



Pearson
BTEC

BTEC International
**Quality Assurance
Handbook**
2023-2024



Contents

Introduction	4
What is quality assurance?	4
The Quality Assurance Model	5
Qualification Approval	5
Which qualifications does this handbook cover?	5
Who is this handbook for?	6
What other quality assurance guidance is available?	6
Key Dates	7
Roles and responsibilities	8
Roles at cross-centre level	8
Roles at programme level	10
Support	15
Subject support	15
Face-to-face support	17
Standards verification	18
BTEC (QCF, SRF & RQF) Entry Level to Level 7	18
Why we do it	18
How we do it	18
When is standards verification required?	19
Roles and Responsibilities	20
Centres delivering Levels 4 – 7	20
The standards verification process	21
Sampling	22
Time frames for standards verification	24
Samples for Level 2 and Level 3	25
Samples for Levels 4 and 5	27
Samples for Level 7	29
Postal (Electronic) Samples	
Assessment of practical activities	30
Postal sampling of practical units	31
Internal Verification	33
The standards verification report	34
Outcomes of the sample	41
Appeals	42
Preparing for a Standards Verifier (SV)/ External Examiner (EE) visit	43

Planning the visit	43
The plan	44
The day of the visit	45
Top tips	46
After the visit	49
Authenticity & authentication	50
Plagiarism	50
Artificial Intelligence	51
Useful contacts	52

Introduction

This handbook provides an overview of the quality assurance processes for the qualifications covered in this handbook, to help you understand the requirements that apply. This handbook will help you work with us to ensure high quality, consistent and rigorous standards.

What is quality assurance?

BTEC quality assurance is:

- at the heart of BTEC qualifications
- how we ensure the quality and standard of internal assessment in all BTEC centres

You use quality assurance to:

- ensure that your managers, Internal Verifiers and Assessors are standardised and supported

We use quality assurance to:

- check that all centres are working to the required standards
- identify and provide support where it is needed in order to safeguard certification
- recognise and support good practice
- facilitate a high-quality learning experience for students to enable high achievement

Every year we publish an updated **BTEC International Quality Assurance Handbook** to explain our quality assurance processes for the coming academic year.

Along with your qualification specification, this handbook should provide your Assessors and Internal Verifiers with the information they need to ensure quality assurance is undertaken successfully.

The Quality Assurance Model

We operate a robust quality management system, and we are committed to quality in everything we do.

The quality assurance model has three parts:

It is a system designed to ensure that the assessment methods that you are using are fit for purpose and that the assessment decisions made by your centre's Assessors are valid, reliable and consistent with qualification criteria for achievement.

Qualification Approval

Centres that are new to the delivery of Pearson programmes will be required to seek approval initially through the existing centre approval process and then through the programme approval process. Programme approval for new centres is considered through a 'Review and Approval' visit to the centre.

Prior to approval being given, centres will be required to submit evidence to demonstrate that they:

- Have the human and physical resources required for effective delivery and assessment
- Have a robust internal assessment system supported by 'fit for purpose' assessment documentation
- Have a robust system to internally verify assessment decisions, to ensure standardised assessment decisions are made across all assessors and sites.

Applications for approval must be supported by the head of the organisation, (Principal or Chief Executive, etc.) and, include a declaration that the centre will operate the programmes strictly as approved, and in line with Pearson requirements.

Which qualifications does this handbook cover?

This handbook covers the following qualifications:

BTEC qualifications accredited on the:

- BTEC Level 2 (SRF)
- BTEC Level 3 (QCF, International & SRF)
- BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Business
- BTEC Levels 4-5 (QCF & RQF)
- BTEC Level 7 (QCF)

The guidance in this handbook relates to the quality assurance of internally assessed qualifications and units.

Additionally, we have a separate handbook for the following qualification:

Higher National programmes approved after 1st September 2017 on the Regulated Qualification Framework (Please refer to [Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality and Assessment](#))

This handbook does not cover the following qualifications. We have separate quality handbooks with specific details for:

- NVQ programmes accredited on the NQF and QCF

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is for **international centres only**. UK centres should refer to the relevant UK guidance documents on our website.

The handbook contains important information for anyone managing, delivering or assessing BTEC qualifications covered in this document. Please make sure that all the relevant staff at your centre read and understand this document.

What other quality assurance guidance is available?

For extra support, we also provide guides and template forms that you may find useful. These guides provide essential information for anyone involved in delivery and assessment of BTEC qualifications.

BTEC Centre Guides

BTEC International Centre Guide to Internal Assessment Entry – Level 3

Overarching guide to the principles of assessment design and delivery for Entry Level to Level 3 BTEC qualifications.

It provides important information and guidance for the internal assessment requirements for BTEC Entry – Level 3. This can be found [here](#).

For new International BTEC Level 3 Qualifications, there will be further information in the programme specification and Pearson Set Assignments (PSAs) published on our website for each qualification.

BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment for BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Business (First teaching from September 2020)

This guide is designed for Pearson BTEC International Foundation Programme for Higher Education programme in Business and provides essential guidance on the planning and implementation of internal assessment.

Subject Guides to Internal Assessment

We have provided subject-specific guides to implement the assessment requirements introduced in 2014 for BTEC Firsts and Nationals. These contain useful advice and guidance, examples of forms and where to get further support. These are published on each qualification specification page on our website.

RQF/SRF/QCF Higher Nationals
BTEC Higher Nationals Guide to Quality and Assessment (Approved from 1st September 2017)

Overarching guide to the principles of assessment design and delivery for Level 4 to 7 BTEC qualifications

Provides important information about quality assurance and assessment requirements for Higher National programmes

BTEC Centre Guides

	approved on the RQF/SRF from 1 st September 2017. This can be found here .
BTEC International Centre Guide to Internal Verification	Advice and guidance on the management and implementation of internal verification and standardisation in your centre. This can be found here .

Key Dates

It is important to register your learners as soon as they start their programme of learning and no later than 60 days after enrolment. The registration on Edexcel Online alerts us that you have started teaching. We then allocate a Standards Verifier who will be able to give you valuable support and advice to ensure that your delivery and assessment are to the required standard.

Please refer to the relevant sections of this handbook for full details of the quality assurance process.

For dates and deadlines relating to learner registration and certification, please refer to the International Information Manual.

Roles and responsibilities

This section gives you an outline of the key roles undertaken at your centre. The responsibilities for each role are described briefly. Where a role has specific responsibility in relation to a quality assurance process, this is also explained in the relevant chapter.

Roles at cross-centre level

Head of Centre and Senior Managers

Senior Manager responsibilities

The Head of Centre is formally responsible for management and delivery of BTECs in your centre.

The Head of Centre must ensure that your centre acts in accordance with our terms and conditions of approval, by:

- ensuring the Terms & Conditions are signed and uploaded on Edexcel online (EoL)
- ensuring the provision of appropriate resources.
- recruiting learners with integrity.
- providing full and fair access to assessment maintaining full and accurate records of assessment.
- complying with all our quality assurance processes.
- ensuring that all certificate claims are secure and accurate.

Day-to-day responsibility is normally delegated to the centre's Quality Nominee.

Senior managers must:

- identify a Quality Nominee to act as a key point of contact with us.
- liaise with the Quality Nominee to ensure that all processes are being conducted effectively.
- support the Quality Nominee to take action to respond to reports on quality assurance.

Other responsibilities:

The Head of Centre or other senior managers may need to be directly involved in:

- dealing with appeals from learners that have not been resolved by the programme team.
- investigating malpractice allegations related to learners or members of staff.
- liaising with us where any serious breach of approval conditions has occurred.
- any aspect of quality assurance which relates to the overall integrity and security of BTEC qualifications.

Quality Nominee

We ask every BTEC centre to identify a member of staff as the Quality Nominee for BTEC provision. This person is the main point of contact for information related to quality assurance. The Quality Nominee will receive regular information from us about all aspects of BTECs, which they must share with the relevant staff in your centre. Therefore, it is very important that Quality Nominee details are kept up to date on Edexcel Online.

Updating Quality Nominee details on Edexcel Online

- Log into your Edexcel Online account at: edexcelonline.com.
- Click on My Account.
- Put a cross in the box marked, 'Please check this box if you are the Quality Nominee for your centre'.
- Click Submit.

We recommend that your Quality Nominee is someone with responsibility for your BTEC curriculum, as they will be involved in monitoring and supporting staff in your centre. This is a curriculum role, so in most cases it is not appropriate for the Examinations Officer to be the Quality Nominee.

Our systems will only allow one person to be identified as the Quality Nominee for your centre. In larger centres, we appreciate that certain responsibilities may be delegated to a team. In this case, the Quality Nominee remains the main point of contact for us and must coordinate quality assurance activity undertaken by their team.

Quality Nominee responsibilities

Ensure the effective management of your BTEC programmes and actively encourage and promote good practice at your centre.

The Quality Nominee is:

- a key point of contact with us.
- the person who liaises with senior management to ensure that all processes are being conducted effectively.
- the initial point of contact for our Standards Verifiers/External Examiners, who makes sure that they are put in touch with the relevant Lead Internal Verifier to conduct sampling.
- the person who puts actions in place to respond to the Standards Verifiers/External Examiners' reports.
- Ensures learners registrations' are accurate.
- Ensures that learners' claimed certificates are accurate.

Liaise with the appropriate centre and Pearson staff to ensure that:

- all programmes are approved, and registrations are accurate and up to date.
- our approval conditions and policy requirements are being implemented consistently and effectively.
- all staff are aware of all support and guidance available and understand requirements.
- assessment and internal verification are effective on all BTEC programmes.
- there is a Lead Internal Verifier in place (where appropriate) for each Principal Subject Area.
- standards verification is completed successfully.

Further guidance can be found in the **BTEC International Centre Guide to Managing Quality** on our [website](#).

Examinations Officer

This is the person in your centre who takes responsibility for the correct administration of learners with us. This may be a defined role or, in a smaller centre, an additional duty undertaken by a Programme Leader or assessor. The Examinations Officer normally acts as the administrator for Edexcel Online, which provides direct access for learner administration.

Examinations Officer responsibilities

- Liaise with programme leaders to maintain information on which programmes are running and when they start and finish.
- Register learners within 60 days of enrolment at your centre, taking into considerations that:
 - Higher fees are payable for late registrations (61-90 days after enrolment the original fee x 1.25; 91 – 120 days x 1.5; 121 days+ x 2).
 - The name given at registration will be printed on the certificate.
- Register learners onto the correct programmes and checking that these are the specific titles and versions that learners are following.
- Check registrations carefully to ensure that all data is correct, accurate and follow correct procedures if amendments are required.
- Claim learners' certificates into the correct programme and ensure that certificates claimed are accurate.
- Give Edexcel Online access to the Quality Nominee.
- Give Edexcel Online basic access to all other BTEC staff as necessary.

You can find full details on BTEC registration procedures, including deadlines and instructions for registering via EDI and Edexcel Online from the Information Manual on our [website](#).

To use Edexcel Online, you will need to set up an account in order to obtain a username and password. You can find more details on our website ([Edexcel Online](#) and [Video Guides](#)).

If your centre is not registered, or you are unsure who your Edexcel Online administrator is, contact our Edexcel Online Customer Services team on +44 (0)844 576 0024. For additional Examinations Officer support, contact: examsofficers@pearson.com or pqs.international@pearson.com

Roles at programme level

The programme team consists of the assessors who are responsible for the delivery, assessment and internal verification of BTEC programmes.

BTEC programme team responsibilities

- Read and understand the programme specification and assessment guidance.
- Understand the construction of the units.
- Identify opportunities to generate evidence.
- Create and agree a plan of assessment activities, with timescales.
- Ensure the assessment plan, assignments and assessment decisions are internally verified and appropriate action is taken by the team.
- Read and understand the relevant chapters of this Quality Assurance Handbook.

The appropriate minimum size of the programme team will depend on the number of units and the number of learners. An Assessor cannot internally verify their assessment decisions. Where there is a single specialist practitioner delivering the programme, arrangements must be made for their assignments and assessment decisions to be internally verified by someone appropriately experienced.

Programme Leader

A Programme Leader, Programme Manager or Head of Department is a person appointed by your centre to take overall responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of BTEC qualifications. **The Programme Leader may also act as the Lead Internal Verifier**, if appropriate.

Programme Leader responsibilities

- Liaise with the Quality Nominee to be aware of information updates and quality assurance requirements.
- Liaise effectively with the Examinations Officer to ensure accuracy of registration and certification of learners.
- Liaise with programme team to confirm assessment and internal verification schedules.
- Ensures that records of assessment and samples of student work are being retained for sampling by the Standards Verifier/External Examiner,
- Plans to set aside examples of work that has been verified to different levels and grades, where applicable,
- Liaises with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to ensure that appropriate sampling takes place.
- Ensure that there are sufficient resources to deliver the programmes and units.
- Ensure that programme staff have the necessary expertise and, where relevant, qualifications.
- Review reports arising from quality assurance and ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

Lead Internal Verifier

The Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework 2008 require us to “put in place procedures that must ensure each centre has arrangements to identify a single named point of accountability for the quality assurance and management for the assessment of units and qualifications”. We also require this for all BTEC qualifications.

A Lead Internal Verifier is a person designated by your centre to act as a point of sign-off for the assessment and internal verification of programmes in a Principal Subject Area (e.g. BTEC International Level 2 and Level 3 in Business, Engineering, Construction, IT...etc.)

We use the term “Lead Internal Verifier” to emphasise the importance of proper co-ordination of internal verification through a single point of contact. This is a role that senior staff members within programme teams have always undertaken.

We appreciate that centres deliver BTEC programmes in different ways and have a variety of programme team and management structures. However, the Lead Internal Verifier should be:

- the person within the centre who has responsibility for verifying and signing off the assessment outcomes for a subject area.
- a subject specialist - it is important that the Lead Internal Verifier has an understanding of the subject that they are responsible for.
- directly involved in the assessment and delivery of a programme, with a good understanding of the units being assessed.
- the person who usually coordinates internal verification across assessors and other internal verifiers for a subject area.

Lead Internal Verifier responsibilities

- Oversee the internal verification activity in their subject and ensure that it is consistently applied.
- Please note: The Lead Internal Verifier is not expected to undertake the internal verification themselves.
- Ensure that there is an assessment and verification plan for your programmes which is fit for purpose and meets requirements.
- Sign off the plan and check that it is being followed at suitable points.
- Ensure that assessment plans, records of assessment and samples of learner work are retained for standards verification if necessary. Plan to set aside examples of work verified to different levels and grades.
- Support the development of Assessors and Internal Verifiers.
- Liaise with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to ensure that appropriate sampling takes place.

For levels 2 and 3, the Lead Internal Verifier will be responsible for:

- authorising resubmission of assignments for learners who are thought to be able to achieve more without any additional guidance.
- authorising re-takes for those learners who, after a re-submission have not yet achieved the Pass criteria on levels 2/3 Qualifications.

ensuring any resubmissions and retakes are administered fairly and consistently.

Internal Verifiers

Internal verification is the quality assurance system you use to monitor assessment practice and decisions, ensuring that:

- assessment is consistent across the programme.
- assessment instruments are fit for purpose.
- assessment decisions accurately match learner work to assessment and grading criteria.
- standardisation of Assessors takes place.

Internal Verifiers can be anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme. You cannot internally verify your own assessment.

Where there is a team of Assessors, it is good practice for all Assessors to be involved in internally verifying each other. If there is only one main person responsible for delivery and assessment, then another person will need to be identified to undertake internal verification.

Internal Verifier responsibilities

- Agree an assessment and verification plan for each programme.
- Check the quality of assessment instruments to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place.
- Keep accurate and up-to-date records of the internal verification process.
- Advise on the appropriateness of assessment evidence with regards to level, sufficiency, authenticity, validity and consistency.
- Use subject specialism to sample assessments to verify Assessors' judgements, ensuring that they are consistent, fair and reliable.
- Ensure your own assessment decisions are sampled when teaching on the programme.
- Ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary.
- Take part in the formal stages of any appeal.

Further guidance can be found in the **BTEC Centre Guide to Internal verification** on our [website](#).

Assessors

An Assessor is anyone responsible for the assessment of learners.

Assessor responsibilities

- Ensure that you have read and understood the programme specifications and the requirements of all units being assessed.
- Agree an assessment and verification plan for each programme ensuring full coverage of the required units.
- Teach learners the knowledge and skills required to achieve the qualification.
- Design assessment activities which guide learners to produce evidence that meets the targeted learning aims and assessment criteria, using the associated assessment guidance to provide sufficient coverage of unit content.
- For learners studying at Levels 2 and 3, decide when they are ready to complete independently an assignment for formal assessment.
- Ensure opportunities for plagiarism are minimised and that learners' work is authentic.
- Provide summative assessment of the completed work submitted by learners, checking authenticity and sufficiency of evidence produced against the relevant learning aims, assessment criteria and unit content.
- Accurately record all summative assessment decisions.
- Follow up any advice from your Internal Verifier.

Further guidance can be found on our website as follows:

- [BTEC International Centre Guide to Internal Assessment.](#)
- [Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment](#)

Support

There are many ways we can support you. We have dedicated teams available for specific advice and guidance who you can contact for help.

Subject support

Pearson Authorised Assignment Briefs

A bank of Pearson Authorised Assignment Briefs for our BTEC qualifications is available on the specification pages of our website.

These assignment briefs cover several units of BTEC qualifications. Please take care to check the framework of the qualification matches the framework for your qualification.

It is **not compulsory** to use these assignments and if you do develop centre devised briefs, you should review these to ensure they are in line with national standards and best BTEC practice. You must apply internal verification to the Pearson Authorised Assignment Briefs as follows.

Assignment brief option	Internal verification required
Use a Pearson Authorised Assignment Brief as published	An Internal Verifier must ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">it meets the specific needs of your learnersit remains current and relevant for learners in your centrethe Assessor has added correct key information including hand out dates and submission deadlines
Adapt a Pearson Authorised Assignment Brief to suit the needs of your learners	The internal verification process must be detailed and rigorous in order to ensure the assignment brief is fully fit for purpose. We provide templates for you to use on our website which can be found here
Create your own assignment briefs	The internal verification process must be detailed and rigorous in order to ensure the assignment brief is fully fit for purpose. We provide templates for you to use on our website which can be found here

For more guidance on internal verification, please see our **BTEC International Centre Guide to Internal Verification** on our [website](#).

Other support materials are available for BTEC assessors to plan, teach and assess the new BTEC International Level 3 qualifications e.g. Sample Pearson Set Assignments, Delivery Guide, Delivery Plans and Scheme of Work, and [HN Global](#) for HNs.

For Higher Nationals Example Assessment Briefs

For some of the Higher National qualifications, we offer Example Assessment Briefs, those examples can help you make the most of your planning time and give you the opportunity to add in your own activities. You can access these along with other teaching resources on our [HN Global Platform](#)

They are there to give you an example of what the assessment will look like in terms of the feel and level of demand of the assessment. The Example Assessment Briefs, (with the exception of the mandatory Pearson-set unit), provide tutors with suggested types of assignments and structures that can be adopted and, if so, must be adapted accordingly.

Please note that this Example Assessment Brief is NOT an authorised assignment brief. It is provided as a reference only. Centres must develop assignments and assessment materials that meet the needs of their students and align with their curriculum planning. This Example Assessment Brief may be used as a starting point for the development of an assignment; however, Centres are expected to modify and revise the Example Assessment Brief to meet the specific needs of their students and curriculum. All assessment briefs must be Internally Verified.

Our Assignment Checking Service

You can also submit assignments you have written to our [Assignment Checking Service](#) (You need to ensure that you have access to Edexcel Online). Your assignments will be reviewed by an expert who will check that you have understood and applied the relevant assessment requirements and provide feedback. When using this service always be careful to select the correct BTEC qualification from the drop-down list.

Please note: This free service is advisory only. It is not a replacement for internal verification, nor does it remove the need for standards verification. You must always internally verify all assignment briefs you have written to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the specific needs of your learners.

Assessors and Heads of Department

To connect you directly with our subject experts, we have subject lines just for [assessors](#), each supported by a dedicated specialist. During busy periods, we may ask you to leave a message. If you do, we'll get back to you as soon as we can - usually within three working days.

You may prefer to use our subject-specific email addresses located on the qualification's webpage, so you can check for a response when it suits you. We aim to reply within three working days at the most.

Exams Officers

We now have a single customer support number for exams officers. When you call this number, you'll be connected to your account specialist: +44 (0) 844 463 2535

You can email us with queries concerning registrations and entries, certification, fees, invoice content or any general enquiry about administering a Pearson qualification: pgs.internationaleo@pearson.com

Training from Pearson

Training from Pearson is our specialist training division. Training is designed to fit your requirements, with an option of face-to-face, online or customised training so you can choose where, when and how you want to be trained. Find out more on our [website](#).

Feedback on our Assessment Associates

Your feedback is important to us and is used to improve our services. We will be happy to receive feedback about our Assessment Associates (Standards Verifiers/ External Examiners) about their reporting, judgement, communication, responsiveness and professionalism. The feedback will be considered as part of our Assessment Associate monitoring process. If you would like to provide feedback, please contact the International Quality Standards and Operations Manager - letitia.rowan@pearson.com

Face-to-face support

International Quality Managers

International Quality Managers are an important part of our quality partnership and are full time managers within our BTEC Assessment team. We have four International Quality Managers working in:

- Indian subcontinent – saurabh.saxena@pearson.com
- Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Turkey & Uzbekistan – mohamed.kamel@pearson.com
- Gulf and Lebanon – khaled.elhabashy@pearson.com
- Asia Pacific – florence.chan@pearson.com

Their role is to:

- offer quality assurance advice and support for BTEC qualifications
- provide formal support and monitoring throughout our quality assurance process of standards verification
- review SV/EE reports submitted for centres in their region

Regional Development Managers

Our Regional Development Managers are sales experts who provide information and guidance to Senior Management Teams..

If you would like your Regional Development Manager to get in touch, their contact details can be found on the website. Alternatively, email pqs.internationaleo@pearson.com and the team will get in touch with you.

Contact us

Please use our "[Contact us](#)" portal to tell us about yourself and the issue you're having, and we'll connect you with the right person to help you.

Write to us

Customer Services Contact Team
Pearson Qualification Services
14 The Quays
Salford Quays
Manchester
M50 3B

Standards verification

BTEC (QCF, SRF & RQF) Entry Level to Level 7

This chapter gives you information on standards verification for BTEC (QCF, SRF & RQF). A subject specialist Standards Verifier/ External Examiner will be allocated to verify a sample of assessed BTEC learner work and support you in working to national standards.

Which qualifications does BTEC standards verification cover?

This chapter covers the following qualifications:

BTEC (SRF & QCF) Entry to Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BTEC Level 2 (SRF)• BTEC Level 3 (QCF & SRF)• BTEC (QCF) specialist qualifications at Entry Level to Level 3
BTEC (QCF) Level 4 to 7 & Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Business• BTEC Level 4 HNC and Level 5 HND• BTEC Level 3 and 4 Foundation Diploma in Art & Design• BTEC Professional qualifications at levels 4 and above
BTEC RQF Level 4 to 5	Please also refer to the Higher National Centre Guide to Quality assurance and Assessment on our website

Why we do it

Standards verification is how we check that you are operating appropriate quality assurance and assessing to national standards. We undertake standards verification to ensure reliability of assessment across all BTEC centres and to:

- provide a thorough review of assessment and verification
- ensure that correct processes and procedures are being applied, consistent with qualifications at all levels
- encourage you to continue to deliver best practice in vocational assessment
- provide a detailed report on verification and assessment practice for the relevant programme sector

Standards verification helps ensure you have accurate assessment and verification records and that you are assessing learners appropriately, consistently and fairly.

The outcome of standards verification informs us whether or not to print certificates for your learners, as they must reach the required national standard before certificates can be released.

How we do it

We allocate a Standards Verifier/ External Examiner who is a subject expert to conduct sampling of assessment instruments and assessed learner work to provide judgements and feedback.

Standards Verifiers/ External Examiners will visit you and work with you to support you to identify good practice and areas for further development. They will give you guidance on how you can improve the delivery of the programme.

When is standards verification required?

We allocate a Standards Verifier/ External Examiner to sample your programme (s) twice per year. This will normally be conducted remotely but could also be conducted physically if we feel you would benefit from additional support. There is a cost for the sampling activity. Please ask your Regional Development Manager for more information about the charges.

If a visit is arranged and you cancel, this may incur extra costs and the certification of your learners could be delayed. We ask you therefore to liaise with your Standards Verifier/ External Examiner to arrange mutually convenient dates and times for the remote sampling/ visits as soon as possible after registration of your learners.

Sampling will be arranged at times agreed between your Quality Nominee and the Standards Verifier/External Examiner. They should take place between November and August of each year.

The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will sample all of the units that make up your qualification and will need to report that the required standard is being achieved, before the certificates can be released.

If after running the programme for three years during which time you have received acceptable reports i.e. release of certification, the number of samples can be reduced to one per year. This is subject to approval by Centre Management in London. There must be no outstanding issues or required actions.

If quality issues should arise leading to a block of certification, the frequency of the sampling will return to two per year until a satisfactory quality profile is re-established.

Please be aware that the frequency of sampling applies to specific programmes and does not apply across your centre. You may receive one sample per year for one of your BTEC programmes but still have two samples for other programmes.

If you have achieved consistently good reports but would like further support or reassurance for your programme teams, then this can be arranged through our Training Team. There is further information available on our [website](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

Standards Verifier Entry - Level 3 / External Examiner Level 4-7

We appoint a Standards Verifier/External Examiner to a Principal Subject Area. They will be a subject specialist and their primary focus is to ensure that you are assessing to national standards. We normally change the Standards Verifier/ External Examiner allocated to your centre when needed.

Standards Verifier/External Examiner responsibilities

- Assessing learners to national standards as set out within the BTEC qualification specifications
- Maintaining effective mechanisms for the internal verification of BTEC programmes
- Demonstrating effective recording of assessment and internal verification
- Applying centre-wide processes and procedures effectively and consistently in your programme area

Please note that the **Standards Verifier/External Examiner is not allowed to deliver training to your centre.** Training sessions can be arranged through our specialist training division. Training is designed to fit your requirements, with an option of face-to-face, online, or customised training so you can choose where, when, and how you want to be trained.

Senior Standards Verifier or Senior External Examiner

The Senior Standards Verifier / Senior External Examiner for each Principal Subject Area has an overview of standards and ensures that all Standards Verifiers/External Examiners have appropriate standardisation and training. The Senior Standards Verifier/Senior External Examiner may become directly involved with a centre at our request.

Senior Standards Verifier responsibilities

- Upholds the national standard for their sector
- Trains and standardises Standards Verifiers/ External Examiners
- Provides ongoing advice and guidance for Standards Verifiers/ External Examiners
- Provides support for queries and appeals

Centres delivering Levels 4 – 7

We make every effort to ensure that international centres delivering Level 4 – 7 qualifications operate to the standards outlined in the **QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education** (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>).

You must ensure that your External Examiner is informed about your organisational procedures, practices, and academic regulations. It is good practice for all centres but essential for centres delivering higher level qualifications that the External Examiner feedback to Assessors and students is part of your broader system of quality assurance and enhancement.

We ask our External Examiners to gather feedback from students on Higher National programmes and provide them with the following guidance;

Student interviews must only take place whilst the student is on site (i.e. centre or workplace) and never in their homes

A member of centre staff who is not involved with the delivery and/or assessment of the programme

should accompany the student for the duration of the interview for observation purposes only
Centres will need to provide a centre email address to facilitate the interview, for example a Teams meeting could be arranged for a group of students, with the invite link being sent by the centre staff to you, or by you to centre staff

Alternatively, the centre may have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that does not share personal email data

If the programme is being delivered via Distance Learning, the feedback may be gained using the centres VLE. A member of staff who is not involved with the programme should accompany the student (s) for the duration of the meeting

The standards verification process

Stage	Activity
Standards Verifier/ External Examiner allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From October onwards, we will identify Standards Verifiers/ External Examiners with appropriate subject expertise and allocate them to the programmes that have active registrations at your centre. If a programme is no longer running at your centre but still has active registrations, you must either claim certificates or withdraw the learners. The Standards Verifiers/ External Verifiers will contact your Quality Nominee to inform him/her of the allocation
Arranging the sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your Quality Nominee should put the Standards Verifier/External Examiner in touch with the relevant Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate) to agree the sample <p>You should confirm with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner your assessment plan for all registered learners, identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> which Assessors are assessing which units and learners when assessment is planned to take place who are the Internal Verifiers and when internal verification is planned to take place <p>After consultation with the Lead Internal Verifier, the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will confirm by email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the date of the sample, the sample size, which learners' portfolios will be sampled a sample plan.
During the sample	<p>The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the operation of the internal verification process assignment briefs; learner work; assessment and internal verification records programme documentation; policies; programme review documentation physical resources e.g. library; computer facilities; laboratories, workshops <p>The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners

- Teaching staff
- Key personnel in your centre
- At the end of the sample the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will provide verbal feedback on the findings (either remotely or face to face)

A report will be sent to your centre within 10 working days of the sample. If there is any reason why this Service Level Agreement cannot be met, the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will let you know

Large cohorts and multi-site centres

If you deliver programmes across additional sites, the Standards Verifier/External Verifier will communicate directly with the Quality Nominee at the main site.

- The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will select the sample from learners across the sites.
- The Lead Internal Verifier will collate and check the sample to ensure that there is an appropriately sized sample from all of the sites. Before certificates can be released, the assessment decisions of all Assessors at all sites will need to be sampled. This will confirm that all staff are making accurate assessment decisions.
- Outcomes of standards verification/external examination will apply to all of the sites running the programme.
- Over a period of time, the Standards Verifier/External Examiner may request to visit other sites, rather than making the visit to the main site.

Where programmes have particularly large cohorts or operate across a large number of multiple sites, we may operate a 'team approach' to standards verification.

In such cases, a Standards Verifier/External Verifier will be allocated, but they will coordinate a team of Standards Verifiers/External Examiners who will support them in conducting sampling. The allocated Standards Verifier/ External Examiner will look at programme management and complete the appropriate part of the report. The supporting Standards Verifiers/ External Examiners will make visit(s), conduct sampling of one or more units and provide judgements and commentary. The allocated Standards Verifier/ External Examiner will collate the sampling evidence for the assessment decisions part of the report and then complete the final report.

There will be an increased cost for visits that require a team of Standards Verifiers/External Examiners or for visits that will take more than one day to complete the required amount of sampling e.g. when there are a high number of registrations or certificates are needed urgently when the programme has not yet been fully sampled.

Sampling

As part of our overarching quality assurance process, we scrutinise each centre's quality profile, taking into account factors such as:

- registration patterns
- claimed grades over time
- the results of other processes, such as the approval of other qualifications
- general issues highlighted in a particular sector

We may ask you to facilitate extra Standards Verifier/External Examiner visits if this is required.

Time frames for standards verification

Standards verification will ordinarily be conducted between November and August:

<p>Allocation of Standards Verifiers/External Examiners for BTEC qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will discuss your assessment plan at the start of the process and use this to select the learners to be sampled • We allocate Standards Verifiers/External Examiners in October though allocations may take place at other points in the year • The learners to be sampled will be agreed with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner • The date for sampling will be agreed with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner
<p>The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will contact you to request a list of learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will check the list of names you provide with the learners who are registered on Edexcel Online • Only those learners registered on Edexcel Online will be sampled • You should already track and record learners' achievement as they progress on the programme. This can be used to provide information when the sample is being selected • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will confirm which learners will be sampled • The sample must include the full range of grades that you have awarded • If a range of grades is not available because of the achievement of the learners in the cohort, discuss this with your Standards Verifier/External Examiner • We may scrutinise subsequent certificate claims to identify any discrepancies
<p>The Standards Verifier/ External Examiner will complete their report within 10 working days of conducting the sample</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will not be able to claim certificates until sampling has been successfully completed and the certification is released. • It is particularly important for Level 3 programmes where learners are applying for college/university that sampling is undertaken at an appropriate time

Over the period of time that the qualification is delivered, the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will sample all of the units and all of the Assessors. For example, a 12-unit qualification being delivered over 2 years, 4 visits will be required before certificates can be released.

For short courses it may be appropriate that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will be able to see all units and sample all Assessors at the first visit. In this case certificates would be released after the first visit.

The rule is that certificates cannot be released until all units have been sampled and assessment decisions have been found to be accurate.

Samples for Level 2 and Level 3

The Standards Verifier/External Examiner selects the learners to be sampled. For each learner sampled, you must provide the Standards Verifier/External Examiner with full assessment records.

Stage	Evidence
Assignment briefs	All assignment briefs used to generate learner evidence for the unit-samples
Sample size for Entry - Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 learners - all learners' work will be sampled • 4-100 learners - 4-3 learners' work will be sampled • 101-250 learners - 8-6 learners' work will be sampled • More than 250 learners - 12-9 learners' work will be sampled • The sample must contain examples of the range of grades awarded (Pass, Merit, Distinction and Not achieved) • The sample will also need to encompass (over a period of time) all Assessors, and different qualification sizes (if any) • Please note: There is no maximum size of the sample. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner may ask for more samples if initial sampling suggests that further investigation is required • Additional visits to increase the sample size are not permitted without consent from Pearson
Learner evidence and assessment records	<p>The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will need to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a list of learners' names which will be compared to the names registered on Edexcel Online • assessment decisions for the learner work and related feedback • signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner • confirmation from the Assessor that the evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work*
Internal verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal verification documents for the assignment briefs • Any internal verification documentation relating to the assessment decisions for learners sampled
Resubmissions	<p>Where applicable, evidence of any resubmissions, including a full audit trail of the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of Lead Internal Verifier authorisation, signed and dated, with the resubmission deadline clearly stated* • the initial assessment record, • the resubmitted learner evidence, accompanied by a signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner • the resubmission assessment record, detailing the additional learner evidence submitted and showing any related changes to the assessment decisions • confirmation from the Assessor that the resubmitted evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work*

Re-takes	<p>Where applicable, evidence of any retakes, including a full audit trail of the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of Lead Internal Verifier authorisation, signed and dated • the initial assessment record • the learner evidence, targeted to the Pass criteria only and accompanied by a signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner • the assessment record, detailing the learner evidence submitted and showing any related changes to the assessment decisions • confirmation from the Assessor that the evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work*
----------	--

* These are mandatory requirements for new learners from 1 September 2014. For full guidance, please see BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Assessment Entry – Level 3, and Subject Guides, available on each qualification specification page: www.btec.co.uk

For each sample there must be definitive evidence of assessed work covering targeted criteria. You must provide a complete sample which can be used to accurately judge your approach to assessment. If the materials are incomplete, inappropriate or appear not to be authentic, the Standards Verifier /External Examiner will not be able to complete sampling.

Samples for Levels 4 and 5

Stage	Evidence
Assignment briefs	All assignment briefs used to generate learner evidence for the unit samples
Sample size for Levels 4 and 5 and RQF Foundation Art, Design and Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 9 learners – All students will be sampled • 9 – 99 students – 9 students will be sampled • 100 – 199 students - 18 students will be sampled • A further 9 students will be sampled per 100 students registered with Pearson • The sample must contain examples of the range of grades awarded (Pass, Merit, Distinction and Not achieved) • The sample will also need to encompass (over a period of time) all Assessors • Please note: There is no maximum size of the sample. The External Examiner may ask for more samples if initial sampling suggests that further investigation is required • Additional visits to increase the sample size are not permitted without consent from Pearson
Foundation Art, Design and Media L3 and 4	The sample must include work from the Final project. A minimum of 9 learners will be sampled for every 100 registered
Learner evidence and assessment records	<p>The External Examiner will need to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a list of learners' names which will be compared to the names registered on Edexcel Online • assessment decisions for the learner work and related feedback • signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner • confirmation from the Assessor that the evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work • staff CVs and the list of units they delivered and assessed
Internal verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal verification documents for the assignment briefs • Any internal verification documentation relating to the assessment decisions for learners sampled

Resubmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student who, for the first assessment opportunity, has failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification shall be expected to undertake a reassessment. • At centre discretion and Assessment Board, decisions can be made to permit a resubmission. • Only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted. • Reassessment for course work, project- or portfolio-based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original task. • A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit. • A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a Pass grade or higher has already been awarded
Repeats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student who, for the first assessment opportunity and resubmission opportunity, still failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification: • At centre discretion and Assessment Board, decisions can be made to permit a repeat of a unit. • The student must study the unit again with full attendance and payment of the unit fee. • The overall unit grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit. • Units can only be repeated once

Samples for Level 7

Stage	Evidence
Assignment briefs	All assignment briefs used to generate learner evidence for the unit-samples
Sample size for Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are more than 100 learners, the visit will take 2 days. There will be an extra cost applied • Please note: There is no maximum size of the sample. The External Examiner may ask for more samples if initial sampling suggests that further investigation is required • Additional visits to increase the sample size are not permitted without consent from Pearson
Learner evidence and assessment records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of learners' names which will be compared to the names registered on Edexcel Online • You will be asked to make available all evidence for all students since the last visit • The External Examiner will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ check staff CVs at each visit • <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ look at the gap between student registrations and certifications • The External Examiner will need to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assessment decisions for the learner work and related feedback ○ signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner ○ confirmation from the Assessor that the evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work
Internal verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal verification documents for the assignment briefs • Any internal verification documentation relating to the assessment decisions for learners sampled

Assessment of practical activities

Many units include practical activities where assessment is recorded through observation records. We advise you to use a form that clearly details the assessment and identifies the assessment and grading criteria achieved. We provide template forms on our [website](#).

These templates are not mandatory, and you are free to design your own, but using them will help to ensure that you are meeting requirements.

Standards Verifiers/External Examiners need to be able to judge the validity of the assessment decisions and so they need evidence in addition to observation records. This evidence may take a variety of forms such as photographs, video, and audio.

When submitting electronic copies and other recorded materials please ensure such materials identify the following as part of the evidence:

- centre name and number, Assessor name
- learner name and Pearson registration number
- unit title and number, assessment and grading criteria attempted

You must also provide information on assessment decisions and Assessor feedback. These are likely to be provided as paper or electronic documents to support DVD/CD materials.

Postal sampling of practical units

It is important that sampling evidence is sufficient to justify the assessment and grading criteria awarded. Please ensure that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner has all the information needed to verify grades, to prevent misunderstandings.

You should send copies, **not** original evidence, to reduce the risk of damage to the learners' work. Also, original work may be too bulky and expensive to deliver. For some units, this may present logistical issues.

The following guidance gives advice on how best to prepare for sampling of the various types of evidence. If in doubt, discuss the sample with your Standards Verifier/External Examiner.

General guidance

- Encourage the recording of work as it is being done. Records of work in progress can provide good evidence. Also, collating a sample is easier if records have been kept throughout
- Portfolios should be indexed allowing the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to find work quickly and easily
- Witness statements and observation records should be included where relevant
- A front sheet should be included for every assignment, showing the learner's name, Pearson registration number, centre name and number, unit and criteria awarded. The work of each learner must be clearly identifiable, and it should be clear which assignment each piece of work applies to
- All work, including electronic files, should be clearly labelled with the learner's name and unit title
- Electronic evidence should be on a CD, DVD or using Cloud storage
- The quality and resolution of any photographs or digital evidence must be high enough for the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to be able to make judgments on the quality of the original work. This includes video or audio files
- To make sure that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner can open electronic files, please discuss this with them before you prepare a postal (electronic) sample. You should use the standard file formats: PowerPoint; Word Document (in Rich Text Format, to ensure compatibility); PDF; for video & audio files: WMV (Windows), MPEG (Mac), high quality MP3
- Please do not use software that is not commonly available on home systems unless you have agreed this with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner beforehand

When photographing work, please ensure:

- adequate lighting, using natural daylight where possible
- proper framing and the subject are in focus
- white balance is corrected
- any text is easily readable
- a high resolution (for digital)
- Some units require working logbooks (actor logs, dance diaries, training diaries, production files, etc.) which can be bulky, contain annotated scripts, studio diagrams, videos... etc.
- Completed units may relate to more than one performance. At the Standards Verifiers /External Examiners' discretion, samples of completed units may comprise one of the performance projects, as long as all the assessment and grading criteria have been assessed at least once in the sample. This should include final assessment decisions

- Learners must be clearly identified, particularly in a group performance or team activity. Learners can verbally identify themselves on video and/or you can provide a written commentary with a written description, timings and positions
- For musical performances, all performers should be identified. If this is an audio only recording, a written note would cover this
- Ensure that the playback medium is agreed beforehand with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner. In most cases, a DVD which is playable in a domestic DVD player will be appropriate. If a DVD is provided, you must check that it can be played on a standard PC or Mac without the need for specialist software

Production-based units

- As with performance-based units, some productions often require working logbooks (actor logs, dance diaries, production files, meeting minutes, etc.) which can be bulky, contain annotated scripts, studio diagrams, videos...etc.
- CAD evidence of stage plans, studio layouts, shot blocking, etc. will need to be printed or made available in a format accessible to the Standards Verifier/External Examiner
- Evidence may include design portfolios containing sketches, swatches, textured elements, etc.; 3D sets and models; large ground plans and scale diagrams; costumes, etc. These will need to be recorded in photos or videos
- Video and photo records of puppets and masks will be needed to show quality of workmanship as well as fitness for purpose and fitting (masks) and ease of use (puppets)
- For audio and video group productions, it should be made clear what role the learners undertook, so that the Standards Verifier/ External Examiner can assess the contribution from the learner in the sample. Individual production logs are a good way for learners to identify what they did and allows for self-evaluation of their processes and finished production
- Some production evidence may come from project files using specific sequencing or editing software. You should discuss this with the Standards Verifier/External Verifier beforehand. If they do not have access to the relevant software, you may wish to include screenshots of the project environment and include versions of the finished piece to show progression. These will need to be clearly labelled

Visual arts units

- Completed units in Art & Design may include a significant amount of visual evidence. Think about which of the units are most appropriate to send evidence by post. Some units may have evidence which is easier to copy, or may have more evidence in electronic or written formats
- 3D work or large scale 2D pieces should be photographed. It is useful to identify the dimensions of the work by showing a coin or a ruler alongside the piece. It is also useful to photograph ceramic or 3D work from all sides. With hollow vessels, an overhead view would reveal the quality of the interior
- Visual evidence should be supplemented by the learner's research and analysis of the brief, sketchbook work and design development, presentation sheets and the final outcome
- Where a learner has produced several versions of a piece, but do not materially add to the evidence, you may select the appropriate evidence. However, the evidence selected should still show coverage of the assessment and grading criteria awarded
- Any annotations on work should be legible. If this is difficult, then provide close ups of the annotation or a supplementary sheet showing what was said will help
- The images should be presented in the correct sequence so that the Standards Verifier/ External Examiner can see the learner's journey. PowerPoint is one way of ensuring that the images stay in order. Each individual JPEG image or word file should be numbered, and the sequence should be absolutely clear. Numbering files is another simple way of doing this.

Internal Verification

Internal verification is the quality assurance system you use to monitor assessment practice and decisions, ensuring that:

- assessment is consistent across Assessors
- assessment instruments are fit for purpose
- assessment decisions match learner work accurately and fully to the learning aim
- standardisation of Assessors takes place

Learners included within the sample will usually have been subject to internal verification. By this, we mean that for each learner, the assessment decisions for at least one assignment towards the unit have been internally verified. Full evidence of internal verification must be provided in the standards verification sample.

Before the sample is looked at by the Standards Verifier/External Examiner, your Lead Internal Verifier should check the sample and confirm that the standards are met by signing the Lead Internal Verifier Declaration. This is available on our [website](#).

Internal verification templates can be found on our [website](#). The templates are strongly recommended, but their use is not mandatory. You are free to design your own but using them will help to ensure that you are meeting requirements.

Full guidance on internal verification can be found in the **BTEC International Centre Guide to Internal Verification**, available on our [website](#).

The standards verification report

On the day of the visit, the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will make arrangements to meet the relevant people in your centre to discuss the management and delivery of the programmes. You should provide the previous Standards Verifier/External Examiner report and any other minutes from appropriate meetings that have been held since the last visit.

All of the following topics will be included in the report and, if required, Essential Actions and/or Recommendations may be identified. Essential Actions identified are mandatory, but do not result in a certification being stopped for programmes.

Inaccurate assessment judgements reported in the last part of the report will result in certification pending status of a programme. We will not be able to issue certificates for your learners until these have been rectified.

Centre Information

The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will confirm with you..

- the language of delivery and assessment (if the learners are assessed in a language other than English, the certificate needs to contain a statement to this effect. Please contact your Regional Development Manager if you are assessing in a language other than English but your certificates do not contain this sentence)
- date of sampling
- the number of registrations made on Edexcel Online and the number of active learners at your centre
- the mode of delivery (face to face, blended or distance learning)
- whether any programmes are being run on a collaborative basis with other institutions
- a provisional date for the next visit

Summary of Essential Actions

This is a summary of action points reported on elsewhere in the form. It provides an action plan for you to work to before the next visit

Summary of Actions from the Last Visit

The report will include any Essential Actions or Recommendations from the previous report. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will look at progress made in relation to action points given in previous reports, indicating any that remain to be addressed

Areas of Good Practice

This will report any truly exceptional areas of good practice. You should not expect to see an entry here in every report

General Comments

The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will report here any general points that have not been made elsewhere in the report. These may relate to administration, communication, access to resources or issues arising that may have affected the report e.g. bad weather or transport problems

Detailed Comments

Heading	Evidence required
1. Centre Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective management procedures that are supported by appropriate systems policies and resources• How you review the programmes that you are delivering• How you monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of the programmes. This may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– minutes of meetings of Assessment Boards for levels 4-7 and BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Business– monitoring of late submission of student work– tracking the number of referrals and resubmissions– decisions made on extenuating circumstances– appeals• How changes are made as a result of review• Existence of a programme handbook owned by the programme Leader.• The operation of on-going assessment meetings, reviewing the:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– fairness and consistency of decisions– decision making process– administrative support for the meetings– scope of the minutes of previous meetings– organisation and conduct of the meetings• Conflict of duty:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– When a staff member is carrying out 2 or more different roles at the centre (e.g. Quality Nominee and an Internal verifier, Head of centre and assessor....etc) this should be disclosed to the SV/EE, in such case the SV/EE would need to question that, and be given a name of a staff member for a second opinion.– Conflicts of duty arise when a person is required to fulfil two or more different roles that may be in conflict with each other, and can be actual, potential or perceived conflicts of duty.• Conflict of duty scenarios are especially common issue in some centres especially in smaller size.
2. Policies and Procedures	<p>The following policies and associated procedures are in place, published, communicated and embedded in centre practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal verification - to include specific information about the role of the Lead IV for Level 2 and 3 programmes• Assessment - to include the new assessment rules at Levels 2 and 3 for centres delivering at this level

- Learner recruitment, registration and certification - to ensure that all learners are accurately registered on correct programmes on Edexcel Online at the beginning of their programme of learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - to ensure that learners who join your centre with qualifications already achieved are granted recognition for prior learning that maps to the BTEC qualification
- Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments – a policy to show that Reasonable Adjustment is identified by the centre at the pre-assessment planning stage and results in actions that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. The policy should also include Special Consideration to cover situations where a post-assessment allowance is made to reflect temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred at the time of assessment. The policy should ensure that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised
- Equal Opportunities - a policy to ensure that all learners have equal opportunity to access delivery and assessments, and that assessment is fair to every learner
- Learner plagiarism: staff malpractice and/or maladministration policies - to ensure that the meaning of plagiarism and maladministration are fully understood and the consequences of learners plagiarising work or staff committing malpractice are published and understood
- Appeals - a policy internal to the centre that is accompanied by the processes for a learner to make a staged, time constrained appeal regarding assessment outcomes
- Complaints - to indicate how all stakeholders are able to make a complaint about any issue other than an appeal against assessment
- Safeguarding of Learners - to explain how anyone can raise safeguarding concerns with us and how we will manage those concerns.
- Risk Assessment and health and safety - a policy to ensure the safety of all BTEC learners on a programme of study with the centre
- Conflict of Interest - a policy to ensure that the outcome of assessment cannot be influenced by people with a vested interest in the outcome
- Learner Support - a policy to ensure that learners receive any support required to allow them to achieve to their full potential, but which does not compromise the integrity of assessment
- Distance learning and assessment policy - This policy is for centres who are applying to use distance learning or assessment in our qualifications and outlines the minimum requirements needed to deliver our qualifications in this way.
- Centre Contingency and Adverse Effects – a policy that asks ‘what if’ questions about unusual events e.g. a fire that may destroy learner records; the breakdown of a relationship with a 3rd party provider; government legislation
- Centre completed, signed and uploaded their Terms & Conditions document on Edexcel online (EoL)

3.
Registration and

- There is a process for ensuring that student registration and certification is accurate and monitored effectively

<p>student learner support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must be registered correctly on the programme and any amendments, transfers or withdrawals made in a timely manner • The programme team has a good working relationship with your exams office to ensure that our student registration details accurately reflect your own records • Your centre must have procedures in place for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – checking of the accuracy of student registrations – ensuring that timely and accurate certification claims are checked and verified against assessment records – checking a sample of certificates received against assessment records, prior to issue to students – investigating and reporting all inaccurate, early/late and fraudulent registrations or certification claims, via your senior management, to us – The centre only recruits those learners who show a potential to achieve the qualification (recruitment with integrity) – RPL is applied according to policy where appropriate – Specialist support is given to learners where appropriate – There is an informative and accurate student handbook •
<p>4. Programme delivery</p>	<p>Human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that an appropriate number of centre staff are appropriately qualified, updated, trained and supported. Records of training events held to update staff about developments in Pearson qualifications, including changes in assessment practices • Regularity of programme staff team meetings • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will meet with the staff and ask if there are any concerns relating to the current and future operation of the programmes <p>Physical resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an overall strategy for provision of learning resources consistent with learning strategies and the student profile? • Are resources regularly reviewed, maintained and replaced as required? • Is the Library/Learning resource stock adequate and up to date? Are opening hours appropriate to the student profile and the learning regime? • Are computing facilities sufficient and is there adequate access? Is specialist software sufficient/readily accessible? • Are there open access learning/IT facilities? • The learners' environment is safe, healthy and monitored to reduce risk. <p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of the programme is appropriate for a vocational programme and includes a variety of delivery methods. • The centre has accurate qualification structure and unit combinations produced <p>For Higher National programmes and BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Business only</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will seek views from students about the assessment process and access to resources. This requires meeting some students every year. Therefore, visits should be arranged on a day when the cohort of students is on site or remotely (online applications) in case of remote sampling took place. • Points the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will discuss with students include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – all areas relating to the assessment process including assessment quality, quantity, variety, outcome coverage, skills development, feedback quality and promptness, academic support and clarity of task descriptions and grading criteria – the quality, variety and effectiveness of teaching methods – whether physical resources are appropriate in terms of type, quantity and currency in relation to supporting the teaching and learning – whether there is an effective tutorial system in operation covering both academic and pastoral care • whether there are effective methods for students to express their opinions regarding their learning experiences and are their concerns documented and acted upon?
<p>5. Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design and nature of assessments permit the aims and learning objectives of each programme to be met and are of a standard appropriate to the qualification level • The centre has taken reasonable steps to ensure that opportunities for plagiarism are removed • If more than one Assessor assesses a unit, that standardisation events have been held • For Pearson Set Assignments, the centre made arrangements for the secure delivery with the defined degree of control • Did the centre use Authorised Assignment Briefs? • Whether Authorised Assignment Briefs used are amended, including the changes made (where appropriate) • The following points will be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are the assignment outcomes and related assessment criteria clearly stated? – Are the assessment tasks matched to the outcomes/assessment criteria and to the level? – Is there a variety of assessment tasks? – Do the tasks relate fully to the unit content? – Is there clear guidance to students on tasks, content/scope, and grading? – Are assessments appropriate to the student profile, level and mode of study? – Do assessments promote learning, allowing students to develop skills as opposed to rote learning/accumulation of facts? – At levels 4, 5 and 7 are there formative as well as summative assessments? – Are there opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and have some freedom of choice for completion? – Is there a unit assessment plan detailing coverage of all assessment criteria and grading opportunities? – Are there sufficient assessments for each unit?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the workload realistic? – Is there equality of opportunity for all students, including those with particular requirements, to achieve the stated outcomes and associated grading criteria?
6. Internal verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records show that verification of the amended Authorised Assignment Briefs and centre devised assignment briefs are checked before they are given to learners and they are thorough, planned, recorded and used to enhance future assessment practice • The Internal Verifier ensured that Pearson Set Assessment(s) are not amended • IV records show that appropriate samples of assessment decisions are checked to ensure that the standard is being achieved • Accurate and up to date assessment records are kept securely and made available for third party scrutiny on request • The procedure for maintaining and auditing assessment records is secure and effective. • For Levels 2 and 3 resubmissions and retakes have the authorising of the Lead Internal Verifier
7. Higher National programmes and BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Business only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Assessment Board minutes and supporting documentation • Learners meet Pearson’s Language requirements as specified on our website • Resubmission and repeat documentation which is signed and dated by a member of the Assessment Board • For HNs only, confirmation that Pearson’s Annual Programme Monitoring Report forms (online) have been completed • Confirmation that marketing materials use full and accurate titles of Higher National programmes being delivered
8. Assessment sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will verify a sample of assessed student work. If the assessment does not meet national standards for any of the students sampled, the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will identify an Essential Action. Existence of an Essential Action in this part of the report will result in certification pending status for the specific programme • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will take an appropriately sized sample of learners’ work and check the assessment decisions made • Only learners registered on Edexcel Online will be sampled and the Pearson registration number will be entered on the report form • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will decide ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ as to whether the standard has been achieved • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will give a written justification of the decision • For Levels 4 and 5 only the External Examiner will check that contextualised grading criteria for each grade being applied correctly in assignments • Please note, in general, if the Standards Verifier/External Examiner finds evidence of plagiarism in the student evidence, this will result in an Essential Action and this will result in certification pending status for the specific programme.

At the end of the visit the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will give verbal feedback to senior management and any other appropriate members of the programme team. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will not normally provide a full report on the day but will summarise his/her findings and any required actions. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will tell you when the report will be sent, and this is normally within 10 working days of the visit.

The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will send a copy of the report to:

- The Centre
- reportsprocessing@pearson.com
- International Quality Manager
- Regional Office pqs.internationaleo@pearson.com

The reports are read and reviewed. In very exceptional circumstances, the decision of the Standards Verifier//External Examiner might be challenged, investigated and the decision may be overturned.

The report will:

- show the status and quality of the programme
- evaluate the materials and processed reviewed during the visit
- guide you towards action required to improve the quality of the programme
- decide whether certificates can be released for printing

You must give full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in the Standards Verifier//External Examiner reports. The actions taken as a result of reports, or the reasons for not following recommendations, should be formally recorded and circulated to those concerned

You should ensure that student representatives are given the opportunity to be fully involved in this process, enabling them to understand all the issues raised and your response. At centre level the general issues and themes arising from the reports should be reviewed.

Outcomes of the sample

First sample report status	Outcome
Certification Released	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sufficient sample has been provided and the Standards Verifier/External Examiner judges that you are assessing to national standards and documenting assessment correctly • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner confirms that all student evidence is valid, authentic and sufficient • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner report releases certification, programme by programme • You will receive separate reports for different levels of programmes with different assessment methodologies • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner may agree that assessment standards are being maintained but identify Essential Actions or Recommendations in sections 1 – 7 of the report (where appropriate). You should read the report carefully for Essential Actions or Recommendations. • Certificates can be claimed on Edexcel Online and certificates will be printed
Certification Pending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external examination report will release or stop certification for each individual programme within a sector. Therefore, if one or more programmes are subject to “certification pending” this does not automatically affect certification of the other programmes • Certification pending means that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner does not agree that you are assessing to national standards and/or not documenting assessment and internal verification correctly on one or more of the programmes in the sector • Certification pending status will also result from any evidence of student plagiarism found in the sample • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner judges that one or more assessment decisions are incorrect, or the approach to assessment and verification does not meet requirements • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will give initial feedback on the day of the visit, so you should be prepared for the outcomes of the report • Certificates should not be claimed • Certificates will not be printed
Not Yet Fully Sampled (NYFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standards Verifier/External Examiner has not yet sampled all of the units that make up the qualification • Your learners are in the first cohort and this first cohort will not yet have completed the course • Certificates are not yet required and will not be claimed

Certification pending with limited certification

- The Standards Verifier//External Examiner is prepared to release the certificates for a small number of learners. The standard of these learners' work is judged as appropriate for certificates to be issued. A limited certification form will be submitted along with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner's report
- The programme has certification pending status for certification of other learners

Appeals

If you have concerns about the outcomes of standards verification, we have a formal enquiries and appeals process. Details can be found on the Policies section of our [website](#)

Preparing for a Standards Verifier (SV)/ External Examiner (EE) visit

This chapter will help you put everything in place for a successful visit from your Standards Verifier/External Examiner.

Planning the visit

Planning ahead for the visit is an important part of the standards verification process. Planning helps the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to use the time effectively and to provide you with support and guidance. Planning will also help you understand what will be required from you and other staff on the day.

Before each visit the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will send you a visit plan. They will copy in your Regional Development Manager who, if required, will be pleased to help you plan the visit.

The plan will state the date of the visit, which should be at a time that is also acceptable to you. Please bear in mind that if your Standards Verifier/External Examiner needs to fly from the UK, there may be a need for him/her to obtain a visa or other travel documents. Please build this time into the date agreed.

The plan will also detail the activities that will be undertaken. When the Standards Verifier/External Examiner visits you s/he will need to have the maximum amount of time possible to complete their planned activities.

You are asked not to provide hospitality or other activities beyond ensuring they have some refreshments during their visit.

Standards Verifiers/External Examiners are not contracted to attend press conferences, prize giving or similar activities. They are allocated to your centre to check that the assessment of the learners' work is to the required standard and not to act as a Pearson representative for public relations purposes.

Please note that a visit normally takes one full working day. However, if there is a high number of registrations at your centre or there is an urgent need for certification for a programme that has not yet been fully sampled then more than one day may be needed. In this case there will be an extra cost incurred.

The plan

Everything that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will want to see should already exist. It should be a matter of getting everything together and letting everybody know what is expected of them on the day of the visit.

This list will help you think about what is required and can be used as a planning aid for the visit.

Required documents for the visit	Person responsible
The visit plan sent by the Standards Verifier/External Examiner	Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate); Quality Nominee
The Internal Verification plan that shows what is going to be Internally Verified, by whom and when	Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate), Programme Leader
The assessment plan that shows when units are going to be delivered and when assessment opportunities are going to be given to learners	Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate); Programme Leader
Internal Verification records that show assignments were internally verified before being given to learners	Internal Verifiers, Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate)
Internal Verification records that show assessment decisions for all Assessors have been sampled and shown to be correct	Internal Verifiers, Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate)
Assessed learner work as called for by the Standards Verifier/External Examiners	Assessors
All assessment records that track the learners	Programme Leader
The last Standards Verifier/External Examiner report (unless this is a first visit)	Quality Nominee; Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate); Programme Leader

There will be a number of activities that will need to be planned. This list is not exhaustive, but it will help you arrange a useful visit.

Things to do	Person who may do this
Inform the staff and learners of the date of the visit and why the visit is happening	Senior Management
Check the learner registration details on Edexcel Online match the learners on programme	Examinations Officer, Quality Nominee
Check assessment records are up-to-date	Programme Leader
Check that all assessors are using the correct programme/unit specification	Programme Leader; Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate), Assessors
Check that Internal Verification records are up to date	Lead Internal Verifier (where appropriate), Programme Leader
Check that learners' work is available and accessible by the Standards Verifier/External Examiner	Assessors

Arrange a room for the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to work in quietly and undisturbed	Senior Management
Book transport and driver to collect and return the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to the hotel (if requested)	Regional Development Manager and centre
Arrange the time for the staff to meet with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner	Senior Management
Arrange the time for the learners to meet with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner (Higher National and Level 7 only)	Programme Leader
Ensure that all materials are available in the room on the day of the visit	Programme Team

The day of the visit

This is an important day. When the Standards Verifier/External Examiner arrives, please confirm the visit plan that should already have been agreed.

Please note the following points.

- The formal centre introductions should not take more than 15-20 minutes and the verification process should start as soon as possible.
- The Standards Verifier/External Examiner is going to spend most of their time checking assessment practice and this needs to be undertaken in private. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner should be left alone to do this. There should be no-one else in the room
- Please remember that the Standards Verifiers/External Examiners are not allowed to deliver any training. Training sessions can be arranged through our specialist [training team](#).
- We know that your staff have their regular jobs to do, so please do not cancel classes. The visit plan should help make sure that appropriate people are available at the right time.
- Lunch should be a low-key event. Lunch should take no more than one hour; otherwise it begins to take up too much of the verification time. It is recognised that you may want to use the lunch as an opportunity for your staff to meet the Standards Verifier/External Examiner.
- Please try not to ask the Standards Verifier/External Examiner how the process is going. Kindly wait for everything to be completed. A final judgement will be announced at the feedback session at the end of the day.
- Please ensure that meetings run to time. The day may be extended by mutual agreement if extra discussion time is required.

- The feedback session is formal. It is important that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner is given the opportunity to present their findings and recommendations. The feedback may require action points that need to be agreed with senior management, so it is recommended that at least one member of the senior management team is present at this meeting. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will make the same points in their written report.
- Gifts should not be given to Standards Verifier/External Examiner. They are not expected. Your culture may provide small friendship gifts, such as booklets or photographs of your centre. A Standards Verifier/External Examiner can accept these if it is your culture to give them. Other gifts could be considered to impose a conflict of interest and as refusal to accept them may offend, we ask you not to offer gifts to Standards Verifier/External Examiner.

Top tips

These pointers to good practice will help you ensure a successful outcome to the visit.

- Make sure that Assessors are giving appropriate feedback to learners. The feedback on the learner work should clearly show which of the assessment or grading criteria they have achieved.
- Provide a realistic scenario for each assignment (where appropriate)
- Make sure that your learners have acknowledged their sources of information in their work and that work has not been copied or plagiarised.
- If you are using exams or end tests make sure that the questions relate to the assessment criteria (where appropriate). Assessment must be to the assessment criteria and not marked in any other way. Percentage marking is unacceptable. For more information please refer to 'Guidelines for International Centres – The Use of Time Limited Assessment Activities', available on our [website](#)
- The new assessment rules for Levels 2 and 3, introduced in September 2014 have limited number of times that learners can submit their work for assessment. Make sure that if you are delivering qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 that your staff have read this document; 'BTEC international Centre Guide to Internal Assessment Entry – Level 3' available on our [website](#).
- If you would like further support to plan a visit, please contact your Standards Verifier/External Examiner or your Regional Office.

After the visit

Making a good plan should result in a successful visit. Success will be measured by the following:

- you feel supported and informed about the standards required
- the Standards Verifier/External Examiner has been assured that you are assessing and internally verifying learners' work accurately
- no serious quality issues have been found
- certificates have been released
- you feel prepared for the next visit

Authenticity and authentication

Only evidence for assessment that is authentic should be accepted, i.e. that is the learner's own and that can be judged fully to see whether it meets the assessment criteria.

Centres should ensure that authenticity is considered when setting assignments. For example, ensuring that each learner has a different focus for research will reduce opportunities for copying or collaboration. On some occasions, it will be useful to include supervised production of evidence. Where appropriate, practical activities or performance observed by the Assessor should be included.

Learners must authenticate the evidence that they provide for assessment. They do this by signing a declaration stating that it is their own work when they submit it. For practical or performance activities observed by the Assessor, this is not necessary.

Assessors should only assess learner evidence that is authentic. If they find through the assessment process that some or all of the evidence is not authentic, they need to take appropriate action, including invoking malpractice policies as required.

It is important that all evidence can be validated through verification. This means that it must be capable of being reassessed in full by another person. When practical and performance evidence are used, centres need to think about how supporting evidence can be captured through using, for example, videos, recordings, photographs, handouts, activity sheets etc.

The authentication of learner evidence is the responsibility of each centre. If during a Standards Verifier (SV) raises concerns about the authenticity of evidence, or learner declarations of authenticity are not available, a set timeframe will be given to produce these. If any concerns are not resolved, or declarations are not produced, within the timeframe given, the SV will not release certification for the relevant programme(s).

Plagiarism

There are many definitions of what constitutes as plagiarism. All of them agree that plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct or, put more simply, a form of cheating. Plagiarism is much more than simple copying from another learner, or from books or the Internet, and can be taken to include paraphrasing, sub-contracting the work to someone else, submitting the same piece of work for two different purposes, etc. Ultimately, plagiarism is attempting to pass off other people's work and ideas as your own.

Plagiarism is fundamentally wrong and provides learners with an unfair advantage. Assessment procedures are compromised if the work submitted is not the learner's own and the Standards Verifier (SV) will set the programme's status to Certification Pending – Centre Action Required if they find evidence of learner plagiarism that has not been detected by the centre.

Anti-plagiarism software is an aid to detecting plagiarism, other potential indicators include:

- changes in font/font size
- inconsistencies/changes in topic/subject (e.g. change of company under discussion)
- presence of foreign language accents, marks or numerals where not expected

- changes in topic/flow of text/tone
- text having passages which read oddly (potentially indicative of use of rewording tools to avoid plagiarism detection)
- changes in writing style across assignments.

It is also extremely important that centres have policies and procedures in place to address contract cheating, the use of third-party services and essay mills. JCQ guidance on preventing, detecting and dealing with plagiarism can be found [here](#).

Where centres identify staff or learner malpractice concerns the JCQ [process](#) for reporting it to the Awarding Body should be followed.

In the event of malpractice being suspected or proven, Pearson will be required to complete additional quality assurance checks before certification can take place.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

JCQ guidance in relation to the use of AI can be found [here](#). Whilst the principles above remain, centres may wish to consider additional assessment methods to address the potential use of AI.

Useful contacts

For more information on Pearson qualifications and services please visit the [Delivering BTEC Qualifications](#) section of our website or via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).