

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 prioritises quality in qualification assessment. This policy and procedure defines how AA will scrutinise assessment that is carried out by third party Centres recognised to deliver AA qualifications. This will ensure Advance Assessments maintains the integrity of its qualifications and complies with Ofqual conditions of recognition, particularly:

Condition C2: Arrangements with the Centres

Condition H2: Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny where an assessment is marked by a Centre

Condition H6: Issuing results

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

To assure the quality of assessment for Users of AA qualifications, AA recognised Centres are required to set and deliver assessments in accordance with AA Policy and Procedure AA_OP_31, Setting and Delivering an Assessment.

Protection of learners. AA will always consider the achievement of all Learners, their ambitions and development goals and will hold these as important concerns when making decisions about the quality of qualification assessment. AA aims to work with Centres to prioritise the protection of Learners from Adverse Effects and asks for a similar commitment from Centres.

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

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 –

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

- (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 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.

1.1.8 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.

1.1.9 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 Senior Officer

A director or senior executive officer of the awarding organisation or, where the awarding organisation is not a limited company, a person holding a position of equivalent status within the organisational structure of the awarding organisation.

1.1.11 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.

1.1.12 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.

1.1.13 Other Definitions used by AA in this policy and procedure

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

1.1.13.2 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.

1.1.13.3 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.

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

1.1.13.5 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 **Review of AA Centre Assessment Standard Scrutiny (AA CASS) policy and procedure.** The AA CASS policy and procedure will be regularly reviewed within and according to policy and procedure AA_OP_12: Policy and Procedure Review and Update **and** as part of each General Practice Review Meeting, held according to policy and procedure: AA_OP_20: General Practice Review Meetings. In the event of any incident that may have Adverse Effects on any stakeholder, or where an opportunity to reduce assessment risk is identified, an Extraordinary General Practice Meeting may be held. The AA CASS policy and procedure will also be updated following an expansion of the scope of regulated qualifications (other than EPAs) offered by AA with a Qualification Assessment Risk Level rating table inserted into this procedure for the new qualification(s) (Section 3 of this policy and procedure).

2.3 Centre assessment standards are scrutinised following a risk based approach that must include: annual reviews of a Centre, sampling of assessment instruments, sampling of marked Learner submissions and a review of the training, competence and independence of all parties involved in assessment. Moderation of marking may also be included in the scrutiny, dependent on both the Qualification and Centre risk levels.

2.4 **Annual review of Centres.** A Centre Assessments Standards Scrutiny (CASS) review is included in the regular Centre Recognition and Review Meeting, held in accordance with policy and procedure AA_OP_02, Centre Recognition and ongoing Review.

2.5 **Review of each qualification.** A review of marking standards, performance and standardisation of assessment is held in each Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation meeting, held according to policy and procedure AA_OP_07.

2.6 **Moderation.** Moderation may be required for assessments conducted by an AA recognised Centre. The sampling frequency required by AA is determined in the CASS review, held as part of the Centre Recognition and Review meeting held according to AA_OP_02 Centre Recognition and ongoing Review. Guidelines for moderation are given in Policy and Procedure AA_OP_05 Assessment Internal Verification and

Moderation. In the absence of Centre-specific guidelines, the requirements set out in this document should be adhered to.

2.7 Incorrect marking. Where incorrect results have been issued, Policy and Procedure AA_OP_24 Incorrect Results Discovery will be invoked and records of this held on the Centre's performance records area on the AA online assessment platform. These will be included in a Centre's review and allocation of a Risk Level.

2.8 Qualification risk level. Section 3 of this procedure provides details of the risk level assigned to each assessment within each qualification that AA offers. Factors that are considered when determining an assessment qualification risk level include:

- 2.8.1 The qualification being substantially different in type or content from qualifications previously offered by AA.
- 2.8.2 The professional standard, including the IfATE occupational standard, for a qualification having changed.
- 2.8.3 AA's analysis of data and evidence indicating that a particular approach is of the appropriate quality.

2.9 Determination of Centre Assessment Standard Scrutiny requirements by AA.

Factors that AA uses to determine the approach for a Centre's Assessment Standards Scrutiny include:

- 2.9.1 The typical course of study for the qualification – for example, whether it is sessional, whether it is roll-on/roll-off, and whether there are fixed start or end points for the qualification.
- 2.9.2 The typical duration of the course of study – for example, the number of semesters a Learner typically takes to complete the qualification.
- 2.9.3 The profile of a typical Learner for the qualification and type of Centre delivering it – for example, whether these are school/college students, or employees taking qualifications through a training provider or employer. Learner profiles considered will exclude protected characteristics but include recognition of Reasonable Adjustments required due to disability.
- 2.9.4 The number of Components in the qualification and the number of these that are marked by a Centre.
- 2.9.5 The typical evidence generated by a Learner in assessments for the qualification – for example, a portfolio of evidence, a presentation or a task/assignment.
- 2.9.6 The assessment model – for example, whether Components are graded or marked.
- 2.9.7 The number of Learners taking the qualification – the overall number and whether these are following the same course of study, or are part of different intakes per semester.
- 2.9.8 The potential for a Learner to employ Artificial Intelligence as an aid where an assessment is designed to assess knowledge.
- 2.9.9 The current Risk Level allocated to a Centre following a Centre review in accordance with policy and procedure AA_OP_02 Centre Recognition and ongoing Review.
- 2.9.10 AA's experience with Centre controls for similarly structured qualifications and assessments.

2.10 Areas in which AA may put controls in place for a Centre:

- 2.10.1 The frequency and type of monitoring activities AA undertakes in respect of the Centre.
- 2.10.2 The timing of such monitoring activities.

- 2.10.3 The number of Components sampled during monitoring activities – the number of Components and which Components are sampled, for example whether these relate to Learners that have started the course of study at different times.
- 2.10.4 The time-period over which all Components for a qualification are sampled – for example, whether every Component is sampled every year.
- 2.10.5 The number of Learners sampled during each assessment for each Component.
- 2.10.6 The controls considered for imposition are influenced by:
- 2.10.6.1 Whether sample checking involves Learners that have already received results for their qualification or only those that have yet to receive results.
 - 2.10.6.2 Whether all or some Learners are sampled prior to receiving results.
 - 2.10.6.3 The intended outcome of the control measure – for example, whether it would be likely to inform future changes to processes, require reassessment of Learners that have not yet received results, or lead to revocation of certificates that have already been issued.
- 2.11 CASS decisions.** Decisions relating to a Centre's recognition to set and deliver assessments will be made according to both the risk level of the assessment and the risk level assigned to the Centre within policy and procedure to AA_OP_02 Centre Approval and Ongoing Review.
- 2.12 Sampling strategy.** The scope and frequency of Centre marked assignments to be sampled by AA is determined by a review of both the specific qualification assessment risk level and the risk level of the Centre concerned. A table in section 3 of this procedure describes the options available for each assessment within a qualification. Where there is considered to be a high risk, AA may provide the assessment service. This is a chargeable service.
- 2.13 Sanctions.** Section 3 of this procedure provides details of the risk level associated for each assessment within each qualification that AA offers. Decisions relating to Centre sanctions will be made according to both the risk level of the assessment described in this procedure and the risk level assigned to the Centre, according to AA policy AA_OP_02 Centre Approval and Ongoing Review.
- 2.14 Notifying Centres of CASS decisions.** Centres will be notified of CASS decisions within 10 working days of decisions being made in the approval meeting described in AA policy AA_OP_02 Centre Approval and Ongoing Review. Centres may choose to use AA to conduct AA qualification assessment. This is a chargeable service.
- 2.15 CASS Records.** The Centres and Assessment Manager will hold and maintain records of scrutiny standards applied by AA in the area dedicated to the Centre on the AA online assessment platform. Records of decisions and communications regarding each decision relating to a specific Centre will be held for the duration of AA's relationship with the relevant Centre and for ten years after termination of a relationship with a Centre. Records will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) before disposal.
- 2.16 Appeals against Centre Assessments Standards Scrutiny decisions.** Centres may appeal against the level of scrutiny applied to a centre by AA by following the AA Appeals Policy and Procedure AA_OP_03.

- 2.17 **Complaints.** Where any stakeholder, including a learner, has a complaint about the way AA has handled a withdrawal, please contact AA on support@advanceassessments.co.uk Complaints will be addressed following the AA Complaints procedure: AA_OP_23

3.0

3.1 Qualification: Improvement Practitioner Higher Certificate L4 – Risk Level rating table

Qualification Number	Module/unit name (Component)	Level	Credit	Assessment method 1 (%)	Method 1 risk level	Assessment Available from AA?	Assessment method 2 (%)	Method 2 risk level	Assessment Available from AA?
	Ethics, sustainability and compliance	4	10	1 hr Objective Response EXAM *	L	YES	1 hr Constructed Response EXAM *	L	YES
	Describing and sampling data	4	10	1 hr Objective Response EXAM *	L	YES	1 hr Constructed Response EXAM *	L	YES
	Developing individuals and teams	4	10	2,000 word written assignment	H	YES		H	
	Process improvement	4	10	2,000 word written assignment	H	YES		H	
	Managing improvement and change projects	4	10	1 hr Objective Response EXAM *	L	YES	1 hr Constructed Response EXAM *	L	YES
	Statistical process control	4	10	1 hr Objective Response EXAM *	L	YES	1 hr Constructed Response EXAM *	L	YES
	Design of experiments	4	10	1 hr Objective Response EXAM *	L	YES	1 hr Constructed Response EXAM *	L	YES
	Measurement systems analysis	4	10	1 hr Objective Response EXAM *	L	YES	1 hr Constructed Response EXAM *	L	YES
	Applied improvement solutions	4	40	4,000 word project portfolio	M	YES	20 min presentation and 30 min professional discussion	M	YES

Key: L= Low; M = Medium; H = High *Two 1 hour exams may be combined as a single 2 hour exam

4.0 Forms/Documents associated with this procedure

- 4.1 Policy and Procedure AA_OP_02 Centre Recognition and Ongoing Review
- 4.2 Policy and Procedure AA_OP_05 Assessment Internal Verification and Moderation
- 4.3 Policy and Procedure AA_OP_07 Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation
- 4.4 Policy and Procedure AA_OP_12 Policy and Procedure Review and Update Procedure
- 4.5 Policy and Procedure AA_OP_20 General Practice Review Meetings
- 4.6 Policy and Procedure AA_OP_24 Incorrect Result Discovery

5.0 Document Revision History

5.1 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)