

# Accountability for Awards: impact of new Ofqual rules on schools, colleges and training providers

Ofqual recently consulted on its approach to regulating the controls awarding organisations have in place over centre-assessment judgements<sup>1</sup>. We have today published our decisions from that consultation, alongside a technical consultation<sup>2</sup> on the specific rules we propose to put in place to implement that approach. You can read the detail of our approach in those documents, but in short, we intend, by September 2021 at the latest, to:

- require awarding organisations to have put in place arrangements to scrutinise the standards of assessment judgements made by schools, colleges and training providers ('centres') offering their qualifications
- set minimum requirements that these scrutiny arrangements must meet, and require that for some qualifications, these must include moderation
- require awarding organisations to explain their approach in a strategy document

Through these decisions, we expect awarding organisations to have in place effective controls over centres that make assessment judgements on their behalf. This is an important issue that is part of a broader overall strategy of improving the controls that awarding organisations have over centres, aimed at ensuring that assessment judgements are consistent whenever and wherever they are made.

Centres may see changes to the arrangements they have in place with awarding organisations currently. The extent of these changes may vary, and will depend on the effectiveness of awarding organisations' existing controls, and how close these are to what we are now proposing.

We summarise below how our decisions may affect staff in centres.

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

We have introduced a new term to cover all of the controls an awarding organisation might put in place with centres. You may hear awarding organisations refer to this term, as it will cover processes such as moderation, verification and the wide range of other checks and controls that awarding organisations carry out. Awarding organisations may still choose to use alternative terms in the materials they produce for centres though, so you may not notice a difference.

<sup>1</sup> [Moderation and Verification of Centre Assessment Judgements consultation](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Awarding organisation controls for centre assessments - regulations](#)

## **Minimum requirements for centre monitoring**

We have decided to set minimum requirements for an awarding organisation's scrutiny arrangements to meet. Most of these should be things that you would expect an awarding organisation to be doing and whether you see changes as a result will depend largely on what arrangements your awarding organisation has in place currently. The type of things we will expect awarding organisations to do as a minimum will include:

- carrying out annual scrutiny activities with centres, some of which could be face to face, and some remote. We expect some of these activities to take place at short notice.
- observing centres delivering and marking assessments where appropriate
- sampling centre marking, making sure that the sample selected is appropriate based on any specific risks relating to that centre, the size of the centre, the attainment of learners in that centre, and the number of assessors in the centre
- reviewing additional assessments beyond those selected by the centre
- reviewing their approach based on specific risks relating to the centre or qualification, and adjusting the approach accordingly
- where it identifies issues, requiring an awarding organisation to consider whether to correct any assessment judgements that do not meet the required standard

If the awarding organisation(s) you work with already does all of this, you may see very little change. If not, you may see changes such as more contact with your awarding organisation(s), or them asking you to make assessments available for them to sample remotely. You can read about our minimum requirements in our technical consultation.

## **CASS strategy**

We are requiring awarding organisations to explain their approach to centre controls in a strategy. Many of the processes in the strategy will be things you are already familiar with, such as the awarding organisation's approach to monitoring centres. This is the first time that we have required all of these processes to be described in a single strategy though, so you may see some changes to awarding organisations' processes and procedures as they review and add them to their strategy. We will not require awarding organisations to publish these strategies, but the awarding organisations may choose to share them with centres.

## **Implementation**

We are keen that these changes are made as soon as possible, but we realise that if awarding organisations are changing centre controls, then both awarding organisations and centres will need time to familiarise themselves with, and implement, any changes. We have listened to the concerns of centres about the

burden of implementing changes, and are proposing to give some time for this; we require our new requirements to be met by September 2021 at the latest. But we will expect awarding organisations to be working towards meeting our requirements as soon as they can, so you may start to see changes before this.