

1.0 Policy

To deliver its strategic policy aims of excellence in: Quality of Practice, the Learner Experience, Stakeholder Relationships, Innovation and Cost Management, Advance Assessments ensures that assessment of Learners taking its qualifications is of high quality, including being valid, reliable and attributable to the identified Learner. AA and recognised Centres that set or deliver assessments for Learners registered for AA qualifications must operate within this policy and procedure and in compliance with Ofqual rules and conditions, particularly:

Condition E4: Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose

Condition G1: Setting the assessment

Condition G2: Language of the assessment

Condition G3: Use of language and Stimulus Materials

Condition G4: Maintaining confidentiality of assessment materials

Condition G5: Registration of Learners

Condition G6: Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments

Condition G7: Arrangements for Special Consideration

Condition G8: Completion of the assessment under the required conditions

Condition G9: Delivering the assessment

Where qualifications are Higher Education (UK) qualifications, Advance Assessments (AA) will also comply with the HE Quality AA Code, particularly:

Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment

AA recognised Centres are subject to the AA Centre Assessment Standard Scrutiny Policy and Procedure AA_OP_26.

Quality of assessment. AA recognises the following 'common criteria' as being measures for the quality of assessment:¹

- Validity
- Reliability
- Comparability
- Minimising bias
- Manageability

AA also recognises the following criteria as being further measures for the quality of assessment:

- Authentication
- Sufficiency

Definitions from Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition

[Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section J - Interpretation and definitions - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (Accessed 12/06/2024)

1.1.1 Adverse Effect

¹ Paul E. Newton (2017) *An approach to understanding validation arguments*. Ofqual

An act, omission, event, incident, or circumstance has an Adverse Effect if it –

- (a) gives rise to prejudice to Learners or potential Learners, or (b) adversely affects –
 - (i) the ability of the awarding organisation to undertake the development, delivery or award of qualifications in a way that complies with its Conditions of Recognition,
 - (ii) the standards of qualifications which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, or
 - (iii) public confidence in qualifications.

1.1.2 Authentication

A process under which evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment is confirmed as having been generated by that Learner (or identified and confirmed as being that Learner's contribution to group work) and as being generated under the required conditions.

1.1.3 Centre

An organisation undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to Learners on behalf of an awarding organisation. Centres are typically educational institutions, training providers, or employers.

1.1.4 Component

A discrete part of a qualification which –

- (a) focuses on specific areas of the knowledge, skills and understanding assessed for the qualification, and
- (b) has a specific set of criteria against which Learners' performance will be differentiated.

1.1.5 Comparability

Generating assessment outcomes that are comparable in standards between assessments within a qualification, between similar qualifications, with other awarding organisations, and over time. Where an assessment has equivalent forms then it is important to ensure comparability of outcomes. There are two reasons for this –

- (a) To reach fair comparisons about the attainment of Learners: It is impossible to produce different forms with exactly the same content and statistical specifications (such as the level of difficulty or demand on the Learner). Therefore, a requirement to ensure comparability of outcomes makes sure the level of difficulty or demand of the test forms is taken into account when setting standards so that Learners taking the different forms can be compared fairly, and
- (b) To ensure that the outcomes can be used as a measure of standards: Outcomes from different forms of the same test must be comparable if they are to be used to measure standards over time. Both expert judgements and statistical procedures such as test equating can be used to ensure comparability of outcomes

from different forms of the same test. It is, however, important to ensure that assessments are not so similar that they become predictable, as this would be a threat to Validity.

1.1.6 Learner

A person who is registered to take a qualification and to be assessed as part of that qualification.

1.1.7 Level of Demand

A person who is registered to take a qualification and to be assessed as part of that qualification.

1.1.8 Moderation

A particular form of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny through which the marking of assessments by Centres is monitored to make sure it meets required standards and through which adjustments to a Centre's marking are made, where required, to ensure that results are based on the required standard. Moderation takes place before final results are issued under Condition H6.1.

1.1.9 Reasonable Adjustment

An adjustment made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

1.1.10 Recognition of Prior Learning

The –

(a) identification by an awarding organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a Learner –

- (i) prior to that Learner taking a qualification which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, and
- (ii) which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and
- (iii) recognition by an awarding organisation of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a Learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded

1.1.11 Reliability

Reliability is about consistency and so concerns the extent to which the various stages in the assessment process generate outcomes which would be replicated were the assessment repeated. Reliability is a necessary condition of Validity, as it is not possible to demonstrate the Validity of an assessment process which is not Reliable. The Reliability of an assessment is affected by a range of factors such as the sampling of assessment tasks and inconsistency in marking by human Assessors.

1.1.12 Stimulus Materials

Materials provided to the Learner before or at the time of the assessment which facilitate the Learner's demonstration of his or her knowledge, skills and understanding. Tasks in an assessment may relate directly to the materials and a Learner may make direct

reference to the materials in completing the assessment. Such materials may include, for example, charts, diagrams, pictures, quotations or machinery.

1.1.13 Users of qualifications

Persons who have a legitimate interest in the qualification or type of qualification made available by the awarding organisation, which may include –

- (a) Learners and Learners' representatives,
- (b) Centres,
- (c) Teachers,
- (d) employers and employers' representatives,
- (e) further and higher education establishments,
- (f) schools,
- (g) government departments and agencies, and
- (h) professional bodies.

1.1.14 Validity

The extent to which evidence and theory support the interpretation that the assessment outcomes meet their intended uses.

The evaluation of Validity involves the development of a clear argument to support the proposed interpretation of the outcomes and as a consequence the intended uses of the assessment. The Validity argument should be built on statements of the proposed interpretation and supporting evidence collected from all stages of the assessment process.

1.1.15 Other Definitions used by AA in this policy and procedure

1.1.15.1 **Differentiation.** The ability of an assessment process to indicate a Learner's performance relative to a given performance standard.

1.1.15.2 **Manageability.** The quality of assessments being simple to administer by a Centre. The less burden an assessment places on a Centre, the more manageable it is.

1.1.15.3 **Minimising bias.** The reduction of any factors (systematic or random), other than those systematically required for assessment differentiation, that may impact on a Learner's performance in an assessment.

1.1.15.4 **Sampling.** The activity of scrutinising a selection of Learner responses in an assessment to establish the qualities of the assessment overall.

1.1.15.5 **Sufficiency.** The amount of valid evidence provided by a Learner in an assessment that is required to provide a reliable quality of assessment.

2.0 Procedure

2.1 The AA Centres and Assessment Manager is responsible for implementation of this procedure.

2.2 **Setting the assessment:** When setting an assessment for a qualification AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications, will ensure the content of the assessment is:

2.2.1 Fit for purpose

2.2.2 Appropriate for the method of assessment chosen

- 2.2.3 Consistent with the specification for that qualification
- 2.2.4 Has a Level of Demand for Learners that is consistent:
 - 2.2.4.1 Across all options as to tasks that may be completed by a Learner for the purposes of that assessment
 - 2.2.4.2 With the Level of Demand of any other assessment which may be completed by a Learner as an alternative to the assessment, for the purpose of the qualification
 - 2.2.4.3 With the Level of Demand of previous assessments and of any specimen assessment materials which AA has published in relation to the qualification.
- 2.2.5 Complies with AA specifications for authoring given in the appropriate protocol. Protocols will be added to where new assessment methods are developed. Protocols:
 - 2.2.5.1 Assessment Materials Writing Protocol
 - 2.2.5.2 Online Multiple Choice Examination Development Protocolv3

This will be achieved by

- 2.2.6 Only employing Qualification Writers and Independent Reviewers that meet AA's Person Specifications and have passed the relevant AA Capability Appraisal.
- 2.2.7 Requiring each assessment instrument to undergo an Independent Verification process according to AA policy and procedure AA_OP_05.
- 2.2.8 Requiring assessment materials to undergo Independent Review by a qualified AA Independent Reviewer on a risk-based frequency.
- 2.2.9 Regularly reviewing qualification (and associated assessments) performance according to AA policy and procedure AA_OP-07.

2.3 Assessment documentation: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications will produce a written document for each assessment it sets that specifies clear and unambiguous criteria against which Learners' levels of attainment will be differentiated. The language of the assessment will be:

- 2.3.1 English
- 2.3.2 Where Learners have a Reasonable Adjustment, a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language.

2.4 Use of language and Stimulus Materials: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications use only appropriate language and Stimulus Materials. Language and Stimulus Materials are only appropriate if they-

- 2.4.1 Enable Learners to demonstrate their level of attainment.
- 2.4.2 Require knowledge, skills and understanding that are required for the qualification.
- 2.4.3 Are clear and unambiguous (unless ambiguity forms part of the assessment).
- 2.4.4 Are not likely to cause offence to Learners.

In considering whether language and Stimulus Materials for an assessment are appropriate AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must take into account in particular:

- 2.4.5 The age of the Learners who may reasonably be expected to take the qualification
- 2.4.6 The level of the qualification
- 2.4.7 The objective of the qualification
- 2.4.8 The knowledge, skills and understanding assessed for the qualification

AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no assessment for a qualification which it makes available contains language or Stimulus Materials which could lead a group of Learners who share a common attribute or circumstance to experience – because of that attribute or circumstance – a unreasonable disadvantage in the level of attainment that they are able to demonstrate in the assessment.

This will be achieved through:

- 2.4.9 Only employing Qualification Writers and Independent Reviewers that meet AA's Person Specifications and have passed the relevant AA Capability Appraisal.
- 2.4.10 Requiring each assessment instrument to undergo an Independent Verification process according to AA policy and procedure AA_OP_05.
- 2.4.11 Requiring assessment materials to undergo Independent Review by a qualified AA Independent Reviewer on a risk-based frequency.
- 2.4.12 Reviewing assessments against current Ofqual guidance for designing and developing accessible assessment. Available at: [Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section D - General requirements for regulated qualifications - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook-general-conditions-of-recognition-section-d-general-requirements-for-regulated-qualifications-guidance)
- 2.4.13 Regularly reviewing qualification (and associated assessments) performance according to AA policy and procedure AA_OP-07.

2.5 Maintaining confidentiality of assessment materials: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must maintain the confidentiality of assessments that it sets through a policy and procedure that is duly followed. For AA this is specified in policy and procedure AA_OP_22 Assessment Confidentiality. Centres are required to commit to maintaining confidentiality at the time of their AA recognition, in accordance with policy and procedure AA_OP_02, Centre recognition and ongoing review.

2.6 Registration of Learners. Each Learner taking an AA qualification must be registered with AA in a way that permits the Learner to be clearly and uniquely identified. To assure this AA operates a Learner Admission and Registration policy and procedure, AA_OP_13.

2.7 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must make arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments to be made when setting and delivering an assessment through a policy and procedure that is duly followed. For AA making Reasonable Adjustments when delivering an assessment is specified in policy and procedure AA_OP_04 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. Recognised Centres are required to demonstrate commitment to a Reasonable Adjustments policy and procedure at the time of their AA recognition.

2.8 Arrangements for Special Consideration: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must make arrangements for Special Considerations to be considered through a policy and procedure that is duly followed. For AA this is specified in policy and procedure AA_OP_04 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. Recognised Centres are required to demonstrate commitment to a Special Consideration policy and procedure at the time of their recognition.

2.9 Completion of the assessment under the required conditions: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must take all reasonable steps to ensure that, in relation to qualifications that it makes available:

- 2.9.1 Evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment is generated by that Learner (or includes evidence generated by that Learner as a contribution to group work).
- 2.9.2 Where an assessment is required to be completed under specified condition, Learners complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration require alternative conditions).

To ensure that all qualified AA assessors and recognised Centre assessors deliver compatible assessments under the required conditions, assessment protocols are available on the AA online platform. These are added to, by qualified Independent Reviewers, to accommodate new assessment types as they are developed.

Assessments must take place in accordance with the respective protocol.

Assessment protocols:

- 2.9.3 How to conduct a Learner Presentation with Questions and Answers Protocol
- 2.9.4 How to conduct a Learner Professional Discussion Protocol
- 2.9.5 How to conduct an online Multiple Choice Examination Protocol

2.10 Delivering the assessment: AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must ensure that every assessment for a qualification is delivered effectively and efficiently and the assessment and its content:

- 2.10.1 Is fit for purpose.
- 2.10.2 Permits Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them.
- 2.10.3 Allows each Learner to generate evidence which can be Authenticated.
- 2.10.4 Allows each specified level of attainment detailed in the specification to be reached by a Learner who has attained the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 2.10.5 Allows assessors to be able to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainments by Learners.
- 2.10.6 Has content appropriate for the method of assessment chosen.
- 2.10.7 Is consistent with the specification for that qualification.

This will be achieved through:

- 2.10.8 Only employing Qualification Writers and Independent Reviewers that meet AA's Person Specifications and have passed the relevant AA Capability Appraisal.
- 2.10.9 Requiring each assessment instrument to undergo an Independent Verification process according to AA policy and procedure AA_OP_05.
- 2.10.10 Requiring assessment materials to undergo Independent Review by a qualified AA Independent Reviewer on a risk-based frequency.
- 2.10.11 Regularly reviewing qualification (and associated assessments) performance according to AA policy and procedure AA_OP_07.

- 2.11 **Appeals:** AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must operate an appeals procedure. For AA this is AA_OP_03
- 2.12 **Complaints:** AA, or a recognised Centre setting assessments for Learners on AA qualifications must operate a complaints procedure. For AA this is AA_OP_23.

3.0 Forms/Documents associated with this procedure

- 3.1 Form AA_OP_30A Qualification Independent Reviewer Report
- 3.2 Form AA_OP_30B Qualification Review and Compliance Meeting Agenda and Record
- 3.3 Ofqual Level requirements (including level descriptors). Available at [Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section E - Design and development of qualifications - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 3.4 The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies 2nd Edition Updated February 2024. Available at: [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(qaa.ac.uk\)](#)
- 3.5 AA Appeals Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_03)
- 3.6 AA Assessment Internal Verification and Moderation Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_05)
- 3.7 AA Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_07)
- 3.8 AA Assessment Complaints Policy and Procedure (AA_OP_23)
- 3.9 AA Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny policy and procedure (AA_OP_26)
- 3.10 AA Recognition of Prior Learning policy and procedure (AA_OP_31)
- 3.11 AA Assessment Materials Writing Protocol
- 3.12 AA Online Multiple Choice Examination Development Protocolv3
- 3.13 AA Protocol-How to conduct a Learner Presentation with Questions and Answers
- 3.14 AA Protocol-How to conduct a Learner Professional Discussion
- 3.15 AA Protocol-How to conduct an online Multiple Choice Examination

4.0 Document Revision History

4.1 Following improvement identifications and review with colleagues, the Centres and Assessment Manager is responsible for revisions of this policy/procedure and completion of the table below, before issue of the amended policy/procedure.

Date (most recent first)	Revision(s)	Reason for revision(s)	New Version Number	Approved by (Initial)