



## **Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny strategy (CASS)**

**For**

**Level 4 Diploma in Cyber Security**

**February 2021**

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## Strategy Rationale

The strategy includes the following factors:

- the typical course of study for the qualification – sessional, roll on roll off, fixed start/end dates for the qualification
- the typical duration of the course of study – number of weeks, months or terms
- the typical learner undertaking the qualification – adult learners in the workplace and accredited study centres in the UK and internationally
- the typical type of centre delivering the qualification – FE College, private training provider, HE College, university, school, academy, overseas centre
- the number of components in the qualification and the number of these that are marked by a centre – the number of units within the qualification and number of centre devised assessments associated with the units
- the typical evidence generated for the qualification – assignments, a portfolio of evidence, assessor observation, multiple choice question papers, oral and written feedback
- the assessment model – units that are marked or graded
- the number of learners taking the qualification – the overall number and whether these are following the same course of study
- the time period over which all components for a qualification are sampled
- the number of learners sampled during each activity for each component – based on the EQA sampling strategy and rationale
- the content of the monitoring sample of learners – a sample checking involves learners that have already received results for their qualification or only those that have yet to receive results and whether all or some learners are sampled prior to receiving results
- the intended outcome of monitoring activities – to inform future changes to processes, monitoring visits or if certificates need to be revoked

## CASS for Level 4 Diploma in Cyber Security

Key Factors	
Course of study	Roll on roll off intakes. Face to face, classroom-based, online or blended learning methods
Duration of study (average)	Total Qualification Time (TQT) is 1200 hours and 720 hours out of TQT are Guided Learning Hours (GLH)
Learner profile	Adult learners - aged 19+
Centres delivering	Further Education Colleges, training providers
Qualification components	Five mandatory units and one elective unit
Evidence	Formative and summative assignments, worksheet, assessor observation, peer assessment and portfolio of product evidence
Assessment model	Written assignments All assignment questions are provided by Qualifi
Number of learners taking the qualification	The number of learners will vary depending on the delivery model. Assessment requirements will be consistent. Internal quality assurance and external quality assurance to be conducted
Components of the qualification to be monitored	All components. All assessments – once internally marked and verified internally, across all units and assessors. Learners from various cohorts to be sampled by Qualifi’s EQA (based on the centre delivery model, duration)
Timing of monitoring	On completion of the first cohort plus subsequent cohorts if multiple registered at once. Monitoring can take place at any time during the year depending on the requirement
Number of components sampled during monitoring	All components across multiple learners (based on the EQA sampling strategy)
Time period for sampling qualification components	Roll on, roll off basis
Number of learners sampled during each monitoring	Based on the EQA sampling strategy – minimum of 10 students, or 20% of total, whichever is higher
Content of monitoring sample	All learners that have completed Qualifi’s standard assessments successfully

Intended outcomes of monitoring	<p>As mentioned in the External Quality Assurance report:</p> <p>Centre staff involved in assessment assessing and internal verification  Compliance to assessment practices  Compliance to internal quality assurance procedures  Compliance of centre management to practices  Learner experience</p>
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Factors will vary and specific attention will be given to the variation in delivery models and course durations via the external quality assurance process.

Additional considerations (centre specific) to the strategy:

- Monitoring to take place (ahead of certification) if a centre has not previously marked assessments for the qualification.
- At approval, all members of the centre staff involved in the qualification will be approved. Centre staff updates to be provided by the centre. Any additional centre staff will be approved and all staff to be monitored during the EQA process.
- Monitoring to take place if there is a significant increase in learner registration for the qualification since the last EQA monitoring based on the risk management of centres.
- An additional EQA monitoring would take place if the two annual visits had been carried out:
  - if there is any suggestion of malpractice
  - maladministration in relation to delivery
  - assessment and certification of learners when the qualification content changes considerably as a result of a review and development based on national occupational standards or industry requirements. This would apply to any centre offering the qualification once it had been changed
  - where the professional standard (licence to practise) is changed
  - if an analysis of data and evidence suggests any additional scrutiny is required

## External Quality Assurance (EQA)

External quality assurance with regards to centres will include:

- reviewing assessments marked by each centre (all assessors)
- reviewing individual assessments within a qualification (all assessments)
- assessments of specific components of a qualification
- assessments undertaken on a range of cohorts within a centre

As part of the external quality assurance monitoring process, centres will be provided with a Learner Verification Report (LVR) which is a written feedback following sampling of centre assessed marking. The LVR must include the following:

- details of the qualifications and learners of which the external quality assurance has taken place
- centre staff involved in assessment assessing and internal verification
- compliance with assessment practices
- compliance with internal quality assurance procedures
- compliance with centre management practices
- learner experience
- compliance with data protection
- EQA sampling record
- actions points from the last EQA report
- recommended actions to be taken by the centre
- recommendations and comments on best practice

### **Overall approach**

In considering the overall approach of Centre Assessment Scrutiny, the areas below have been paid particular attention:

- whether the assessment marking by the centre is considered appropriate or no, for particular assessments within a particular qualification or type of qualification
- the appropriateness of the approach to assessment by the centre based on the nature of the evidence produced by learners in the relevant assessment
- whether the approach is appropriate or not to ensure valid and manageable qualifications based on the risks it has identified in relation to the qualification
- how the approach to assessment ensures that certificate claims are accurate and, if certificate claims are inaccurate, what could be the possible reasons
- what the centre needs to do to remain compliant or become compliant with the stipulated conditions.

Written feedback will be recorded within the Qualifi External Quality Assurance Report and provided to the centre following each external quality assurance monitoring visit.

## Allowing centre to mark assessments

Centres will be subject to a rigorous, centre approval process. Only once a centre has met all of the approval criteria will they be entitled to offer Qualifi qualifications. There are several checks made on the centre to ensure they have sufficient staff, skills, knowledge and competence, staff development and expertise to devise internally assessed assessments for the qualifications that they are delivering.

For each qualification, centre staff will be approved based on:

- relevant qualifications held
- experience and expertise based on the subject area
- evidence on continuous professional development

Only when a member of centre staff satisfies the above criteria will they be approved to assess the qualification for which they wish to be approved. Centre staff will be monitored at each external quality assurance monitoring. Any additional staff wanting to assess the qualification will need to be approved ahead of assessing the qualification.

Centres and subsequently staff will be approved per qualification, based on staff competence and the anticipated learner numbers for each qualification, ensuring that staff ratios are appropriate.

Qualifi will provide training for centre staff to support them with the development of assessment materials for each qualification.

Assessment guidance and support materials will be provided for every qualification that is internally devised and assessed. The guidance documents provided for centres are:

- centre guidance for assessors
- centre guidance for Internal Verifiers
- guide to centre and qualification approval
- IQA template with guidance
- Learner Verification Report (LVR) template

## Monitoring

- Justification for the CASS of centre-assessed qualifications – the monitoring of centres will be based on risk management – per qualification to include centre staff, number of learners, locations of assessment (if applicable), assessment methods used to internally assess the components of the qualification. The approach will be supported by the Qualifi External Quality Assurance (EQA) policy.

- Selection of personnel to undertake CASS of centre-assessed qualifications – recruitment will be carried out to ensure all Qualifi EQAs are appropriately qualified, experienced and knowledgeable about the qualifications that they monitor. Selection processes will be carried out by the Quality Assurance team.
- Training provided for those personnel undertaking the monitoring of CASS at centres carrying out centre-based assessments – the EQAs will undertake an induction to Qualifi following selection. This will be followed by training on the external quality assurance processes to be applied. Further training and standardisation throughout the year will be carried out.
- Ensuring that personnel undertaking monitoring activities remain suitable – CPD schedules and logs for all to be submitted on an annual basis and as part of the external quality assurance team resource review. It is a mandatory requirement for EQAs to maintain their own CPD that is relevant to the qualifications of which they assure the quality externally and submit this to Qualifi.
- Information centres are required to retain to enable CASS to be carried out – clear guidance documentation will be provided to centres to enable them to maintain information and records for monitoring purposes. Communication will be established prior to any monitoring visits to ensure the centres are aware of the information and assessment records requested for review.
- The requirement for centres to retain any data (including evidence generated by learners and marked by centres) is necessary to allow it to undertake Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) – guidance is provided to centres based on the documentation required for external quality assurance monitoring.
- Ongoing monitoring of centres will take place once a centre has been approved to offer qualifications (monitoring to check staff, delivery model and planned assessments). Monitoring to be completed twice per year for a qualification upon completion of the first cohort (first monitoring) prior to any certificate claims being made by the centre. Six months after the first monitoring, a second monitoring will take place. Additional monitoring could be activated should there be any unusual spikes in registrations / certificate claims between the planned monitoring visits. Qualifi will be proactive in monitoring the data for each centre in relation to registration and certificate claims, ensuring no additional risk could occur through this process.
- Feedback to centres and monitoring of centres' performance over time – written feedback will be provided to centres following every external quality assurance monitoring activity via the Qualifi External Quality Assurance Report. Centre activity reports (registration / certification) will be generated monthly and will be shared with each centre. These reports would also be used to flag any unusual trends and trigger an external quality assurance monitoring if required.



- Ongoing training and guidance will be provided to centres both via generic training sessions and updates but also through a centre requesting a bespoke training session based specifically on its own needs. Training, guidance and support will be provided on ways to deliver and assess qualifications.
- The sampling approach – the Qualifi External Quality Assurance sampling strategy will be used to ensure that sampling of centre assessments are appropriate. This will include a sample of learners across each assessor. Each assessment method relates to assessments that have been assessed internally.
- Selecting examples of marking – the centre will be advised of the sample chosen by the external quality assurer ahead of the external quality assurance monitoring visit to enable them to prepare and make available all of the necessary documentation. EQA visits will generally be carried out through face to face centre visits, however the visits may also be conducted remotely using ICT technologies such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

### **Conflict of Interests**

- Identification and monitoring of all relevant conflicts of interest and any scenario that could foreseeably lead to such a conflict in the future – each EQA will be required to declare any conflict with a centre or any staff working at a centre that is approved by Qualifi.
- Conflict of interest declarations will be reviewed and completed annually. As part of their contracts of interest agreement for work, EQAs will be required to declare any conflict should it arise outside of the annual review.
- Allocations of EQAs to centres will include consideration of any conflict of interest that has been flagged. Any conflict of interest will lead to an alternative EQA being allocated to the centre.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice or maladministration in relation to the delivery or marking of assessments by a centre – the Qualifi quality assurance processes will be used to ensure any acts of malpractice or maladministration are prevented through rigorous quality assurance. Quality monitoring will be carried out at the centre approval stage and twice per year as part of qualification quality assurance monitoring visits. Other mechanism for monitoring will include monitoring of registration numbers, certification claims and staff resources (centre staff to be approved before working with a qualification).
- Entering into arrangements with a centre on terms that allow the awarding organisation to comply with the conditions as a whole and monitor and where necessary take action, to ensure the centre does not put the awarding organisation's compliance at risk – the continuous measurements planned by Qualifi in monitoring the centre upon approval until the issuance of the certificates of learners for each cohort make sure that the centres are in compliance with the stipulated guidelines.

The EQA strategy ensures that the centres do not put Qualifi's compliance at risk through rigorous monitoring of centres while going into details at all times.

- Ensuring that assessments for the relevant qualification remain fit for purpose upon delivery, ensuring that the criteria against which learners' performance is differentiated are being applied accurately and consistently by Assessors – regular reviews are done by Qualifi EQAs to monitor the quality of assessment across each of the qualifications a centre is approved to offer.
- Ensuring that any results it issues are reflected accurately and fully the evidence produced by the learner and the learner's attainment when judged against the standard set by the awarding organisation – regular reviews by EQAs to monitor centre claims for certification and to ensure that learners have satisfied fully the requirements of the qualification with regard to evidence, assessment and that assessment is consistent across each assessor.

### **Taking action and making adjustments**

EQA visits the centres to monitor the quality of delivery and assessment and check the accuracy of assessments. Outcomes of visits will include action plans that set actions for the centre to address within a reasonable timescale or recommendations for improvement, also with timescales for implementation. These actions will be included in Qualifi's External Verification report.

**If you require any further information please contact Qualifi's External Verification Team at [ev@qualifi.net](mailto:ev@qualifi.net)**