diploma in Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge based • Series based • Externally examined and externally moderated • Centre and qualification approval required
	Level 2 Certificate and Diploma in Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts	
C	Level 3 Health and Social Care Practice – Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice based • 100% internal assessment • External verification • Centre and qualification approval required
	Level 3 Health and Social Care Practice – Children and Young People	
	Level 2 Health and Social Care: Practice – Adults	
D	Level 2 Health and Social Care Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External assessment • Centre and qualification approval required
E	Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development Core	

Group	Qualifications	Characteristics
F	Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice and Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and Practice • Series based • External and internal assessment • External verification • Centre and qualification approval required
	Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice and Theory	
	Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice • 100% internal assessment • External verification • Centre and qualification approval required
	Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice	
G	Level 5: Leadership and Management of Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice • Knowledge • Centre and qualification approval required
	Level 4: Professional Practice in Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development	
	Level 4: Preparing for Leadership and Management in Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development	
H	Level 5: Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care: Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice • Knowledge • Centre and qualification approval required
	Level 4: Professional Practice in Health and Social Care	
	Level 4: Preparing for Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care	
	Level 4 Adult Placement/Shared Lives	
	Level 4 Independent Advocacy	
	Level 4 Social Services Practitioner	

1.4 Preparation of assessment

Below are some examples of good practice for the 'planning', 'teaching and learning' and 'assessment' stages that may be useful in supporting centre delivery of these qualifications. Centre staff can elect to use whichever approach supports the qualification they are delivering.

a) Planning stage

- Identify and read all of the relevant documentation provided by City & Guilds/WJEC for delivering the qualification.
- Involve the wider teaching team, including employers and learners.
- Take a holistic overview to the whole qualification and identify themes and content that could be covered together.
- Identify key content and concepts which need to be taught first, leading to more advanced content.
- Consider learning resources and the role of 'flipped approaches' to content coverage and extending learning outside of the classroom.
- Plan in opportunities for relevant visits and experiences which bring learning to life and reinforce the real world of work.
- Ensure sufficient time for regular formative assessment, such as mock assignments and revision are planned into the scheme of learning.
- Consider the certification windows when planning assessments.

b) Teaching and Learning stage

- Undertake initial assessment of learners.
- Use explicit instructional methods to maximise transmission of knowledge, and model application of knowledge to relevant work-based problems, methodically building understanding and skills.
- Support classroom learning with visits to the workplace, guest speakers from industry, master classes and engaging online learning content.
- Include regular formative assessments to check learners' knowledge and understanding of key content throughout.
- Differentiate learning through challenge to give less skilled learners the time to develop their knowledge and understanding and the most skilled learners' opportunities to go deeper and broader into the subject content.
- Use teaching and learning strategies which encourage learners to be curious and creative, developing their confidence and increasing independence.
- Use projects and mock assignments to check understanding and skills and promote learners' confidence with end assessments.
- Use consortium sample assessments and mark schemes as a basis for developing formative and mock assessment materials to cover the full range of content, to

prepare learners to demonstrate their understanding and skills and ensure their readiness for assessment.

c) Assessment stage

- Learners should be well prepared and confident to undertake end-point assessments to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The teaching team should reflect on and revise the plan for learning, making good use of data including learner comments and feedback.
- Centres must manage the assessment resit process where required.

Section 2: Internal Quality Assurance

2.1 Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) role

IQAs play a key role in a centre's quality assurance procedures and systems, in particular in the delivery of the internally assessed components for these qualifications. They are a vital link between us and the centre, in terms of maintaining and upholding quality standards.

IQAs ensure that:

- Markers / assessors consistently make valid decisions
- Markers / assessors make the same decisions when given the same learner work or evidence
- All learners are assessed fairly
- Assessments are administered in line with published requirements

2.2 IQA strategy

Centres must produce and maintain a written Internal Quality Assurance Strategy for these qualifications with the aim of ensuring quality is embedded at all points of the candidate journey. This helps ensure that internal quality assurance procedures provide accuracy and consistency between markers / assessors in the use and interpretation of the qualification guidance and assessment documentation.

Centres must operate and maintain explicit, written internal quality assurance procedures to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions between markers / assessors operating at the centre. Centres will recognise in their IQA strategy the nuances of different qualifications within the suite.

IQA strategies and procedures will be reviewed as part of ongoing external quality assurance monitoring for these qualifications.

2.3 Quality Assurance of internal assessments

The HSCC qualifications are assessed by externally marked knowledge exams/tests and/or internally marked assessments, subject to external quality assurance. Details of the assessment related to each of the qualifications are available in the relevant qualification handbook/specification.

The assessment and external quality assurance methods differ for the internal assessments for the Core and Practice qualifications.

Core qualifications

- The core qualification is now assessed via an MCQ only and therefore only a systems check will be required by an EQA. The centre should demonstrate quality assurance activity across this qualification to ensure a robust and valid assessment process.

Practice qualifications

- Internally assessed components are internally marked, internally quality assured and then externally verified by EQAs.

- The purpose of verification is to ensure that the delivery and assessment of these qualifications meets the required standards. EQAs will monitor the activity of all centre staff involved in the assessment and internal quality assurance process.
- EQAs will sample a range of learners, looking at IQA and assessor decisions and related assessment records. All assessment decisions must be valid, authentic and sufficient (these could include practice - pre-set tasks, Reflective log, professional discussion, records from meetings; Core – formative assessment and readiness for assessment decisions).
- Where necessary EQAs will issue improvement action plans to centres which must be acted upon before learners can certificate.

2.4 Internal standardisation

For the internally marked assessments standardisation of centre markers / assessors is vital in ensuring that centre assessment is consistent, reliable and accurate. Where centre marking is not standardised, there is an increased risk of adjustments being made at the external quality assurance stage, so it is an important process to understand and implement.

It is the IQA's role to ensure standardisation takes place and to ensure a common standard has been agreed and is being adhered to during marking.

The internal standardisation process is as follows:

- Standardisation is required for each internally marked assessment and must include all assessors / markers.
- Standardisation must always take place using complete 'live' (e.g. current on-programme) learner evidence
- Individually, assessors / markers should mark in draft a pre-selected common sample of learners' evidence, following the relevant marking guidance.
- The common sample should be chosen to give coverage of the range of performance expected across the cohort. For small cohorts (e.g. under 10) all learners should be included
- Where there are discrepancies, assessors / markers should examine these collectively and come to a consensus in interpreting the marking guidance. If there is any disagreement, IQAs have the final say.
- Markers are encouraged to keep notes during standardisation and develop shared reference material to support them in maintaining the agreed standard throughout marking.
- Once the standard has been agreed, further common pieces of evidence should be marked to confirm closer agreement has been reached.

2.5 Sampling

The accuracy of internal assessment is quality assured by sampling a range of learner work, to ensure that it meets agreed standards. How the sample is determined depends on the type of qualification and assessment.

- Core qualifications:

The core qualification is now assessed via an MCQ only and therefore only a systems check will be required by an EQA.

- **Practice qualifications:**

The internal assessment is subject to external verification by consortium EQAs, who use the **CAMERA sampling** method. This means that the sample plan must take into account each of the following:

Candidates / learners	A representative sample based on age, gender, ethnicity, Welsh language skills
Assessors	Experience and qualifications, workload, occupational experience
Methods of assessment	Observation and Assessor-led discussion / PD (depending on Level), questioning, testimony, projects (Level 4/5)
Evidence	All types of evidence (different from the required evidence specified in the Practice qualification handbooks e.g., reflective logs and activity plans)
Records	Assessment and IQA records (including initial assessment records, readiness for assessment records)
Assessment locations	Workplace assessments, college, other assessment location

CAMERA sampling plans for each centre will be agreed by the EQA, prior to the verification activity.

2.6 Supervision and authentication of internally assessed work

IQAs must ensure, on behalf of the Head of Centre, that internally assessed work is conducted in accordance with the Consortium's requirements that.

- learners sign a declaration of authenticity form to confirm that any work submitted is their own and that they attended the Core internal assessment.
- assessors confirm on the declaration of authenticity form that the work assessed is solely that of the learner concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down in the assessment documentation.

2.7 Continuing Professional Development

IQAs must guide, support and ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of team members. This CPD must include updating of occupational occupationally related knowledge and technical knowledge and competency in line with relevant regulatory and professional requirements and ensuring that good practice is maintained in relation to facilitating learning and assessment

Section 3: External Quality Assurance

3.1 Purpose of external quality assurance

The purpose of external quality assurance is to confirm that a centre's assessment decisions and internal quality assurance processes are valid, consistent and meet the requirements for these qualifications.

These monitoring activities will be undertaken by External Quality Assurers (EQAs) allocated to each centre by the consortium.

For the internally marked assessments in these qualifications centres are required to certificate learners in designated windows throughout the year. EQAs will review a sample of learner work, assessment decisions and records at each of these certification windows to verify the assessment decisions made by the centre.

The core qualifications will undergo an annual External Quality Assurer system visit.

3.2 EQA monitoring activities

Each centre will be subject to either remote or face-to-face monitoring activities (determined by the consortium using risk-based criteria), involving the sampling of assessment decisions, prior to certificating any learners. The sampling process is outlined below:

- a) Centre contacted by the consortium to advise them of a planned sampling activity. This may include a planning document to be returned by the centre, to provide certain details for each registered learner, including:
 - Name of assessor
 - Name of IQA
 - Date of IQA sample
 - Location of assessment
- b) Where applicable, the centre returns the planning document to the consortium and EQA
- c) EQA completes & sends to the centre a sample planner, identifying the agenda for the sample activity, including:
 - The qualifications and specific learners to be sampled
 - Staff to be met/contacted
 - Previous actions to be monitored (if applicable)
- d) EQA sampling activity takes place. The EQA will prepare a report on the sampling activity, which will be discussed with the centre. The centre will not however receive a copy of the report until it has been processed by the consortium.
- e) Consortium quality teams will review and process the EQA sampling report. Once processed, the report will be sent to the centre, identifying:
 - Learners that have achieved the standard and can be certificated
 - Comments on good practice and areas for improvement
 - Actions and improvements for the centre

3.3 The EQA sampling process

Consortium EQAs will undertake sampling activities for all centre

Core qualifications

- The core qualification is now assessed via an MCQ only and therefore only a systems check will be required by an EQA.

Practice qualifications

The internally marked assessments for the Practice qualifications involve learners completing set tasks, creating a portfolio, completing a reflective log and undertaking a professional discussion. EQAs will sample centre's assessment and IQA records and review a sample of learner portfolios. To achieve this, they will include the following in their sampling strategy, based on CAMERA:

- IQA decisions
- assessor decisions
- assessment locations
- assessment methods
- assessment records
- learner interviews
- assessor interviews
- IQA interviews

There must be effective measures in place to address any shortfall in assessment. All assessment decisions must satisfy the 'VAS' rule – that the evidence is Valid, Authentic, and Sufficient.

3.4 Outcome of External Quality Assurance activities

Upon completion of the external quality assurance visit, the EQA will provide a written report to the consortium. EQA judgements will be based upon the relevant quality assurance documents and qualifications/assessment guidance. Quality teams will review and process the EQA sampling report. Once processed, the report will be sent to the centre. The EQA sampling report will give clear feedback on the conduct and outcomes of the external quality assurance visit in relation to assessment, internal quality assurance and any actions or improvement points

There are three recommendations that the EQA can make on the sampling report, which require the agreement of the consortium for the qualification(s) in question:

- certification can proceed for all or some learners
- certification cannot proceed for learners as there are concerns about the assessment and quality assurance process
- EQA recommends Direct Claims Status for the centre for a particular qualification based on the published [criteria](#). Any minor or major issues as described below will be taken into account when this recommendation is being considered.

Direct Claim status is no longer applicable to core qualifications as the qualification is solely assessed through external assessment.

3.5 Issues identified through quality assurance

Minor issues

If external quality assurance reveals some minor issues with the centre's quality assurance process, the recommendation will be that some immediate remedial action is taken by the tutors and/or assessors. This may include learners resitting the assessment, once all corrective actions have taken place. In such instances the centre must ensure that the internal quality assurance process is followed again prior to the EQA conducting a further sampling activity. The second sampling activity may be undertaken remotely, and may take place within the same assessment window, or in the next available assessment window.

Minor issues are likely to be either incomplete evidence provided, or some minor errors in assessors' judgement to cover discrepancies within **one or two** marks.

Major issues

If external quality assurance reveals some major issues with the centre's quality assurance process, the recommendation will be that 'pass' results cannot be issued for learners until the written action plan is produced by the EQA is fully resolved by the centre.

The sampling report will detail the reasons for this decision and describe the action the centre may take to address the issues.

Major issues could relate to:

- Assessment decision judged to be inaccurate: an assessor applies the mark scheme incorrectly to a learners' work, or in the case of practice qualifications, has made an incorrect judgement about whether the learner has achieved, or not.
- Inconsistent assessment decisions: the EQA will sample a range of assessment decisions made by the IQA. If the evidence presented fails to reach the level defined in the mark scheme but has been judged by the assessor to have met these criteria, this raises doubts as to the reliability of assessors' assessment decisions and the internal quality assurance processes.

3.6 Withholding and releasing certification

Where issues are identified, certification may be withheld for some or all learners within a centre cohort.

The EQA may request an additional sample of learner work is sent within a specified timeframe to ensure that the issues have been addressed.

If additional evidence has been requested it can be sent electronically to the EQA.

Once the EQA is satisfied that candidates have achieved the standard to pass the assessment, they will inform the consortium and the candidates will be certificated.

3.7 Appealing an EQA decision

If a centre disagrees with an EQA decision, the centre should, in the first instance, contact the consortium. This will allow discussion on the content of the report, and in particular will enable the centre to indicate whether there is any relevant information which was not available at the time of the original decision. The consortium will then investigate and notify the centre of the outcome.

If, after this, the centre still feels that the quality assurance decision is incorrect, a formal review/appeal against the decision can be made, following the standard review/appeals procedure for the consortium.