



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Evaluation of assessor and verifier awards (A1, A2, V1)

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Executive summary

This is a post-accreditation report evaluating the new assessor and verifier (A&V) awards, their introduction to centres by the awarding bodies and their delivery in relation to the requirements of the relevant assessment strategy. These awards were designed to replace the existing suite of 'D' unit qualifications and were made available towards the end of 2002.

New unit reference	New unit title in the Learning and Development NVQ	Old unit reference
A1	Assess candidates using a range of methods	D32 + 33
A2	Assess candidates' performance through observation	D32
V1	Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process	D34
V2	Conduct external quality assurance of the assessment process	D35

Six awarding bodies were selected for the study on the basis of the number, range and type of qualifications they offer. The focus of this activity was on the following awards:

- Level 3 award in 'Assess candidates using a range of methods'
- Level 3 award in 'Assess candidates' performance through observation'
- Level 4 award in 'Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process'.

The QCA and ACCAC monitoring team carried out a number of activities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland for this study from April to October 2003. These included desk research, an analysis of the information and guidance supplied to centres by the awarding bodies, and visits to and telephone surveys of 54 centres.

The centres visited in this monitoring activity welcomed the involvement of the regulatory authorities and the early opportunity to contribute to a review of the implementation of their A&V awards. This summary gives an indication of the overall outcomes.

Outcomes

Generally, the A&V awards represented a valuable improvement in assessment practice. The major issues still to be addressed are: insufficient rigour in awarding bodies' monitoring of these awards; variation in the use and interpretation of independent assessment; lack of amplification from awarding bodies of sector body guidance when used at the assessor level; and inconsistent, often poor, assessment planning.

- The awarding bodies have not adequately interpreted these awards and created clear, consistent guidance for their centres. There is variation between them on the type and extent of support provided. Most awarding bodies put on events, which are seen by the centres to be of varying usefulness. Provision of support and advice over and above this varies from very little to full documentation, supplied by the sector body and awarding body forum, as well as specific updates

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and online information. There is evidence that there is no consistent understanding in centres of the assessment requirements for these awards.

- There is no evidence that any awarding body carries out evaluation of the activities related to the implementation of the A&V awards. However, one awarding body suspended centre approval until an external verifier visit had been made.
- The majority of centres have addressed the need for internal training and guidance for assessors and verifiers, but findings from centre visits indicate that there has been insufficient training and monitoring of the performance of external verifiers to ensure that consistent assessment is taking place.
- There is a lack of overall consistent application of the requirements for independent assessment and understanding of precisely what it is. Many of the centres feel that it adds nothing to the robustness of the awards, merely creating an additional administrative burden. Furthermore, the use of internal verifiers in the independent assessment role is leading to confusion over the purpose of independent assessment itself, as well as a lack of consistency in application. This lack of clear understanding is also to be found in the interpretation and use of professional discussion and in the application of hypothetical questioning.
- The majority of centres have adapted existing processes and do not find the occupational competence requirements a problem for candidates. Although there are variations in the interpretation of continuing professional development (CPD) requirements, the majority of centres have taken this on board and made efforts to create opportunities for candidates to apply and record their professional development. Evidence of external verifier checking on this activity was patchy.
- There is inconsistency both within and across awarding bodies on the use of non-NVQ evidence. Confusion and inconsistency is also apparent across awarding bodies in the interpretation of what constitutes a 'realistic work environment' (RWE) and its application within centres.
- There is evidence of some confused guidance from one awarding body on upgrading from D34 to V1, but the overall picture is of centres being allowed to make their own decisions. A significant number of centres raised an issue regarding the construction of element 4 of the V1 award. Verifiers working in certain centre structures have difficulty fulfilling this requirement of the award. It relates to the roles of internal verifiers carrying out portfolio checks only in some larger centres where there are a number of internal verifiers – perhaps one of whom is solely responsible for external verifier liaison. Awarding bodies need to be aware of the threat to consistency of standards in this kind of circumstance.
- The quality of external verification is inconsistent, and there is concern over the number of centres that have not received a visit at all – approximately 50 per cent of the sample. Awarding bodies with multiple centre approval schemes showed weaknesses in the separation of comments related to the A&V awards and those relating to other awards being covered at the time of the same visit.
- Awarding bodies have not yet supplied appropriate guidance to amplify and contextualise the basic assessment requirements contained in the common assessment strategy and evidence documents.

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- There is a large proportion of discrepancies within the candidates' portfolio evidence. This seems to indicate a fragmented approach to portfolio building and little use of holistic approaches to assessment.

Introduction

Post-accreditation monitoring of the awarding bodies

This is a report on the arrangements for delivering the assessor and verifier (A&V) awards. The report focuses on a number of key issues relating to the following questions asked of centres:

- What support/visits are received from the awarding body in relation to the A&V awards?
- What assessment guidance is provided, how useful is this and is its usage mandatory?
- What guidance/training is given to verifiers and assessors for these awards within the centre and who provides this training?
- How does the centre meet the requirements for the independent assessment component of A1, A2 and V1?
- Does the centre use the internal verifier in the independent assessor role and, if so, what impact does this have on the internal verifier's quality assurance role?
- How are verifiers/centre managers ensuring that the occupational competence requirement (especially time constraints) is being met for assessors and verifiers?
- How are the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for assessors and verifiers being met and documented for awarding body checking, and has the external verifier checked this if a visit has occurred?
- What guidance has been given on non-NVQ evidence and what use has/will be made of this evidence?
- Is there any use of realistic working environments (RWEs) within the centres and, if so, what is it and how is it being used?
- Do assessors and verifiers who are not yet qualified assess the A&V awards?
- Does the centre use assessors qualified with unit A2 only and, if so, in what role?
- Do internal verifiers who hold D34 plan on upgrading to V1?
- If the Learning and Development NVQ external verifier has visited since the new awards came out, what were the outcome and required actions (if any)?
- How, if applicable, does the centre use professional discussion?
- Have there been any instances of, or are there any plans for, the use of 'hypothetical questioning' for candidates who are not able to generate appropriate performance evidence?

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- Does the examination of portfolio evidence support the correct application of the assessment strategy and standards?

During the monitoring, regulatory authority staff undertook a number of activities:

- desk research of the awarding bodies' introduction of the awards, based on information and documentation supplied by the awarding bodies and other information held by the regulatory authorities
- visits to 54 centres offering the awards across all six awarding bodies
- telephone survey of two centres.

Post-accreditation monitoring findings

What support/visits are received from the awarding body in relation to the A&V awards?

There is variation between the awarding bodies on the type and extent of support provided to centres. Most awarding bodies put on events, which are seen by centres to be of varying usefulness. Provision of support and advice over and above this varies from very little to full documentation, supplied by the sector body and awarding body forum, as well as specific updates and online information. There is no evidence that any awarding body carries out evaluation of the activities related to the implementation of the A&V awards. However, one awarding body suspended centre approval until an external verifier visit had been made.

- All except one awarding body offer training days. The value of these is seen as variable by centres across all awarding bodies. No centre indicated that all of its questions are answered. A small number of centres claim that the days are a waste of time.
- A significant number of centres say that they have received no specific support at all. This includes centres from all of the major awarding bodies.
- The most common source of information and discussion of issues is said to be the centres' external verifiers.
- Some awarding bodies provide guidance documentation. This is said to be of varying usefulness and in many cases is the generic information already circulated from the national training organisation (NTO)¹. There is no consistency among awarding bodies in the amount and extent of information given to centres.
- Approval arrangements range from the requirement of a centre visit for the new awards to the submission of a request to offer the awards, or to requests for automatic transfer from 'D' units. Where a centre visit is required there appears to be a better understanding of the requirements of the awards.
- Only two centres out of the 54 directly praise their awarding body support.

What assessment guidance has been provided, how useful is this and is its usage mandatory?

The extent and quality of assessment guidance varies both within and across awarding bodies. There is no evidence to show that there is consistent understanding in centres of the assessment requirements for these awards.

- There is variation in centres' perceptions, both across and within awarding bodies, of whether assessment guidance is provided and whether it is mandatory where it is provided. All awarding bodies arrange events for centre staff and all staff have some form of access to the assessment strategy.

¹ National training organisations (NTOs) are now being replaced by other sector bodies.

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- A small but significant number of centres say that they receive no guidance at all. This is across all awarding bodies except EAL.
- Many centres say that the guidance documentation is mandatory. This documentation is usually the assessment strategy and, where the awarding body was a party to the awarding body forum, the agreed common evidence is mandatory.
- EAL re-package the standards with a different identification system, which splits up the knowledge and understanding specification, to meet their evidence-gathering process. This makes it difficult for candidates to make a direct link with achievement of the standards.
- Opinion varies on the effectiveness of the guidance that is made available, but no individual centre is happy that all of its issues have been resolved, and the majority still have queries and uncertainties.

What guidance/training is given to verifiers and assessors for these awards within the centre and who provides this training?

The majority of centres have addressed the need for internal training and guidance for assessors and verifiers.

- The majority of centres offer training for the assessors and verifiers. This ranges from the creation of a formal CPD process with records to the informal discussion of issues within the team (usually in small centres with two or three team members involved). Only two centres use outside consultants in this role.

How does the centre meet the requirements for the independent assessment component of A1, A2 and V1?

There is a lack of overall consistent application of the requirements for independent assessment and understanding of precisely what it is. Many of the centres feel that it adds nothing to the robustness of the awards, merely creating an additional administrative burden.

- There is a lack of clear understanding of what exactly independent assessment is – this applies to centres across all awarding bodies. There is also no clear interpretation among the centres of what constitutes an independent assessment strategy by the awarding bodies.
- The extreme examples found include one centre that thinks independent assessment must be sourced from outside the centre itself and another centre that said the independent assessor provides guidance and support to the candidate before the final assessment.
- The most common interpretation is that independent assessment may be undertaken by a competent assessor from within the centre who has had no involvement in that candidate's assessment.
- There is great variation in the practice carried out by independent assessors. Activities vary from the scrutiny of individual pieces of evidence to the

examination of elements or complete units. Some centres believe that the independent assessor can overturn the assessor's judgement, others that they cannot.

- There is variation in the type of reporting by independent assessors. Some complete a discrete report for each candidate, some complete a batch report and others tick a box.
- Many centres commented that independent assessment as described and used in these awards does not contribute anything to the consistency or quality of the assessment process, it merely adds another bureaucratic burden.

Does the centre use the internal verifier in the independent assessor role and, if so, what impact does this have on the internal verifier's quality assurance role?

The use of the internal verifier in the independent assessment role is leading to confusion over issues surrounding independent assessment itself as well as a lack of consistency in its application.

- There is confusion about the role of the independent assessor and how it links to the internal verifier's role. There is no consistency within or between awarding bodies on this issue. Centres tend to make their own decisions (usually based upon size and staffing), with centres having to manage the allocation of candidates to an internal verifier, who may also be a candidate assessor and act in the independent assessor capacity. There is no consistent understanding of whether it is 'right' or 'wrong' for an internal verifier to verify a portfolio for which they have acted as the independent assessor.
- Where there is more than one internal verifier for the A&V awards there is generally evidence to show that the independent assessor does not then act in an internal verifier role, this being addressed through the sampling strategy.

How are verifiers/centre managers ensuring that the occupational competence requirement (especially time constraints) is being met for assessors and verifiers?

The majority of centres have adapted existing processes and do not find the occupational competence requirements a problem for candidates.

- The majority of centres do not find this to be an issue, as most of the staff concerned were previously involved in delivering the 'D' units. Existing processes are easily adapted to provide for this requirement. One centre did not know anything about this but was subsequently found to have no real knowledge of the awards at all, despite being approved. This was reported as a serious issue directly to the awarding body concerned.

How are the CPD requirements for assessors and verifiers being met and documented for awarding body checking, and has the external verifier checked this if a visit has occurred?

Although there are variations in the interpretation of CPD requirements, the majority of centres have taken this on board and made efforts to create opportunities for candidates to apply and record their professional development. There is some evidence of confused guidance from one awarding body on D34 upgrading, but the overall picture is of centres being allowed to make their own decisions.

- The majority of centres across all awarding bodies have developed mechanisms to record this. There is variation in the definition of what constitutes the requirements for CPD, and this has yet to be fully tested as there has been variable checking by external verifiers where centre visits have occurred. At present there is insufficient evidence to make a measured judgement in this area.
- A small number of centres report that they have been told by one of the awarding bodies that existing qualified internal verifiers must achieve V1.

What guidance has been given on non-NVQ evidence and what use has/will be made of this evidence?

There is lack of clarity and consistency both within and across awarding bodies on the use of non-NVQ evidence.

- There are differences both within and across awarding bodies, with no evidence of clear policies. The type of centre and NVQs in use impact on whether non-NVQ evidence is considered at all. Many of the centres visited do not use it in any circumstances. Where centres do use this type of evidence there is variation of implementation according to a number of factors: whether the centre consults the awarding body at all or uses its own discretion, whether it receives advice from its external verifier, and whether it uses advice from other centres or forums.

Is there any use of realistic working environments within the centres and, if so, what is it and how is it being used?

There is confusion and inconsistency across awarding bodies in the interpretation of what constitutes realistic working environments (RWEs) and their application within centres.

- There is no evidence of any awarding body giving clarification to centres other than that provided in the assessment strategy or agreed common evidence.
- Across all awarding bodies' centres there is some confusion as to what an RWE really is and where it differs from a simulation. The majority of centres understand that simulation is not allowed (with the exception of one centre) but cannot easily define the difference between simulation and use of an RWE.
- The majority of centres do not use RWEs, saying that natural performance evidence is readily available.

Do assessors and verifiers who are not yet qualified assess the A&V awards?

Assessors who have not yet achieved A1 do not assess the A1 award.

- The majority of centres across all awarding bodies cascade arrangements already in place from previous 'D' unit practices. There is no evidence of unqualified assessors or verifiers assessing A&V awards.

Does the centre use assessors qualified with A2 only and, if so, in what role?

There was no evidence of the use of A2 assessors at the time of the monitoring activity. The majority of centres feel that there will be little demand for this award.

- There was no evidence of centres having 'A2 only' candidates. The majority of centres feel that there will be either no demand or very little demand for this award.
- As a technical issue, there is a discrepancy in the wording between A1 and A2 relating to assessment planning. A1 refers to 'develop' an assessment plan, whereas A2 refers to 'agree and review'. One centre was confused about where A2 candidates would get or demonstrate the development skills for assessment planning.

Do internal verifiers who hold D34 plan on upgrading to V1?

Centres are applying their own discretion, with some requiring upgrading but the majority not requiring it. A significant number of centres raised the issue of the construction of the award making it difficult for verifiers working in certain centre structures to fulfil their requirements.

- Centres are left to make their own decisions: the majority are not requiring D34 holders to achieve V1, instead using the CPD route to ensure that skills are upgraded.
- Some centres report difficulties with the standards where they are required to generate evidence of involvement in the overall quality assurance process, including material about external auditing (as required in element 4 of V1). The structure of some centres is such that there are internal verifiers who simply carry out a sampling role, having no liaison with the awarding body. These candidates would have difficulty in achieving this award, as they would not be able to accumulate evidence for their portfolios that is specified in the standards. There is no evidence to show that this is having a current impact on the quality of these qualifications when they are taken by candidates with access to relevant resources, but it does raise the issue of accessibility for some candidates in terms of their design.

If the Learning and Development external verifier has visited since the new awards came out, what were the outcome and required actions (if any)?

The quality of external verification is inconsistent and there is concern over the number of centres that have not received a visit at all. Awarding bodies with multiple centre approval schemes showed weaknesses in the separation of A&V award comments and issues relating to other awards being covered at the time of the same visit. Action points are not being raised when they should be.

The table summarises external verifier visits since the introduction of the awards.

Awarding body	Number of centres	Number of visits
BHTB	2	2
C & G	14	9
EAL	6	5
EDI	9	2
LQ	9	4
OCR	14	4

- The quality of external verification is variable across the external verification reports seen. Detail in the reports is lacking, many do not have action points, and the overall impression is one of external verifiers not making a concerted attempt to help centres implement these awards. It was surprising to note the low number of visits over the sample. The awards have been in operation for almost a year.
- For those awarding bodies with multiple approval schemes the quality of the scrutiny of A&V awards is further reduced as, in some instances, it was a small part of the overall centre visit. Reporting suffered from unidentifiable action points or no action point at all. During centre visits some 'required actions' not identified by external verifiers were noted by the monitoring team.
- EDI specified that external verifiers would be recording that simulation is not being used, but this was not noted on the reports seen.

How, if applicable, does the centre use professional discussion?

There is a lack of clarity both within and across awarding bodies on the interpretation and use of professional discussion and, in some instances, its applicability to these awards. As a result, centres are unclear about this method of assessment.

- There is no clear definition or explanation of the use of professional discussion across awarding bodies. Centres' comments indicate that no awarding body has given any further guidance on its use other than that provided in the assessment strategy. Some centres have sought clarification from external verifiers (with one saying that as the regulatory authorities were visiting he would be grateful for their opinion).
- Many centres use professional discussion, but in different ways. Some of the different ways it is used include: eliciting knowledge and understanding evidence, dealing with applicative 'what if' contingencies, and as a part of the independent assessment process.

- Recording methodologies vary. Some centres tape all discussions and present the tape as evidence, some do a paper record of questions and answers, some note down answers only.
- No centre indicated that it provides any training to its assessors in the practice of professional discussion, and no external verifier reports comment on the use of this methodology.
- A small number of centres say that they do not use professional discussion at all, as natural performance provides all the required evidence for the awards. One centre says that it does not encourage its use, but does not proscribe it either. Assessors working towards A1 are not required to demonstrate their competence in professional discussion yet will be expected to apply it if they assess A1 awards in the future.

Have there been any instances of, or are there any plans for, the use of 'hypothetical questioning' for candidates who are not able to generate appropriate performance evidence?

There is no consistency in the interpretation and application of hypothetical questioning, although indications are that this is not undermining the final assessment decision.

- There is no consistent picture within or across awarding bodies. Many centres do not use this type of questioning, saying that all evidence of competence comes from performance – exactly the same response as given by some centres when asked about professional discussion. Some centres say it is used for 'what if' contingency questioning (one centre being adamant that no candidate could get through without this form of evidence). Others say it is for evidence of knowledge and understanding. A number of centres were not completely clear as to the difference between hypothetical questioning and professional discussion.

Does the examination of portfolio evidence support the correct application of the assessment strategy and standards?

Only one out of the six awarding bodies showed no discrepancies within the portfolio evidence seen. There is a fragmented approach to portfolio building and little use of holistic approaches to assessment.

- Portfolio evidence was examined across all awarding bodies. Whilst time constraints and availability reduced the sample size, the following evidence was found:
 - BHTB: all portfolios in progress had discrepancies; in addition, there was no evidence of independent assessment
 - EDI: three out of 11 portfolios had discrepancies
 - C & G: four out of 16 portfolios had discrepancies
 - LQ: four out of 11 portfolios had discrepancies
 - OCR: none of five portfolios had discrepancies
 - EAL: one out of six portfolios had discrepancies.
- The discrepancies range from simple process errors such as missing signatures through to poor evidence of assessment planning and insufficient recording of discussion (either professional or as a result of hypothetical questioning).

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- Of particular note is the use of a fragmented approach to portfolio building and assessment planning. This is due to the unit-based approach to assessment planning inherent in the assessment strategy and guidance being adopted by almost all centres. Adapting the assessment plan to a candidate's natural progression through an NVQ (in order to take advantage of holistic assessment opportunities for the assessor candidate) is not the preferred option.

Appendix 1: Key questions used in post- accreditation monitoring activities

- What support/visits are received from the awarding body in relation to the assessor and verifier (A&V) awards?
- What assessment guidance is provided, how useful is this and is its usage mandatory?
- What guidance/training is given to verifiers and assessors for these awards within the centre and who provides this training?
- How does the centre meet the requirements for the independent assessment component of A1, A2 and V1?
- Does the centre use the internal verifier in the independent assessor role and, if so, what impact does this have on the internal verifier's quality assurance role?
- How are verifiers/centre managers ensuring that the occupational competence requirement (especially time constraints) is being met for assessors and verifiers?
- How are the CPD requirements for assessors and verifiers being met and documented for awarding body checking, and has the external verifier checked this if a visit has occurred?
- What guidance has been given on non-NVQ evidence and what use has/will be made of this evidence?
- Is there any use of realistic working environments within the centres and, if so, what is it and how is it being used?
- Do assessors and verifiers who are not yet qualified assess the A&V awards?
- Does the centre use assessors qualified with A2 only and, if so, in what role?
- Do internal verifiers who hold D34 plan on upgrading to V1?
- If the Learning and Development NVQ external verifier has visited since the new awards came out, what were the outcome and required actions (if any)?
- How, if applicable, does the centre use professional discussion?
- Have there been any instances of, or are there any plans for, the use of 'hypothetical questioning' for candidates who are not able to generate appropriate performance evidence?
- Does the examination of portfolio evidence support the correct application of the assessment strategy and standards?

Appendix 2: The regulatory authorities and their role in post-accreditation monitoring

England, Wales and Northern Ireland share a common system of external qualifications. Statutory regulation of these qualifications is used to safeguard the public interest, ensure fairness for candidates and maintain public confidence.

Under the Education Act 1997 and the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, responsibilities for regulating external qualifications lie with three regulatory authorities:

- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru/the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC)
- the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) for Northern Ireland.

Further details of these responsibilities are set out in the *Arrangements for the statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. One key responsibility of the three regulatory authorities is to keep under review all aspects of such qualifications.

Awarding bodies are responsible for the quality of the qualifications they award and must:

- comply with the requirements of the accreditation criteria, including the codes of practice, for qualifications accredited by the regulatory authorities
- systematically evaluate their delivery of accredited qualifications against the requirements of the criteria, including the codes of practice
- take prompt action to address any weaknesses identified.

In order to promote continuing improvement and public confidence in the quality of external qualifications, the regulatory authorities carry out post-accreditation monitoring.

The regulatory authorities require awarding bodies to take action where they do not meet the criteria, including the codes of practice. The required actions arising from the monitoring have been specified individually for each awarding body in a confidential report.

The regulatory authorities will use the outcomes of monitoring and subsequent action taken by awarding bodies to inform decisions on the re-accreditation of qualifications or, if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation.

Appendix 3: Awarding bodies subject to monitoring

- British Horseracing Training Board (BHTB)
- City & Guilds (C & G)
- Education Development International plc (EDI)
- EMTA Awards Limited (EAL)
- London Qualifications Ltd (LQ), formally Edexcel
- OCR Examinations Board (OCR)

Appendix 4: Glossary

Accreditation	The process through which the regulatory authorities confirm that a qualification and the associated specification conform to the regulatory criteria. Accreditation status has a time limit
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a candidate's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit
Assessment strategy	The recommended principles underpinning an assessment regime that will be appropriate for the skills and competence required in an occupational sector. These are determined by sector bodies
Assessor	An individual, usually working for an approved centre, who is responsible for the initial judgement of a candidate's performance against defined standards
Awarding	The process through which an awarding body uses evidence from assessment to determine the award each candidate's performance merits
Awarding body	An organisation or consortium that awards qualifications
Candidate	A learner who is registered with an awarding body for a qualification or unit. Note: assessors undertaking these awards are themselves candidates on a learning programme to develop and update their skills as assessors
Centre (or assessment centre)	An organisation or consortium accountable to an awarding body for the assessment arrangements leading to achievement of a qualification or units. A centre could, for instance, be an educational institution, training provider or employer. It may operate across more than one organisation or site
Centre approval	A process through which a centre wishing to offer particular qualifications is confirmed as being able to maintain the required quality and consistency of assessment and comply with other expectations of the awarding body
Code of practice	Criteria specified by the regulatory authorities against which the practices and procedures of awarding bodies are evaluated. The criteria include a common code of practice and codes of practice specific to qualification categories
External assessment	A form of independent assessment for tasks that are set or defined by an awarding body. The assessment tasks are taken under specified conditions, including supervision and duration, and are assessed by the awarding body, not the approved centre
External verifier	An individual appointed by the awarding body to ensure accurate and consistent standards of assessment, across centres and over time
Independent assessment	Assessment carried out in a manner that is demonstrably independent of any individual who might have a vested interest in its outcome

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Internal assessment	Assessment where assessment tasks are set, and candidates' work assessed, wholly within the candidate's centre, subject, where appropriate, to external moderation
Internal verifier	An individual appointed by the centre to secure accurate and consistent standards of assessment, both between assessors operating within a centre and between centres offering the same award
Moderation	The process of checking, by an awarding body, that assessment standards have been applied consistently across assessors, across centres and over time, and making adjustments to results where required to compensate for any differences in standard that are encountered (see also verification)
Monitoring	The evaluation of, and reporting on, the awarding body's quality assurance arrangements by the regulatory authorities or the awarding body itself
Realistic working environment	An artificial context or surroundings set up under conditions as close as possible to those normally operating in the workplace
Sector body	A body (such as a national training organisation or sector skills council) recognised by the regulatory authorities as responsible for formulating and reviewing standards of occupational competence for an employment sector
Simulation	The imitation of situations or events requiring the use of skills or knowledge that would be customary in an occupational role. It is used where assessment is required in circumstances that occur infrequently or which may be hazardous to candidates and assessors
Verification	A process of moderation that includes local checking of assessment processes and decisions