

Preparing for EQA Sampling

Centre Guidance Document



learning your way

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Guidance for EQA Sampling

Purpose of the EQA Sampling Activity

The purpose of the external quality assurance sampling is to ensure that Centres are working in line with Gateway Qualifications requirements and assessing in line with the assessment requirements of the qualification(s) being assessed.

This is split into two main activities, an annual Centre monitoring activity to look at policies, processes and systems and qualification sampling. This guide covers the qualification sampling activity and how to prepare.

Communication between the EQA and the Centre is primarily through the Quality Assurance contact at the Centre. Therefore, it is important to update Prism with the new contact details if the Quality Assurance contact changes.

Annual Plans

The Annual Plan is in place to ensure that qualification sampling is planned to ensure that learner certification is carried out in a timely manner and that assessment is carried out in line with Gateway Qualifications requirements. The Annual Plan is a working document and can be updated throughout the year to ensure it remains current and in line with the Centre's delivery schedule. This makes it convenient for Centres operating roll-on, roll-off delivery and short programmes, as well as delivery over the full academic year.

Instructions for completing the Annual Plan can be found on our website following this link:

[Completing the Annual Plan for Sampling](#)

Planning

Qualification sampling takes place in line with the Annual Plan and usually takes place remotely, although in some circumstances or for some qualifications, a Centre visit may be required.

As well as selecting a learner sample, as detailed below, the EQA will also require additional documentation, including the:

- Assessment documentation
- Cross/referencing
- Learner authentication statements, in line with Gateway Qualifications requirements (see below)
- IQA sampling Records
- Observations of teaching learning and assessment
- Records of standardisation

It is also important to ensure that Prism has been updated to include the details and CVs of the tutor/assessors and the IQAs involved in the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of the qualification(s) being sampled.

When agreeing on the date for the sample, the Centre needs to ensure that sufficient time has been allowed for the IQA process to be completed, and any actions raised by the IQA relating to the assessment of the learners being claimed and signed off.

The learner authentication requirements can be found on the [Gateway Qualifications Centre Handbook](#)

Selecting a Sample

Gateway Qualifications takes a risk-based approach to qualification sampling and the EQA will select their sample in line with Gateway Qualifications sampling strategy.

The EQA will primarily select their sample from the claims made by the Centre, on Quartzweb, since the last qualification sampling activity. However, the EQA will also request the IQA sampling plans/tracking sheets to ensure that a representative sample is requested, taking into account all:

- Assessors
- IQAs
- Units
- Assessment sites

This needs to also include information relating to any reasonable adjustments allowed for any of the learners within the cohorts claimed.

The EQA will then send the Quality Assurance Contact the sample request, including the learners and units required for sampling, as well as the required supporting documentation, and will include an upload link to upload the evidence.

During the sampling activity, the EQA may need to extend their sample, and a Centre contact needs to be available to facilitate this if required.

Uploading Evidence

Along with the qualification sample request, the EQA will include an Egnyte upload link for the learner evidence and supporting documentation to be uploaded to. This needs to be uploaded prior to the agreed date for the sampling activity to take place.

The learner evidence and supporting documentation needs to be uploaded to Egnyte using a file name convention, with a separate zip file for each learner, including their evidence and the assessment documentation for the learner, with an additional zip file for the IQA records and supporting documentation.

Where a Centre is sharing the learner evidence through their own systems, or e-portfolio platform, the Centre will need to be available to provide the EQA with support in accessing the system and in understanding how to navigate the system to access the learner evidence and supporting documentation.

If the requested sample is not received in time for the agreed sample date, the review will be cancelled, and a new date will be agreed upon, in line with the EQA's availability. This may result in a delay to certification, especially where the requested sample has not been

uploaded within fourteen days of the request, as any claims on Quartzweb may/will be cancelled, and a new RAC will therefore need to be resubmitted.

During the Sample

As previously identified, the majority of sampling takes place remotely. However, the same learner evidence and supporting documentation needs to be made available as would be for a site visit.

The Quality Assurance contact or another named person should be made available to be able to answer any queries or supply any additional learner evidence or documentation required during the sampling activity. The EQA will also want to review any previously raised actions relating to the qualification(s) being sampled.

The EQA will sample assessment and ensure that:

- the assessment decisions are correct, with the learners presenting sufficient evidence to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, taking into account the requirements of the command verbs.
- the EQA will also check that the assessments provided to the learners are in line with the assessment requirements of the qualification(s) assessed
- there is developmental feedback provided to the learner on a formative and summative basis.
- IQA sampling and monitoring activities, including the delivery of standardisation, are sufficient and there is an IQA sampling decision and feedback provided to the assessor. Where the IQA has raised actions, the EQA will check that these have been completed and signed off.
- the staffing on Prism reflects the current staffing team for the qualification(s) being sampled and that the CVs for the tutor/assessors and IQAs demonstrate sufficient competence and experience to carry out their identified role(s).

If actions are raised following the sampling activity, or if an assessment criteria or learning outcome has been misinterpreted, the EQA will discuss these with the Centre and provide advice and guidance on the nature of the action and what is required to resolve it.

Where the qualification sampling takes place in the Centre, the process remains similar to the remote sampling process. However, in addition to the activities listed above, the EQA may want to meet with the tutor/assessors, IQA(s) and interview learners.

If any concerns regarding Malpractice and/or Maladministration are identified during sampling, this will be escalated to our Centre Compliance team.

Following the External Quality Assurance Review

At the end of the external quality assurance review, feedback is provided to the Centre through the Qualification Sampling report. This may include verbal feedback to discuss the outcomes or any actions of developmental advice when required.

As a result of the sampling activity, the Centre will be risk-rated per qualification between Low and High. This will depend on the quality of the assessment and IQA process, as well as any actions raised as a result of the sampling activity and any outstanding actions that have not been met by the due date.

The EQA will also make a recommendation as to whether direct claims status can be granted or maintained. Where applicable, the EQA will arrange for any certification claims on Quartzweb to be released.

If any actions have been raised, these will include details of the action to take and the deadline for the action to be completed. A Response to Action form will need to be created in Prism and submitted to the Quality Team for review.

Instructions on how to do this are included within this recording: [Response to Actions](#).

Failure to complete actions by the deadline may result in an increase in risk rating for the qualification(s), impact on Direct Claims Status (DCS) or an escalation to our Centre Compliance team.

The Qualification Sampling Report

The EQA will complete a Sampling Report on Prism, which will be shared with you once Quality Assurance checks have been completed by Gateway Qualifications. The report will provide details of/and include the following:

- Their findings
- Feedback
- Areas of good practice
- Any recommendations for improvement
- Actions
- Qualification risk ratings
- Direct Claims Status (DCS) for each qualification

In some cases, the EQA may need to increase a risk rating based on their findings during sampling. Actions and recommendations will be provided to ensure the Centre will be able to work towards decreasing the risk during future sampling. The EQA will review any response to actions and confirm whether they are complete.

DCS may temporarily be removed from a qualification, depending on their findings during sampling. Actions and recommendations will be provided to ensure Centre are able to work towards DCS being recommended at a later stage. Gateway Qualifications review all recommendations for DCS and confirm whether it will be applied.



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