



Internal quality assurance

Guidance for ASDAN qualifications

October 2021

Internal quality assurance

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This guidance covers the processes of internal moderation and internal standardisation, which are defined as:

- **Internal moderation** – the process by which a centre ensures that the marking has taken place in a way which ensures maintenance of standards, consistency of marking, feedback and fairness to students.
- **Internal standardisation** – the process by which a centre ensures that: each assessor consistently makes valid decisions; all assessors make the same decision on the same evidence base; and all candidates are assessed fairly.

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Internal quality assurance process

Before delivery starts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualification coordinator ensures that internal moderators have been allocated to tutors/assessors and introduced.• Internal moderators review and approve proposed schemes of work and assessment plans.
	<p>Round 1: Internal quality assurance of delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal quality assurance of delivery carried out by the internal moderator before delivery begins. Records of sampling the delivery materials and decisions kept. Feedback provided to assessors and stored in the centre file for moderation and audit purposes.
During delivery	<p>Round 2: Internal quality assurance of assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First teaching of the new unit or new assessor: formative internal quality assurance of assessment carried out by the internal moderator after the first unit has been delivered and assessed. Records and feedback stored as before.• Summative internal quality assurance of first completed unit: records and feedback stored as before.• Summative internal quality assurance of continuous assessment of the remaining units: records and feedback to assessor stored as before.• Any actions identified from the first round of internal moderation addressed and signed off.• Internal standardisation meeting held to discuss any issues arising. Minutes kept and actions recorded.
	<p>Round 3: Internal quality assurance of completed assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal quality assurance of completed assessment carried out by the internal moderator at the end of the qualification. Records and feedback stored as before.• Any actions identified from previous rounds of internal moderation addressed and signed off.• Internal standardisation meeting held to discuss any issues arising and plan for external moderation. Minutes kept and actions recorded.
After delivery has finished	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualification coordinator confirms candidates and units to be submitted for external moderation.• Summative internal moderation carried out by the internal moderator to include final checking of portfolios. Records stored as before.• Arrangements made for external moderation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal standardisation meeting held to discuss feedback from external moderation and any issues arising. Minutes kept and actions recorded. Records and feedback stored as before.
Post result	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal standardisation meeting held to discuss feedback from external moderation and any issues arising. Minutes kept and actions recorded. Records and feedback stored as before.

Internal moderation

Internal moderation – the process by which a centre ensures that the marking has taken place in a way which ensures maintenance of standards, consistency of marking, feedback and fairness to students.

All centres must establish internal quality assurance processes relating to the assessment of qualifications. An effective internal moderation system will help centre staff to make accurate, valid and consistent judgements about the evidence presented by candidates to meet qualification assessment criteria. Internal moderation processes and procedures contribute to developing and maintaining good practice in evidence collection and assessment. Appropriately applied systems will help prevent problems occurring at external moderation (eg misinterpretation of standards).

Staff roles and key responsibilities

- **Teacher** – responsible for delivering the qualification/unit learning outcomes and completing formative assessment.
- **Assessor** – can be the teacher. Responsible for assessing summative activities and providing feedback to the candidate (and to the teacher, if not the teacher).
- **Internal moderator (IM)** – responsible for reviewing and approving assessment plans. Responsible for quality assurance of the assessment process by sampling and moderating each unit being delivered and units delivered by each assessor. Responsible for providing feedback to the assessor(s) to improve assessment practices and decisions.
- **Internal verifier (IV)** – responsible for ensuring that the form and content of assessment tasks and methods are: appropriate, fair and valid in terms of standards; fit for purpose and will effectively assess the achievement of learning outcomes; and present an appropriate level of challenge to students.
- **Internal quality assurer (IQA)** – if not the lead IM, responsible for quality assurance of the entire process, from setting the assessments (assessment plans) to training the IM. Responsible for reviewing the summative assessment decisions by the assessor, agreeing the final results and reports, then communicating the results to ASDAN at the end of the quality assurance review.

The role of the internal moderator is different to that of an assessor and the same person who assesses a candidate's evidence cannot be the same person who internally moderates the assessor's decisions.

In all instances, staff acting as internal moderators must have a thorough understanding of the national standards in order to ensure that all assessors are operating to the required level. Internal moderators should be able to offer appropriate support and guidance to new assessors and teachers.

Internal Moderators should be suitably qualified and/or experienced as teachers, assessors or moderators/verifiers (ENTO V1 and V2). They should seek training and guidance if they have limited experience and need to improve their expertise or reinforce their confidence in carrying out the role.

Internal moderation

The benefits of internal moderation

The benefits of an effective internal moderation process:

- Increased understanding of standards
- Improvement in assessment methodology
- Supports self-regulation across the centre
- Supports continued, professional development (CPD)

What does internal moderation involve?

Internal moderation provides an important mechanism for staff development and for supporting colleagues and, as such, is more than just an administrative process. The purpose of internal moderation is to ensure that every assessor in the centre is assessing candidate portfolio evidence consistently and to the national standards.

Internal moderation processes and procedures should address the following:

- Providing opportunities for staff development (eg internal support meetings, external training opportunities, meetings to discuss feedback from External Moderation reports)
- Monitoring portfolios to verify that all work is being checked by the assessor
- Checking that assessment checklists are fully completed, and signed and dated by the candidate and the assessor
- Checking that assessments are aligned to the approved assessment plans and that any adaptations have been noted by the assessor on the assessment plans
- Sampling the evidence for individual units across candidates, and across assessors, to monitor accuracy and consistency
- Providing feedback to assessors

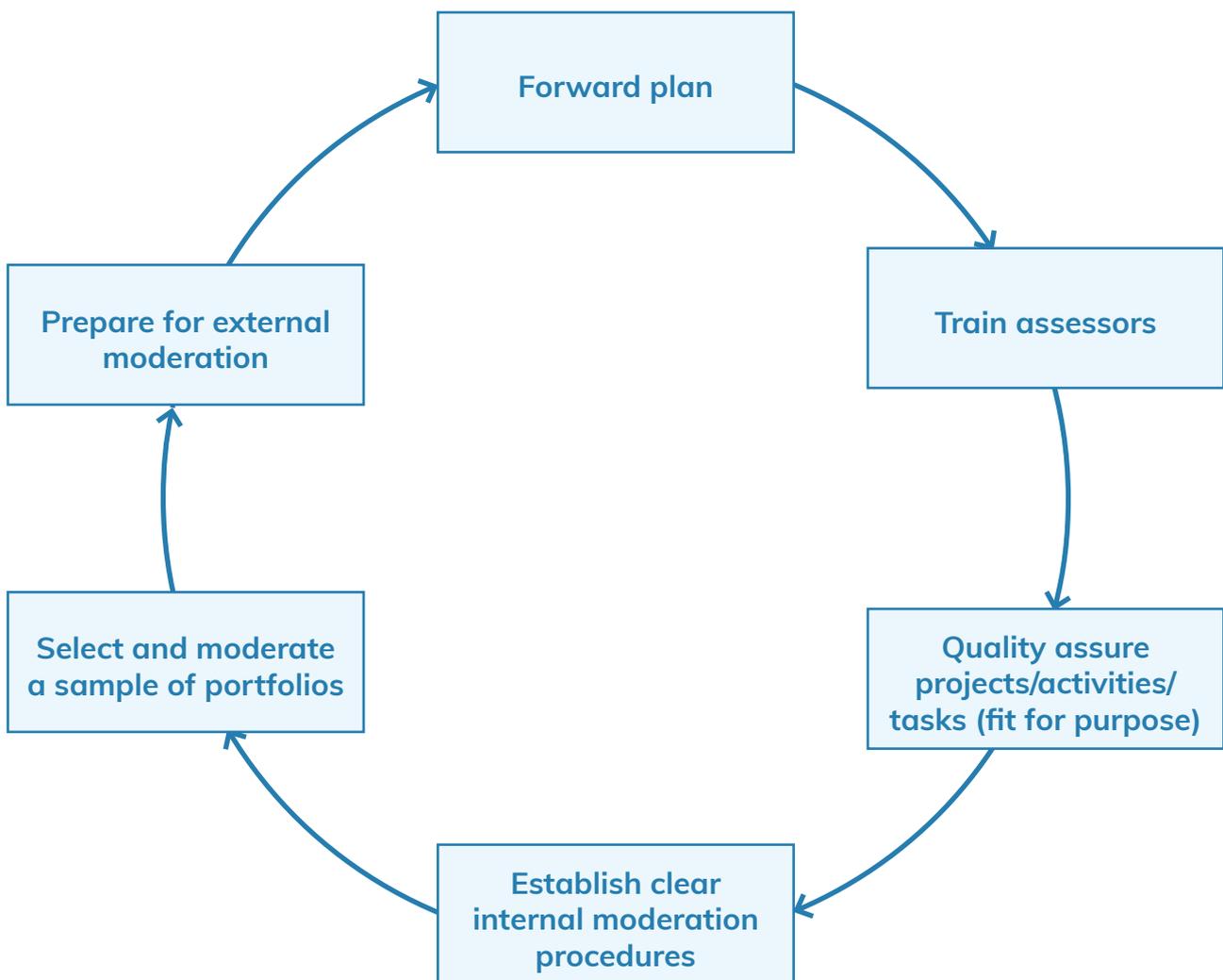
Models for internal moderation

How internal moderation is managed will be dependent on the numbers of candidates undertaking the qualification, the range of contexts in which the learners are working, and the numbers of staff involved in tutoring and assessing. In bigger centres, two or more people might share the internal moderation role.

Internal moderation

The internal moderation cycle

Internal moderation should be a cyclical process which impacts on every phase of assignment/project/task/assessment activity design, portfolio production, and assessment. The feedback an assessor receives is an important part of the process, enabling them to improve their assessment skills and their feedback to candidates. The continued development of an internal moderation system will allow for a more consistent assessment of qualifications and improve support, as well as potentially raising standards.



Internal moderation

Forward planning

Named internal moderators should embark on establishing an internal moderation plan based on the workload and experience of assessors. Centres may find it helpful to have several internal moderation sessions over the year, or to attach internal moderation as an agenda item to qualification or department meetings. This will ensure that internal moderation is properly timetabled and that there is sufficient time to take action if a piece of work has been assessed as not meeting the required standard. Such sessions can also be used to train assessors on matters arising from internal moderation to disseminate examples of good practice.

The following is a list of duties that an Internal Moderator might undertake as part of their role.

- Liaise with external moderators
- Ensure that projects/tasks/assessment activities enable candidates to produce evidence that will meet the required standards at the proposed level, and that they are fit for purpose
- Check on the quality of delivery of provision
- Support and advise staff on delivery of provision
- Support and advise staff on assessment
- Meet regularly with other internal moderators to standardise assessment across the centre
- Check assessment at interim points in the delivery of a qualification
- Comment on the quality of assessment and feedback
- Provide effective feedback to the assessor
- Select and request an appropriate sample of portfolios
- Check assessment standards when portfolios are completed
- Monitor implementation of any action or advice following external moderation
- Disseminate good practice

Sampling

The internal moderator should sample enough work to ensure that the centre's summative assessments of the qualification are consistent. For each qualification delivered, samples should be selected from all:

- assessors
- curriculum contexts/subject areas
- levels
- components (units) of each qualification

The  **Internal moderation sampling plan** template can be used to support and record evidence of the sampling process. See details on internal standardisation (pages 9–14) for guidance on how to sample and standardise assessors.

Internal moderation

The internal moderator should decide on the size of the sample and this will be dependent on delivery workload and assessment experience. In the first year of delivering a new qualification, ASDAN recommends that internal moderators look at all of the portfolios presented. However, once assessors are familiar with the standards, selecting a smaller sample may be appropriate. ASDAN recommends that this should be around 10% of the cohort. What is key is that the IM selects a sample which reflects all of the above selection criteria and that the standards of assessment are consistent and in line with national standards.

The  **Internal moderation report template (with guidance)** can be used to support and record evidence of the internal moderation process.

Internal moderation report template **(with guidance)**

All highlighted text in this template is provided as guidance for the internal moderator. Please delete and replace with relevant data.

ASDAN qualification:	
Unit(s):	Level:
Number of candidates in the cohort:	Number of assessors in the cohort:
Assessor name(s):	No of samples used in the moderation:
Internal moderator(s):	Date:

1. Internal quality assurance of delivery

This section is designed to quality assure the suitability of the selected units for the candidate profile and the suitability of the formative and summative activities. It should be completed prior to the teaching of the units.

Date: _____

Candidate details	Teacher/assessor	Units planned	Teaching time frame
Details of any special needs that the cohort may require	List of all registered teachers/assessors for each unit	List of all units to be scheduled for the academic year	Planned teaching and formative assessment time frames

Teaching plan/schedule completed prior to delivery?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment plan completed (summative)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Feedback on **types** of units selected: (based on the needs of the candidate profile)

Feedback on **quality** of topics selected: (suitability and consistency of the topics and classroom-based activities)

Feedback on the **types** of formative activities prepared that will be used to support the decisions to allow the candidate to complete the summative activity (final assessment activity): (eg role-plays, group activities, Q&A in the classroom)

Feedback on the **types** of activities and assessment methods in the assessment plan: Review of whether the delivery of the guided learning has enabled, or will enable, the candidates to prepare adequately for the summative assessment (final activity used as assessment).

 IM report template: with guidance | © ASDAN October 2021

Internal moderation report template **(with guidance)**

Plans and action points for follow up:	Date to be done	Completed
Why, how	When	Date completed

Internal quality assurance of assessment – first assessment

This section is designed to quality assure the assessment decisions after the first unit has been assessed. It should be completed part-way through the teaching of the units (not at the end of the qualification).

Date: _____

Feedback on **types** of units selected: (based on the needs of the candidate profile)

	Assessor	Assessment decision
Feedback on quality of topics selected: (suitability and consistency of the topics and classroom-based activities)	If more than one assessor is used then ensure that each assessor is reviewed	Did the assessor pass or fail the assessment?

Feedback on the **types** of formative activities prepared that will be used to support the decisions to allow the candidate to complete the summative activity (final assessment activity): (eg role-plays, group activities, Q&A in the classroom)

Feedback on the **types** of activities and assessment methods in the assessment plan: Review of whether the delivery of the guided learning has enabled, or will enable, the candidates to prepare adequately for the summative assessment (final activity used as assessment).

Feedback on the quality of the assessment:

Name: Complete one copy of this table for each assessor that was moderated.

Assessor provide clear evidence of why they made their decision?	Yes	No
Is the assessment consistent with the assessment policy and standards of the centre?	Comments – if applicable	Comments – if applicable
Is the assessment consistent with the expectations of the assessment criteria?		
Is the assessment based on evidence that reflects the breadth of the learner's work throughout the year and their progression?		
Is the assessment based on evidence that is checked and balanced and leads to a defensible judgement?		
Is the assessment based on a sufficiently broad and varied range of different types of evidence?		

Feedback on **quality** of feedback to the candidate: (eg comments on the written evidence, witness statements, annotated photographs provided to the learner)

 IM report template: with guidance | © ASDAN October 2021

Internal standardisation

Internal standardisation – the process by which a centre ensures that: each assessor consistently makes valid decisions; all assessors make the same decision on the same evidence base; and all candidates are assessed fairly.

Internal standardisation provides a system for checking the quality of assessment to make sure that it is:

- Valid – relevant to the standards for which competence/attainment is claimed.
- Authentic – produced by the learners.
- Current – sufficiently recent for assessors to be confident that the learner still has the same level of skills or knowledge.
- Reliable - genuinely representative of the learner's knowledge and skills.
- Sufficient – meets all the requirements of the standards in full.

There are three stages of assessment where internal standardisation plays a vital role:

- 1 The setting of assessments – including devising and/or modifying by centres
- 2 The production of evidence and expectations
- 3 Standardising centre staff assessment decisions

The internal standardisation process

Internal standardisation should be an ongoing process, however, an internal standardisation process should include the following formal stages in the process:

- Review of centre-devised or modified assignments, if relevant
- Standardisation of assessment decisions
- Sampling of assessment evidence
- Review of assessment practices

Roles of the internal moderator and internal quality assurer

In order to complete internal standardisation, a nominated member of staff at the centre needs to take responsibility for the process. This may be the lead internal moderator (IM) or internal quality assurer (IQA). The role of the IM/IQA is to:

- Advise on interpretation of the standards, including feedback from previous assessment series (where relevant)
- Coordinate assessment practice
- Monitor and observe assessment practice to ensure that all assessments are in line with the required standards
- Make sure all centre assessors are assessing to the required standards
- Sample assessments to confirm assessors' judgements
- Make sure that all assessment decisions are fair, valid and reliable
- Make sure feedback is given to all centre assessors and documented (eg records of feedback)

Internal standardisation

- Suggest ways in which assessment may be brought into line to meet the required standards
- Check that all units have been included in internal standardisation
- Maintain assessment documentation
- Organise regular standardisation meetings/activities/events for the centre assessors – the  **Internal standardisation meeting template** can be used to structure and record evidence of standardisation meetings
- Provide feedback to centre assessors and identify development needs – the  **Internal standardisation feedback record** can be used to record evidence of feedback and action points
- Act as arbitrator for any disagreements in outcomes of assessments, including appeals

Setting assessments

ASDAN provides tasks or assignments for some qualifications which cover the requirements of the specification/unit and these can be used by centre staff to assess learners within the centre.

In some cases modifications can be made to the ASDAN task or assignment in order to tailor the content to the needs/requirements of the centre or learners. However, if the ASDAN task or assignment is not used, or it is amended, it is important that any centre modified/devised task or assignment is checked by another member of staff. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and allows the opportunity for the learner to meet all the requirements of the specification/unit being covered by the assignment.

The checking of the task or assignment should preferably be by the IQA personnel or by a member of staff with experience of the nature of the qualification. This check should ensure that the task or assignment is both appropriate for the level of the qualification and allows all of the learners to achieve the relevant assessment criteria. For example, does the task set allow access to all the intended pass, merit and distinction criteria or learning outcomes (if relevant)?

The check should be documented and a record of the check kept by the centre. There may be qualification-specific guidelines, which should also be referred to.

Internal standardisation meeting template **(with guidance)**

All highlighted text in this template is provided as guidance for the internal moderator. Please delete and replace with relevant data.

ASDAN qualification:	
Level:	
Date of meeting:	Location of meeting:

Standard agenda items
Agenda items can be added and amended as necessary.

1. Welcome	Estimated timing
2. Qualification update	
3. Feedback from EQA (External Quality Assurer)	
4. Sampling plan and identified issues	
5. Units to be standardised	
6. Sharing of good assessment practice	
7. AOB	
8. Action log	

Attendees List the names and roles of all attendees present at the meeting.	Apologies List the names and roles of any attendees absent from the meeting.
Meeting minutes Brief summary of the key points discussed under each agenda item.	

Action log
Progress towards these actions should be monitored at subsequent meetings.

Identified actions	People responsible	Deadline
List the actions identified as a result of the meeting.		

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Internal standardisation meeting template: with guidance
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Internal standardisation

Assessment plans

ASDAN requires that assessment plans for at least three units are reviewed as part of the centre approval process. The first time that a centre delivers a qualification, ASDAN will review these assessment plans and provide feedback on the suitability of assessment methods and activities.

Furthermore, at each external moderation of a cohort, ASDAN will require assessment plans for the units declared to be included with the IM report. If the task or assignment are deemed not appropriate, it must be amended so that it is of an appropriate level and allows the learners to achieve all of the relevant criteria.

If these checks and amendments are not completed and the task or assignment is not fit for purpose, this will have implications when it comes to moderation and may impact on learner results.

Standardising the delivery of assessment

Prior to delivery, it is essential for all of those engaged in the assessment of the material/evidence to have a common understanding of the interpretation of the assessment criteria within the qualification specification and/or unit. This should reduce the possibility of there being different interpretations of the assessment requirements between staff and also when the assessments are being externally quality assured by ASDAN.

It is recommended that all teachers and assessors meet, after a certain proportion of assessments have been completed, in order to come to a common understanding of the way in which the evidence is to be assessed. This should reduce any differences in interpretation at this stage rather than waiting until all of the learners have completed a particular unit. It is essential for centres to keep records of any standardisation activities such as this (eg minutes of meetings).

- **EPQ (Extended Project Qualification)** is an independent research task and involves either writing an extended essay of about 5000 words, or creating a product with an accompanying shorter essay of about 1000 words. As the project is only formally assessed at the end, it is recommended that the Supervisor/Assessors meet after a proportion of the project has been completed to reduce any differences in interpretation at each stage.

An appropriate approach to take in a standardisation activity would be to collate some exemplar candidate work (a unit or an individual task) and get each assessor to independently assess the work. A discussion should follow where the assessment decision or feedback is agreed and any queries considered in detail. This type of approach would also enable assessors to explore particular units that they may struggle with or particular assessment methods used in units.

These types of activities should be completed throughout the assessment process, not just as a one-off activity. It is important to ensure that accurate records are kept of these activities.

The  **Internal standardisation meeting template** can be used to structure and record evidence of standardisation meetings.

Internal standardisation

Prior to delivery, agreeing the type of evidence expected for criteria to be met is vital. A good example is the use of witness statements. Before witness statements are used, the level of detail expected should be agreed, as well as whether there'll be a question and answer section or whether the statement will be explicitly linked to assessment criteria, etc. This type of discussion avoids discrepancies in evidence from different assessors.

Assessment decisions and sampling assessments

It is of vital importance that all members of staff who are involved in the assessment of a qualification (or of an individual unit within a qualification) meet in order to internally standardise the assessment of that qualification/unit. Such a meeting should be led by an IQA (or other suitably experienced person) who can provide guidance on the process.

Essentially, this should be to ensure that each member of staff will reach the same decision for assessments and will mark the material in exactly the same way (eg annotation). When a centre is confident that this is the case, it can be agreed that whichever tutor has been involved in the assessment, there is a consistent standard so that students will not be at any advantage or disadvantage based on who marks their assessment/evidence.

Where only one member of staff is delivering a qualification, then it is advisable to identify someone else in the centre who has experience of the nature of the qualification (eg is delivering a similar qualification in another subject) or relevant subject knowledge and arrange to meet to discuss expectations and methods of assessment or complete the activities outlined above but on a smaller scale. A record of this meeting should also be kept.

Sampling

There are two types of sampling:

- 1 Interim sampling – takes place periodically during delivery. Formal assessments may not have been fully completed or a unit may have been completed. This type of sampling ensures any concerns are picked up as early as possible, addressed with the assessor and action taken. It also enables the IQA to identify any possible training needs and enables a flexible approach to supporting assessors. It can also be an ideal opportunity to share any good practice across all assessors.
- 2 Summative sampling – to review the assessment decisions taken through an evaluation of the approach the assessor took with learner's work. This sample should be to check that the assessor has clearly identified that the evidence presented meets the standards required for the qualification. It should also take into consideration anything that will be submitted for external moderation.

Sampling strategy

There is an expectation that the internal sampling process will sample from across the entire qualification and will include all assessors who are involved in the delivery of assessments. However, it would be unusual for an IQA to maintain a 100% sample on assessment decisions. This implies that there is not a considered sampling strategy in place and that there is little to no confidence in the assessors' decisions.

Internal standardisation

The sampling strategy will vary considerably according to the centre’s and assessors’ needs and the overarching principle should be whether the sample provides a realistic overview of the assessment activity in the centre and whether there is confidence that the assessment decisions not sampled would also meet the required standards.

The internal sample should reflect the following:

- All possible ranges of assessment decisions, for example, top end and bottom end of marks or quality of work.
- The experience of the assessor should be taken into account and be reflected in the sample plan; for example, if someone is new to the qualification or assessing, then there is an expectation that they would have more work sampled than an experienced assessor.
- If it is the first time the centre has assessed the particular qualification, then there would be an expectation of a larger sample.
- The amount of work sampled should be relative to the number of entries being made in the qualification for that cohort.
- There should be coverage of all assessment methods used in the qualification.

In order to ensure that the points above are met, it is wise to create a standardisation sample plan at the beginning of the assessment process. The  **Internal moderation sampling plan** template can be used to support and record evidence of the sampling process.

When completing the sampling of assessments you will be focusing on the learner’s work against the set assessment criteria. A judgement will be made on whether it has been accurately assessed against the criteria. It is also necessary to ensure that the feedback provided to the learner is appropriate.

ASDAN qualifications internal moderation sampling plan

Qualification:	Level(s):
Assessor:	Internal moderator:

Candidate name	Unit(s) sampled (tick ✓)								IM feedback given		Follow up completed	
	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit	Unit	Yes ✓	Date	Yes ✓	Date



IM sampling plan | © ASDAN October 2021

Internal standardisation

Records of internal standardisation

A sampling activity should always be documented.

The  **Internal standardisation meeting template** can be used to structure and record evidence of standardisation meetings.

If, during sampling or standardisation meetings, there is identification of an inconsistency in the standards applied, the assessment judgements made, or a mismatch between assessor expectations and marking, then remedial action must be taken.

Any evidence affected should then be reassessed in order to ensure that it is aligned with the agreed standard expected within the qualification. That standard should, of course, reflect the national standard as determined by ASDAN criteria and moderation/external quality assurance processes. Feedback from previous assessment series should be discussed, where relevant, as part of internal standardisation meetings, to ensure clarity of expectations and address problems encountered before.

In addition to reassessing work, any inconsistency should be immediately fed back to the assessor in question. This will ensure that the standards are reinforced and that further problems are not experienced. Further monitoring should then take place.

ASDAN's role

External quality assurance is carried out by awarding organisations and there is an expectation that there is consistency in the internal assessments undertaken by the centre. If the process of internal standardisation is robust and followed effectively by a centre, then this should be the case.

Where internal standardisation has not taken place, this can potentially lead to decisions which can adversely affect learners' outcomes or to the centre being required to re-mark/adjust the results awarded across the entire cohort.

Typically, there are common factors that may lead to issues or concerns around a centre's approach to internal quality assurance. This list is not exhaustive:

- 'End loaded' sampling or fixed date sampling that does not take into account the entire assessment process
- A flat rate % of sampling that does not change or adapt according to circumstances and does not take into account things such as assessor experience/training needs/size of cohort, etc.
- No sampling plan or strategy in place
- Record keeping is not satisfactory and inadequate reports/records
- Lack of feedback for assessors
- No standardisation activities planned.

Centres are required to submit evidence of internal quality assurance at external moderation. This evidence must include the internal moderator's signature on the summative assessment document, as well as further evidence of robust internal standardisation and moderation.



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