

INTERNAL VERIFICATION



Guidance Notes

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Internal Verification is a quality management process. Internal Verifiers are responsible for the management of the assessment process to ensure that assessment consistently meets national standards.

Rigorous internal verification relies upon a number of integrated activities, which should be specified in the Centre's quality management documentation. There should be a written IV procedure, which has been approved by senior management, and its implementation monitored and evaluated to demonstrate senior management commitment to the quality assurance of N/VQs within the centre.

Failure to fulfil internal verification commitments could lead to the withdrawal of Centre approval, or at least to the withdrawal of Direct Claims Status. The following checklist will be helpful in ensuring that all relevant information is included in your IV procedure.

IV PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Does the written procedure include:

Reference to the N/VQ Code of Practice and all internal policies/procedures in relation to N/VQ implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure of the training/assessment team indicating roles and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description of the physical structure of the centre and the location of assessors and IVs	<input type="checkbox"/>
• assessors located at satellites	<input type="checkbox"/>
• IV(s) responsible for each satellite	<input type="checkbox"/>
• arrangements for visiting/monitoring candidates at work placements:	
by assessors	<input type="checkbox"/>
by IVs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competence of staff to practise as IVs and assessors and CPD plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrangements for informing OCR of staffing changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV responsibilities for registration and certification including direct claims, where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
New assessor induction programme and mentoring arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact details for all assessors and IVs in order to facilitate networking between assessors and in case of emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counter-signature arrangements for trainee assessors and IVs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample signatures of assessors and IVs for reference by EV	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum ratios of assessors to candidates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum ratios of internal verifiers to assessors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Method for allocation of candidates to assessors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access arrangements by assessors to the IV(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
• IV 'surgeries'	<input type="checkbox"/>
• frequency of team meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
• standardisation meetings arrangements/frequency/focus	<input type="checkbox"/>
• satellite visit schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV Sampling strategy (see page 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan/schedule of observations of assessors by IV(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate support and progress tracking systems and arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrangements for identification of special assessment requirements of candidates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equal opportunities monitoring arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation/review arrangements including frequency of reports to senior managers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pattern of EV visits, if known	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreed procedures to prepare for EV visits	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preparation Checklist for Systems Audit

Prior Arrangements

- Relevant Senior Manager(s) eg Centre Quality Manager, Health and Safety Manager, Centre Co-ordinator; selected IV, Assessor and Candidate notified of required attendance for the visit
- Dates of last and next EV visits to hand
- Suitable room reserved for use by OCR Systems Auditor

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

All policies and procedures relating to NVQ, signed by appropriate Senior Managers including:

- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- Satellite Centres (if appropriate)
- Staff Development
- Countersigning and Mentoring (this may be incorporated in the Assessment and Internal Verification Policy)
- Assessment and Internal Verification
- DCS (this maybe incorporated in Assessment and Internal Verification Policy)
- Archiving and Storage
- Review and Evaluation (including analysis of achievement)
- Appeals

Evidence from schemes to support above, including:

- Analysis of access to assessment (including candidate achievement)
- Full details of all satellite addresses and assessment locations
- Ratio of candidates to assessors for all schemes
- Ratio of assessors to IVs for all schemes
- Details of candidate numbers plus identified assessors and locations for all schemes
- Self assessment records
- Staff development programmes and their evaluation/review

CANDIDATE SUPPORT - evidence showing implementation of:

- Candidate Induction
- Candidate Training Needs Analysis/Plans
- Candidate Assessment Plans
- Assessment Recording Documentation

INTERNAL VERIFICATION - evidence showing implementation of:

- Detailed Internal Verification Strategy
- Internal Verification documentation/records of activity
- Planned IV activity
- Records of candidate interviews and assessor observations
- Records of assessment standardisation meetings and assessor update meetings
- Evaluation of IV activity
- Any concerns from NVQ personnel to be raised with EV
- Any requests for clarification of the OCR SA Procedure
- Discuss implications of any actions arising from this, or previous, visits.

Preparation Checklist for EV Visit

Prior Arrangements

- Suitable room reserved for use by OCR EV
- Requested assessors, candidates and IVs notified of required attendance at visit
- Updates and feedback to OCR including any recommendations to the EV are gathered
- Names of all candidates for each qualification to be externally verified by this EV, together with a summary of candidates' progress and achievements to date

Meeting with Centre Co-ordinator

- Details of centre staffing structure for all relevant NVOs at all relevant assessment locations/satellites - indication of named candidates allocated to assessors; assessors to IVs; the accountable IV for each qualification and countersignatories for unqualified staff
- Up-to-date, relevant CVs for all staff, including plans for CPD
- Original 'D' unit certificates for new staff (since last EV visit)
- Sample signature list available
- A copy of the last EV report and any other relevant reports
- Previous action points checked and evidence of completion to target date be available

Meeting with Internal Verifier

- Procedures for initial assessment/candidate induction/support
- Sampling strategy; planned and completed IV activity
- Feedback to assessors - action required and taken
- All completed IV and assessor records
- Notes of any action carried out, following OCR requests, since the last visit
- Minutes of assessment team meetings including standardisation

Portfolio sampling

- Candidate portfolios are available, including those claimed through DCS; CARs are up to date
- An auditable trail of candidate achievements
- Roles and responsibilities of Assessment Team including subjects and/or units
- Completed Certification Record Forms and Forms UB99 are completed and available for those candidates claiming certification at this visit
- All candidate records including formative and summative assessment documents, signed by the appropriate people (including witnesses and candidates where appropriate)
- If professional discussion is used ensure all tapes and appropriate equipment (eg video player) are available

Candidates available for interview (with portfolio)

- Details of candidates' training needs/plans
- Details of candidates' assessment plans with updates and revisions

Please also refer to OCR's Guidance Checklist (L939 Version 2 September 2001)

INTERNAL VERIFIER ACTIVITIES

IV sampling strategy

- All assessors must be sampled over a defined period, including peripatetic assessors and those based at satellite centres.
- All units must be sampled for each assessor over a period of time. The period will depend on the number of candidates and programme length. All units for each assessor on an annual cycle would be an appropriate target in most centres.
- Ensure the sampling includes 'critical' units and optional units.
- Internal Verification is not just an 'end process'. Interim (ie formative) as well as summative assessment decisions should be included in the IV sample.
- There is no need to sample every candidate but you must sample from every candidate category or group/cohort, eg include categories in your sample to include age and gender, new starters, mid-term and well-established candidates, the employees of a particular corporate client.
- Ensure that 'new' and less experienced assessors are sampled more frequently.
- Ensure that countersigned decisions are included.
- Ensure that all work-based and specialist assessors are included.

Standardising Assessment Judgements

- Ensure that written feedback on assessors' judgements focuses on those critical features that distinguish between competent and not yet competent candidates.

- Plan and implement standardisation (benchmarking, moderating) workshops with the full N/VQ team (assessors and IVs).
- Focus on revisions to standards when appropriate and how the new requirements differ from the old standards; focus on critical units; units requiring simulation; units identified through your monitoring where evidence has been difficult to generate, or where you perceive assessors to be taking a different approach.
- Focus on validity, sufficiency, currency and authenticity of the evidence reviewed at the meeting. Use real evidence brought into the meeting by assessors wherever possible.
- Develop a supportive, non-threatening environment where assessors are willing to share issues and concerns in order to ensure each assessor makes valid assessment decisions.

Monitoring Assessment Practice

- Ensure there is a clear and accurate audit trail of the IV and assessment processes relating to each candidate incorporated within IV and assessors' records as well as the portfolio of evidence itself.
- Observe all assessors on at least an annual cycle covering all aspects of the assessment process.
- Interview candidates regarding the assessment process to verify the records provided to you by assessors and to monitor their progress and their attitude to the N/VQ and to your centre.
- Give feedback to assessors and record your feedback for scrutiny by the EV.

Developing and Supporting Assessors

- Provide all assessors with an induction programme and issue them with their own copy of the standards for the N/VQ.
- Allocate a suitable number of candidates according to your approved strategy and supply the assessor with information about the location of the candidates and any candidates' particular assessment requirements.
- Monitor all assessment methods used by each assessor in order to identify any training needs.
- Identify any occupational or professional development needs within the team based on the CPD guidance provided by the NTO.
- Give feedback regularly to assessors regarding their assessment activities and the outcomes of your monitoring of their assessment documentation.

Managing the N/VQ Procedures and Documentation

- Ensure that you understand the centre's commitments under the DCS Agreement and that these are fulfilled.
- Maintain all N/VQ records in a centre portfolio i.e. CVs, D unit certificates and team member's details (CPD; Occupational updating; etc.).
- Regularly monitor the centre's resources.
- Ensure that communication with both management and the team is regular, informative and effective.
- Take responsibility for the security of candidate files, assessor records and certification claims.
- Ensure that candidate progress is recorded and monitored.

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