



Assessment & Moderation Handbook *for schools*

Issue 2



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Where Service Matters **ncfe**

‘We create opportunities for success to enrich society’

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Exceptional Customer Service

We're passionate about providing exceptional customer service. Every single NCFE employee is focused on not just meeting, but exceeding your expectations. We believe our approach to customer service makes us easy to do business with, flexible and responsive.

The purpose of this guide is to describe the moderation process so that you can be aware of what systems/processes you should have in place. If you'd like advice about anything in relation to the quality assurance of NCFE qualifications please contact the Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000.

We recognise that you'll deliver qualifications from other awarding organisations and may not use or be familiar with the moderation process. Also that general qualifications such as GCSE and A level are taught using a syllabus where learners are assessed by scoring a percentage against the assessment.

Our qualifications require the learner to achieve against 100% of the learning outcomes and that assessment and internal moderation should be carried out regularly throughout the duration of the course.

Why do we quality assure?

We quality assure for 2 main reasons:

- to support you and offer any guidance to successfully deliver our qualifications
- to ensure that the integrity of our qualifications is maintained.

We do this through a number of quality assurance systems, including:

- thorough and stringent criteria and procedures for approving centres to offer NCFE qualifications
- monitoring the assessment decisions and internal moderation systems used in approved centres
- training External Moderators and monitoring their progress
- responding to queries regarding the content, assessment and moderation of NCFE qualifications
- gathering and acting upon your feedback.

*Further details can be found in our Occupational Competence Guidelines. If you are running Competency Based Qualifications (CBQs) please refer to the individual assessment strategy for each relevant qualification.

What is moderation?

Moderation is the process by which we confirm that assessment decisions in centres are:

- made by competent and qualified Assessors*
- the product of sound and fair assessment practice
- recorded accurately and appropriately
- in accordance with the requirements of the qualification as shown in the Qualification Specifications.

We do this by:

- internal moderation - that you carry out
- external moderation that we carry out. Our External Moderators support you by making sure that assessments meet nationally agreed standards and that your quality assurance systems continue to meet our centre approval criteria. To download a copy of our centre approval criteria please visit www.ncfe.org.uk.

The Internal Moderator needs to be occupationally competent and approves the assessment decisions made by the Assessor(s). They must not have taught the group of candidates that they're internally moderating.

The External Moderator provided by us will be occupationally competent and will approve the assessment decision made by the Assessor(s) and the checks carried out by the Internal Moderator.

The 2 main purposes of the role of the External Moderator is to form a link between your centre and NCFE, acting as a quality assurance agent to ensure systems are maintained, and to offer support. This is a vital role in ensuring candidates continue to achieve the national standard.

For the external moderation process to work efficiently and for you to get the maximum benefit from the support of the External Moderator as early as possible, it's vital that you register your candidates at the beginning of the course.

To deliver NCFE qualifications to the required standards, you must have in place an Assessor and Internal Moderator* that are occupationally competent in the relevant subject area.

The Occupational Competence Guidelines document is available in the downloads section of our website. Assessors must work to the A1 standards (or equivalent), a link to the Ento A1 standards can also be found on our website www.ncfe.org.uk. Assessment of candidates must be ongoing throughout the delivery of the qualification.

Assessment decisions and feedback to candidates must be evidenced for the Internal Moderator and the External Moderator. Likewise, internal moderation should be ongoing throughout the delivery of the qualification, and feedback to Assessors must be evidenced for the External Moderator.

*Further details can be found in our Occupational Competence Guidelines. If you are running Competency Based Qualifications (CBQs) please refer to the individual assessment strategy for each relevant qualification.

External Moderation Visits

All centres offering NCFE qualifications have been approved to do so on the strength of the resources available to support assessment, the competence of staff involved in the assessment process and the systems and procedures in place in the centre.

In order to ensure that these criteria are maintained, the External Moderator is required to visit your centre twice each academic year for each qualification delivered, although this may vary depending on centre activity, the length of the qualification and whether the centre has been awarded Direct Claim Status (DCS).

If you need them, additional visits can be requested via our website. There's a small fee to pay to cover our costs. These are detailed in our Fees and Pricing document available to download from the website.

Allocation of your External Moderator –

How do you find out who your External Moderator is?

We allocate an External Moderator to you when you register your candidates with us. We'll send you the details of your External Moderator to your named qualification contact so you can contact them any time. At the same time your External Moderator will be sent your details. They'll contact you within 72 hours to introduce themselves and to arrange the date and time for your first visit.

Please note that External Moderators can only carry out moderation visits if candidates have been registered so it is important that candidates are registered at the beginning of the course so that an early first visit can be arranged. An early first visit gives the External Moderator an opportunity to guide and support you.

Once your first visit has been arranged, your External Moderator will confirm details in writing at least 3 weeks in advance of the visit, and may at this time indicate candidates whose portfolios they wish to sample. Your External Moderator may request portfolios to be photocopied for the purpose of standardisation, and if you're willing to do so will provide you with a portfolio release form to sign. This helps us in our training to ensure consistency and maintain national standards.

Our External Moderators are responsible for:

- providing you with support and guidance in implementing and maintaining effective quality assurance systems and delivery
- ensuring that assessment and moderation within centres are valid and reliable and continue to meet our approved centre criteria
- reporting to us on the performance of centres.

NCFE and our regulator (Ofqual) have the right to make a visit to a centre at short notice or without prior notification.

Additional visits to centres may be undertaken at our request and/or the centre's, for which a charge is made. Please refer to our Fees and Pricing document available to download from www.ncfe.org.uk or contact our Centre Support team on **0191 239 8000**.

Arranging visits

It's important that the Internal Moderator is present when the External Moderator carries out a visit so that they're available to discuss the internal moderation process. When arranging a visit to your centre, our External Moderator will confirm:

- the date, time and approximate length of the visit (it's unlikely that the requirements of the visit could be met in under 3 hours per qualification)
- the site to be visited
- the names of candidates, Assessors and other Internal Moderators they wish to meet.

The date of the visit should be agreed between you and our External Moderator, because we want you to get the most out of it. It shouldn't fall on the first or the last day of candidates' involvement in the qualification, or on a day upon which no candidates are present.

We recommend that you raise any issues or concerns you have with the External Moderator prior to the meeting, in order for these to be included in the visit plan.

On the day of the visit

The External Moderator visits also provide an important opportunity for you to seek support and guidance and for External Moderators to update centre staff on emerging best practice in assessment and internal moderation.

Our External Moderator will need access to information on your activities so that they can:

- evaluate internal arrangements
- agree a sampling plan
- collect the information that we need to carry out our quality assurance monitoring
- report on all aspects of your assessment and moderation against the approved centre criteria, and make any further recommendations.

During the visit our External Moderator will look at the quality and consistency of assessment decisions and assessment practice. This involves:

- sampling candidate assessments
- speaking with candidates and Assessors to ensure that evidence and records of assessment are both valid and authentic
- reviewing records of assessments, internal moderation and team meetings
- reviewing procedures.

Where portfolio evidence has been captured on video, audiocassette, CD, floppy disk or any other technological means, centres must provide the correct equipment to enable the External Moderator to view candidate work.

Centre visits normally take place on one site and it is the responsibility of the qualification contact to ensure that the appropriate personnel, records and candidate evidence are made available on that particular site.

Sampling

Our External Moderators will sample both assessment and internal moderation decisions.

The sample will vary from centre to centre and will depend on how long the qualification has been approved at the centre, staff familiarity with the qualification and number of candidates. Our Moderator will highlight in the visit plan which candidates, Assessors and Internal Moderators they wish to see. However, there may be additional candidates, Assessors and Internal Moderators whom our External Moderator will wish to see on agreed additional visits.

Examples of sampling strategies:

- the use of all assessment methods across a range of units
- a selection of units across a sample of candidates' evidence
- a full qualification across a sample of candidates' evidence
- a sample of units across all Assessors (individually or collectively)
- a certain percentage of candidates' evidence in detail and a scan of the remainder
- sampling by a particular type of evidence
- a structured sample of candidates according to a particular characteristic
- sampling of satellite sites and other assessment sites where applicable.

Access to Assessment

Our External Moderator will also check that candidates have been given appropriate access to assessment. Where special arrangements are required, the centre should have followed the requirements specified in NCFE's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy.

A copy of the policy can be found on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

Reports

Our Moderator will report on information and evidence under the following headings:

- management systems
- resources
- monitoring the assessment process
- internal moderation.

A copy of the visit report template can be found on our website www.ncfe.org.uk.

Feedback will be given at the end of the visit and will include:

- emphasising good practice
- encouraging the continuation of quality assessment
- discussing areas requiring further development and formulating an action plan.

During the visit, there will be time for Internal Moderators and the rest of the Assessment team to raise issues or to ask questions about NCFE policies and quality assurance requirements. Don't forget our External Moderator is here to help you.

You'll receive a copy of our External Moderator's visit report no more than 5 working days after the visit took place.

If our External Moderator has agreed with you any immediate actions for improvement which may be preventing you from certifying candidates or operating effectively, they also discuss these with one of our External Quality Assurance Officers. Our External Quality Assurance Officer will contact you to offer you any further support and guidance to enable you to achieve the actions. They and our External Moderator will work with you to complete the actions in the agreed timescales.

Assessment Tracking Sheet

This document is used to keep a track of what evidence each of your candidates has collected. Use each Evidence Produced section to record which of the qualification's units, learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met through that particular

piece of evidence. You should also record the date it was completed and the initials of the Assessor. It is useful to allocate a reference number to each individual piece of candidate evidence so that it can be quickly and easily located.

Assessment Tracking Sheet

Qualification	Candidate Name	Start Date	Evidence Produced*	Evidence Produced*	Evidence Produced*	Evidence Produced*	Evidence Produced*	End Date
	Eg: Darren Ngoya	01/07/10	Q&A, ref #1 Unit 1: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 GB: 10/09/10	Assignment, ref #5 Unit 2: 2.1, 2.2 GB: 14/09/10	Observation, ref #16 Unit 2: 2.3 GB: 14/09/10	Witness Testimony, ref #20 Unit 3: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 GB: 17/09/10		17/09/10

* For each piece of evidence produced, please indicate the units and learning outcomes being completed, evidence reference numbers, the initials of the Assessor and also the date of completion.

Assessor Feedback to Candidate

It's essential that your candidates are regularly given feedback from their Assessor. Verbal feedback is great but you also need to provide evidence of written feedback. Feedback should be formative (given throughout the delivery of the qualification) and summative (given at the end, once an activity has been completed). It's also important that you show that your candidate has acknowledged and understood the feedback they've been given. Candidates should understand why they're doing something and how it will contribute to achieving a particular unit.

This document can be used as a 'top sheet' for any and all pieces of candidate evidence. The Assessor will indicate what the activity is and which learning outcomes and assessment criteria will be covered. As we've said, feedback should be formative as well as summative so it's best to start filling this sheet in when you begin the activity. There's also room for the candidate to acknowledge the feedback and for the Assessor and candidate to agree upon any outstanding actions.

Assessor Feedback to Candidate

Candidate	Qualification
Assessor	Unit / piece of evidence
Please list the units, learning outcomes and assessment criteria which were covered by this activity and explain how each one has been met	
Comments from Assessor to candidate	
Comments from candidate	
Assessor – Please tick to indicate that this evidence is: Valid: <input type="checkbox"/> Authentic: <input type="checkbox"/> Current: <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Any further actions? (Please initial and date once actions have been completed)	

Candidate Signature:

Date:

Assessor Signature:

Date:

Candidate Action Plan and Unit Feedback

Before any candidate begins a qualification they should sit down with their Assessor(s) to look at the content of the qualification and agree timescales for completion. This document is broken down so that you can identify which units the candidate will complete and how they will be assessed. It will be agreed what the planned completion date is for each unit and a date will be agreed when this will be looked at and revised if necessary. Throughout the

process the Assessor and candidate can add their comments to this document until the qualification has been successfully completed. Using this document will show your External Moderator/Verifier that you have robust systems in place for assessment planning as well as formative and summative feedback. It's also encouraging for your candidates to see how they're progressing towards achievement of their qualification.

Candidate Action Plan and Unit Feedback

Qualification Internal Moderator/Verifier	Candidate Start Date	Assessor Planned End Date				
Unit Number	Assessment Methods	Target Date for Completion	Revised Date of Completion	Actual Date of Completion	Feedback from Assessor	Candidate Comments

Internal Moderation/Verification Sampling Plan

It's a good idea to plan ahead when it comes to internal moderation/verification. It should not be left until the end of the course as the idea is to identify areas for improvement early on. This document can be used to ensure that your IM/V is sampling across all units and is sampling a range of candidates. You should also try to sample across different Assessors,

assessment sites and assessment methods.

When using this form the IM/V should record the date they plan to sample a unit within the grid. The date the unit was actually sampled should be written beside it. If these dates match then it will show that you are well organised and efficient in planning ahead.

Internal Moderation/Verification Sampling Plan & Tracking Sheet

Qualification:	Internal Moderator/Verifier:									
In the box below, please briefly explain your sampling strategy. You should take care to sample across: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a wide range of learners ◆ all units ◆ all assessment methods Any new Assessors or Assessors new to NCFE should have a higher proportion of their decisions and feedback sampled										
Candidate	Assessor	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9



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