

Quality Assurance Policy

Introduction

BSL First recognises the importance of a well-managed assessment, internal verification and moderation process to the student's learning. The following policy is to be applied to all courses offered by BSL First.

The aim of this policy is to enable BSL First to use External Verifier (EV) reports to demonstrate the company's capacity to maintain and improve upon high standards; to recognise the role of the Internal Verifier (IV) as being one that is primarily concerned with the proactive support for the Assessor, Trainee Assessor or Teacher; and to ensure that IVs are responsible for ensuring that proper systems of assessment are in place and that all Assessors and/or Trainee Assessors are using them consistently.

The Role of the Assessor

All internal assessments must follow the assessment standards/guidelines laid down by the awarding body. The role of the assessor is to assess students against agreed standards of competence using a range of innovative assessment methods.

Occupational Competence Requirements for Assessors

Assessors must have sufficient occupational competence to ensure an up-to-date working knowledge and experience of the principles and practice specified in the standards they are assessing. It is the responsibility of IVs and the Centre Manager to keep records of this evidence.

The Role of the Internal Verifier

BSL First Limited recognises that the role of the Internal Verifier is at the heart of the internal quality assurance process. It is also recognised that the Internal Verifier is key in ensuring that the assessment credibility has been maintained throughout the process and that assessors are supported and monitored.

Internal Verification of QCF NVQ Certificate and Diploma programmes

On NVQ Certificate and Diploma programmes, all new and existing staff carrying out the internal quality assurance role must have the necessary relevant qualifications, e.g. V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process.

Occupational Competence Requirements for Internal Verifiers

Internal Verifiers must have sufficient experience of having conducted assessments of the National Occupational Standards they are verifying, or in an appropriate related area.

All Internal Verifiers will have:

- Direct responsibility for the quality control of assessments and the quality assurance within the assessment centre that has been approved by the awarding body
- A sound working knowledge of assessment and verification principles as defined in the National Standards for Internal Quality Assurance.

- Either the relevant qualification for Internal Verifiers of National Standards or have a development plan indicating progress towards that qualification

All Internal Verifiers will ensure that:

- All assessors follow all regulatory guidance
- All assessors attend standardisation meetings to ensure consistency in the interpretation of the national standards and feedback to the co-ordinating Internal Verifier
- Assessments are sampled systematically to confirm the quality and consistency of decisions and feedback to assessors recorded
- Assignment briefs are checked regularly to ensure they enable students to meet identified units/elements
- Student's achievement records, unit and tracking records meet all award body requirements
- A copy of the External Verifier report is filed for open access
- Evidence of plagiarism is reported to the awarding body

Sampling Strategy

All internally assessed programmes will require a sampling plan, which reflects the needs of assessors and is agreed with the awarding body, if necessary.

Sampling is the reviewing of assignments/assessments and assessor's judgements at a point in time through observation or diverse evidence. In determining the strategy, Internal Verifiers will need to consider the following aspects:

- Current awarding body requirements
- Overall risk factor of assessor
- The assessor's experience - new assessors will require a higher level of sampling to ensure accuracy of assessment
- Assessment/satellite centres
- Cohorts of students
- Problem areas identified through previous sampling and EV reports
- Training needs
- Assessor workload

Sampling Assessments

Internal verification for all internally assessed programmes must be on going. Sampling must not be based exclusively on portfolio evidence alone. An annual internal verification schedule must be produced identifying which assessors, students, units, types of evidence and locations will be verified.

Assessments should be:

- Valid: evidence is relevant to standards and assessment or grading criteria
- Authentic: produced by the Student
- Sufficient: enough evidence to meet the standards
- Reliable: consistent reflection of Student's performance over time

The basic requirement is that the work of all students should be sampled before his or her certificate is requested. Best practice is that the Internal Verifier achieves this thorough planning, which must at least in part include observing assessor/students assessments.

The Internal Verifier must sample an assessor's decisions over all units and all assessment methods within the qualification undertaken over an agreed time period.

The Internal Verifier must record all sampling carried out in sufficient detail to be able to justify the decision made.

The Internal Verifier must ensure that a range of assessment methods is sampled.

Supporting New Assessors

All assessments carried out by unqualified assessment staff must be counter-signed by a competent qualified assessor during the interim period. The Internal Verifier must not countersign this.

It is vital that a new assessor must have a clear action plan for completion in the shortest possible time scales. This should be recorded and carried out as part of the appraisal process after the first four weeks of employment at the latest.

New assessors should be given a coherent and structured induction that should involve BSL First management.

It is essential for NVQ courses that any new assessor is enrolled/registered on an accredited A1 Assessor course, if the relevant qualifications are not held.

The IV must ensure that the trainee assessor is allocated suitable NVQ candidates so that the trainee assessor can collect the evidence for their A1 qualification.

The IV must ensure that the trainee assessor's assessment decisions are included in the standardisation activities

Standardisation Activity

It is recommended that at least one standardisation meeting per annum be carried out and recorded with programme teams.

The standardisation activity can take different forms but must involve students' evidence – either products or portfolios being reviewed by different assessors, or the assessors could compare the evidence they have collected for a particular unit. This should take place in groups of 4-5 assessors (if available) and IVs and could take place in a meeting or in a workshop.

Continuous Professional Development

BSL First requires that Assessors and Internal Verifiers provide evidence of continuous professional development. This must involve **at least two** of the following activities:

- Work placement
 - Job shadowing
 - Technical skill update training
 - Attending relevant courses
 - Studying for Learning and Development Units
 - Study related to job role
 - Collaborative working with awarding bodies
 - Examining
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- Qualification development work
- Other appropriate activity agreed with the awarding body

Record Keeping

The Assessors and Internal Verifiers are collectively responsible for ensuring that the following records are kept:

- Assessor CVs
- Relevant qualifications
- Records of assessor workloads (if applicable)
- Accurate registered student numbers
- Student application forms
- Student Awarding Body registration details
- Locations of satellite centres with current list of assessors and IVs
- Candidate application forms

Portfolio Retention

For all NVQ programmes, the NVQ Code of Practice stipulates that copies of all students' portfolios must be kept for 3 years. It is the Internal Verifier's responsibility to confirm the requirements of the awarding body and to ensure appropriate records are kept and stored safely.

All portfolios will be kept in a secure location at the centre for three years. Students will not be able to access portfolios during this time.

Once the three-year period has lapsed, BSL First will notify students that the portfolio is ready for collection.

If the student has not responded within six months then the portfolio will be destroyed.