

# GA Centre Assessments Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy and General Moderation Policy

## 1. Introduction & Core Principles

Gatehouse Awards (GA) is fully committed to maintaining the integrity of its qualifications, assessments, examination results and awards for the benefit of itself, its centres and candidates and in adherence to the Conditions of Recognition.

GA's approach to Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) forms part of an overall control strategy applicable to qualifications where assessment is marked by a centre (Condition H2). Centres are subject to a wide range of centre controls and quality assurance activities, including the centre approval procedure, centre annual re-approval procedure, annual EQA Reviews and other activities consisting of on-going monitoring of centres' performance and adherence to GA's quality standards in addition to CASS.

Three core principles continue to be at the heart of all decision-making in the design, development, delivery, award and quality assurance of GA qualifications:

1. Fairness to all candidates
2. Safe and secure certification of qualifications
3. Maintaining the integrity and credibility of the qualification system, ensuring that standards are maintained.

In support of this, GA requires all centres to deliver high quality learning and teaching (where applicable) and to provide valid, reliable, practical, equitable and fair assessment practices.

## 2. Responsibility and Authority

The overall responsibility for this strategy is held by the Governance Committee, while the authority to design, implement, review and improve or update it is delegated to the Director, the Assessment Manager and the Lead External Quality Assurer. The implementation of the GA CASS strategy contributes to GA's wider Quality Assurance processes.

## 3. Purpose and Scope

Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny ('CASS'), refers to the arrangements that have been put in place to check assessment decisions made by a centre (referred to as 'centre-assessed' or 'internal assessment').

This Policy does not apply to GA's Externally Assessed qualifications, the moderation arrangements for which are covered in additional Moderation Policy & Procedure documentation.

Through CASS, GA will ensure that all reasonable steps are being taken to effectively determine whether or not:

1. an assessment remains, or was, fit for purpose, and
2. the criteria by which learners' performance is being differentiated are, or were, applied accurately and consistently by the assessment process in all centres, regardless of the identity of the centre, assessor or learner

This document covers the types of checks that happen, the systems of moderation and verification and how these are determined, and the ongoing processes that happen before and after results are issued and results and qualifications are awarded.

It also covers other processes that support this, such as the way in which GA decides which centres can mark and make assessment decisions, how we monitor these, how we decide whether to scale our controls up or down, and what action we may take if we discover an issue with any centre assessment or centre internal quality assurance activity.

These arrangements are in place to:

- ensure that all assessment decisions leading to the award of a qualification (or component of a qualification, where applicable) are valid and reliable and to determine that the assessment is, and remains, fit for purpose.
- ensure that the criteria upon which assessment results are predicated are applied consistently across all candidates, in line with equalities legislation, in order to provide candidates and the public with the assurance that the service is provided within a robust, moderated and quality assured framework.
- give effect to Quality Assurance by implementing quality control mechanisms in order that issues can be addressed in case of failure to meet minimum requirements.
- enable GA to comply with all regulatory requirements and maintain compliance with the General Conditions of Recognition.

Regardless of the type of standards scrutiny undertaken and the specific arrangements in place per qualification and per centre, GA's policy is to:

- ensure that all assessment activities are fair and consistent wherever the assessment has been delivered (i.e. which centre, region or country, etc.). This applies to all levels of qualification in a consistent and equal manner.
- ensure that approved centres apply rigorous internal quality assurance processes to assessments to ensure the currency, reliability, authenticity, validity and sufficiency of the assessment for all candidates on all qualifications.
- ensure that each centre has an internal assessment and quality assurance process which is fully transparent and that there is provision for candidates to appeal against an assessment decision (full details are contained in the published *GA Appeals Policy and Procedure*).

- require centres to maintain records of assessment, including records of the centre's internal quality assurance activities, standardisation, wider quality assurance processes and CPD in line with the published *GA Criteria for Centre Approval*.
- monitor centres, the assessment and internal quality assurance decisions they make and candidates' attainment of the qualification standards to ensure the effective implementation of fair and consistent assessment within and across all qualification delivery and awarding.
- ensure that marking and assessment undertaken by the centre in respect of all components for a qualification is subject to scrutiny, although each component does not need to be the subject of scrutiny every year.
- conduct centre visits (remote or in person) and external moderation and / or verification with the sample decided upon by GA, providing support to all centres in maintaining compliance and providing guidance and template documentation wherever possible.

## 4. Overview and Definitions

GA's CASS strategy covers **centre-assessed** qualification delivery and describes GA's robust systems of **external moderation** and, where applicable, **external verification**.

The approach applied to all qualification delivery is determined based on the risk level of an individual qualification together with the risk associated with each individual centre.

GA operates a series of **wider centre controls**, which inform a centre risk rating. Together, the centre risk rating and qualification risk rating determine the scope and frequency of CASS activities in a continuous cycle of on-going monitoring and quality assurance.

Definitions of the terms used above are provided:

### Centre-assessed / Internal assessment

Centre-assessed or internal assessment means that centre staff are directly involved in making assessment decisions. This takes place when GA determines that a qualification can be delivered, assessed and internally quality assured by suitably qualified and experienced staff within an approved centre.

GA offers a range of qualifications from Entry Level to Level 6/7. A variety of assessment methods may be used. These methods include completion of either GA designed assessment materials or centre-devised assessment materials and activities, which are internally assessed and internally quality assured by centre staff. Typically, internal assessment activities lead to the creation of a portfolio of evidence for each registered learner, but other forms of internal assessment are also available.

### External Moderation

Moderation is a particular form of CASS through which the marking of assessments by centres is monitored prior to results being released to make sure it meets required standards and

through which adjustments to a centre's marking are made, where required, to ensure that results are based on the required standard.

Moderation takes place **before** final results are issued to ensure that certificates are only issued if GA is assured that the assessment decisions across the moderated sample are valid and reliable.

### External Verification

Verification takes a similar approach to moderation in that it is a form of scrutiny applied to internal assessment decisions. Verification can take place **after** final results are issued.

**External Moderation** and **External Verification** are therefore differentiated by the timing of the assessment scrutiny.

The type, scope and frequency applied reflects the categorisation of the risk level for the particular qualification and the risk rating of the centre.

### Wider Centre Controls

GA implements a wider series of centre controls. These comprise of the centre approval process, individual qualification approval, controls and monitoring of external assessment, annual EQA Reviews, external moderation/verification activities, and an annual re-approval exercise, as well as data-led and intelligence risk monitoring.

We refer to all activities collectively as 'wider centre controls'. These wider centre controls allow GA to allocate a risk rating to each individual centre. The published *GA Quality Assurance Policy* provides further details.

## 5. A Risk Based Approach

Justification for the approach to CASS of centre-assessed qualifications is always based on a determination of risk.

GA will ensure that the arrangements with centres are determined on a risk-based approach and keep arrangements under review. GA may apply different arrangements for different centres, for individual qualifications, or for different components within a qualification.

Amendments to our approach to CASS and wider centre controls will be made where we consider it necessary in order to remove, reduce or mitigate any risks that have been identified in relation to a particular centre, assessment or qualification.

## 6. Allowing Centres to Make Assessment Decisions

GA's Qualification Development process considers whether an individual qualification can, or should be, assessed externally, or whether that qualification can, or should be, assessed by a centre.

In some instances, centre assessment is preferable, for a range of reasons. These may include:

- where the assessment approach needs to provide scope for learners to demonstrate depth, breadth, and application of their understanding in appropriate contexts and to meet the full breadth of the requirements,
- where evidence reflects a professional context and/or practical application.
- where a qualification can be contextualised, assessed holistically and evidence takes more than one form.
- where the nature of the qualification lends itself to centre assessment due to a requirement for the learner to build an extensive portfolio of evidence.
- where the evidence will be generated over a period of time as learners move from one component of the qualification to the next and therefore centre assessment is more appropriate than fixed external assessments.
- where the qualifications can be delivered throughout the year and the timing of assessment needs to be “on demand” to reflect the way that learners learn and complete tasks to provide evidence.

GA will ensure each individual centre is able to deliver and assess the qualifications, and internally quality assure assessment decisions in a manner which allows GA to comply with the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition.

Centres are subject to a rigorous approval process at both initial centre approval and qualification approval. A centre must meet all of GA’s centre approval criteria and the approval criteria for the qualification in order to gain centre and qualification approval.

GA permits centres to assess learner work if they have competent, qualified, sector experienced assessors in place who can accurately apply the qualification and unit standards to the work of the learner. Centres are required to have a robust internal quality assurance process in place to ensure that assessment judgements are valid, reliable and made in line with qualification standards. The criteria for centre staff involved in the delivery and quality assurance of a qualification is published in the relevant Qualification Specification.

The centre’s adherence to the centre approval and qualification approval criteria is reviewed at least annually.

## 7. Determining the Risk Level of a Qualification

Each individual qualification is allocated a risk rating, designated as follows:

| Determination | Definition / Indicative reasoning for the determination of risk                                                      |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High risk     | This is the highest risk level for any given qualification. The indicators of a high-risk qualification may include: |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the impact of an incorrect assessment decision on learners and other qualification users is likely to be negative and significant. For example, risk to life or other serious safety concerns (e.g. aviation, construction, engineering, medicine).</li> <li>the qualification provides a direct license to practise in a regulated profession.</li> <li>GA has no prior experience with similar qualifications and /or no or little experience of processes and procedures to support the development, delivery and award of the qualification.</li> <li>the qualification becomes 'high profile' as a result of media attention.</li> <li>the qualification has high additional external regulatory oversight requirements, e.g. mandatory health and safety.</li> <li>the qualification has historic instances of malpractice and/or the incentive for misconduct is increased due to the use of the qualification.</li> <li>qualification reviews and updates have resulted in significant content revisions and/or delivery model changes, which pose transitional risks.</li> <li>any other relevant factor pertaining to the sector subject area, level or assessment type within the individual qualification.</li> </ul> <p>For a high-risk qualification to be internally assessed by a centre, it will be subject to moderation before results are issued. The risk is too high for centres to release results prior to GA having made final checks on the assessment decisions and outcomes determined by centre staff. GA can therefore make any changes to the results where necessary before results are issued.</p> |
| Medium risk | <p>The indicators of a medium-risk qualification may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorrect assessment would not involve direct or immediate legal, safety, professional licensing or sector compliance risks.</li> <li>incorrect assessment could cause a student to delay progression.</li> <li>the qualification relies on a complex grading structure.</li> <li>there are changes within the industry sector (pertaining to legislation or wider regulations) which have highlighted the need for changes to established processes due to an identified risk.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any other relevant factor pertaining to the sector subject area, level or assessment type within the individual qualification.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Low risk | <p>The indicators of a low-risk qualification may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where any negative impact on learners arising from a mistake in an assessment decision would be minimal.</li> <li>the risk of malpractice or fraud associated with the qualification is minimal because it offers limited external benefits to users, reducing incentives for misconduct.</li> <li>the assessment decision would be difficult to make a mistake with, for example, the decision is based on the outcome of a centre-assessed multiple-choice assessment with an objective mark scheme.</li> <li>any other relevant factor pertaining to the sector subject area, level or assessment type within the qualification.</li> </ul> |

In determining the risk level of any given qualification, GA will also take into account a variety of additional factors, including, but not limited to:

- the type, size and level of the qualification and the time a candidate will take to complete the qualification
- the use of the qualification (e.g., for employment purposes, licence to practise, for academic progression, etc)
- the assessment methodology (e.g., use of externally or internally set assessment materials, the differences in practical and academic assessment methods)
- the range and type of evidence required
- the likelihood of an adverse effect occurring as a result of incorrect results being issued or award of a qualification
- the implications and potential adverse effects resulting from the potential revocation of certificates.

## 8. Determining the Risk Rating of a Centre

GA maintains an overall Centre Risk Rating of High/Medium/Low risk allocated to each individual centre.

A range of quality assurance mechanisms and wider centre controls provide evidence for the allocation of a centre's overall risk rating, through initial centre approval, individual qualification approval, controls on external assessment, centre quality monitoring, annual EQA reviews, external moderation/verification activities, an annual re-approval exercise and data-led monitoring, which consists of automated data collection, plus additional intelligence.

Refer to the GA Quality Assurance Policy for further details.

## 9. Determining Centre Assessment Scrutiny Activities Based on Risk

The type of centre assessment scrutiny activities will be determined by the performance of the centre and the risk rating it has been allocated, and the risk level of the individual qualification.

All newly approved centres will have at least their first two cohorts moderated via full moderation activities, regardless of the risk rating of the centre or qualification being delivered.

Where individual learners require certification between full moderation events taking place, there is provision for centre to request additional sampling to take place. These interim moderation events do not typically contribute towards the two required full moderation activities, but rather serve to build a more comprehensive picture of assessment practices and provide timely certification for individual learners.

The decision to move a centre to a verification model from their initial moderation status will be made on a case-by-case basis and take into consideration the centre risk level and the outcome of standards scrutiny activities.

In instances where the risk level of the qualification, the risk level of the centre changes, or risks are identified as a result of moderation activities, the decision to move a centre from verification status back to moderation can be taken. This change in status may apply to all qualifications delivered by the centre, or apply to qualifications within a certain sector subject area/level, or apply to individual qualifications.

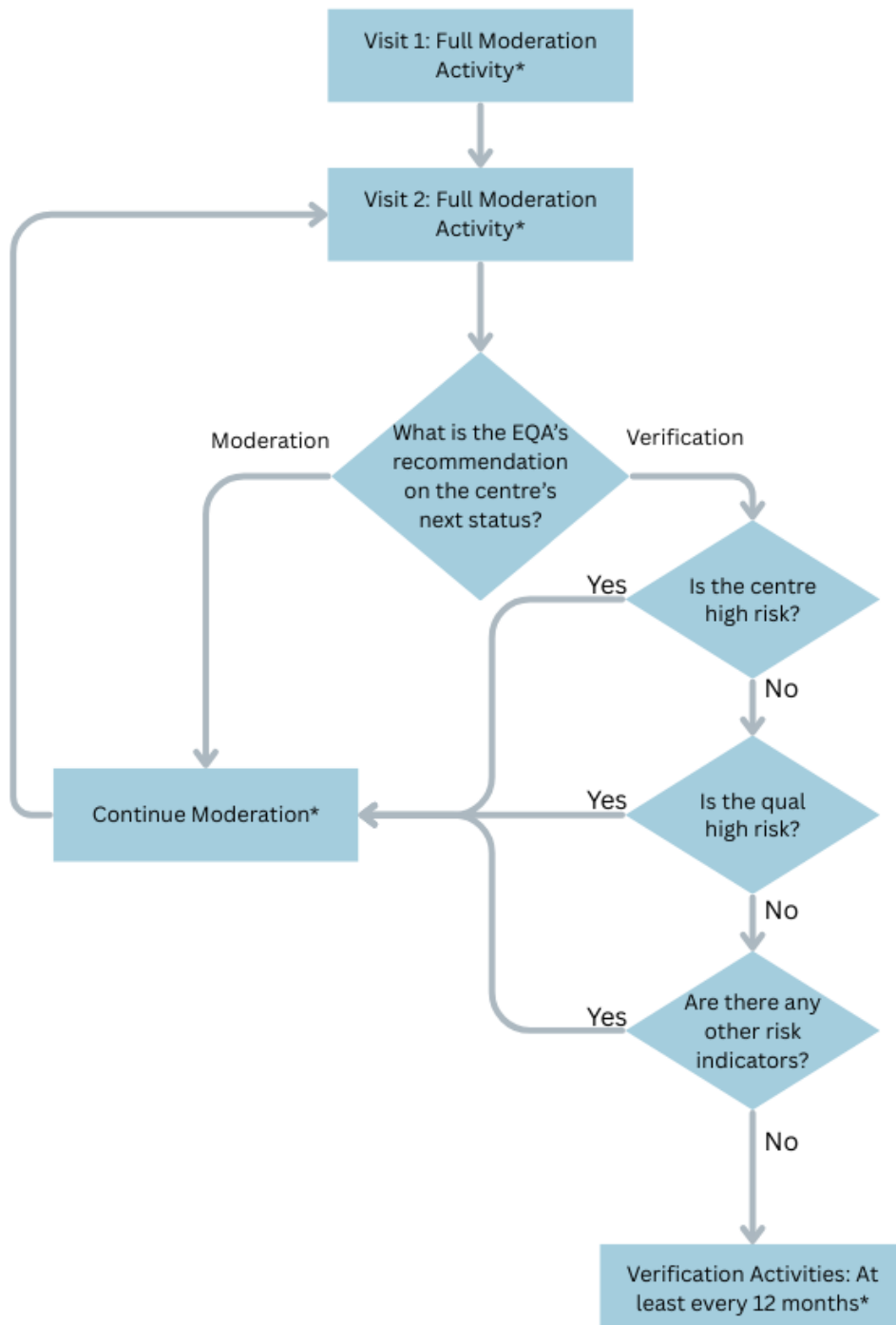
Moving from verification to moderation may also require the centre to undertake certain mandatory actions. GA will conduct standards scrutiny activities in the form of moderation to confirm results are accurate prior to awarding the specified qualification(s).

A range of factors about the qualification and each individual centre is used to inform:

- the type of scrutiny to be carried out, i.e. moderation or verification
- the timing and frequency of the scrutiny activities
- the number of candidates requiring scrutiny (the sample size)
- the range of qualification components requiring scrutiny (the sample scope)

The following flowchart provides a visual representation of the decision-making process.





*\*Additional Interim Moderation and/or Verification Activities can occur at any time, scheduled or unannounced\**

A consistency in processes is maintained between moderation and verification activities, so that irrespective of the timing of the assessment scrutiny, or the past performance of the centre, there is evidenced legitimacy of assessment outcomes.

For GA to be able to scrutinise centre assessment decisions by either moderation or verification, GA requires centres to retain complete accurate learner records and relevant documentation for a minimum period of 12 months following the issuing of results. This means that all learner work and associated documentation is available to GA upon request and provision is made for learners who wish to appeal a decision.

This documentation must include assessment and quality assurance records, certificate claims, records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations, copies of learner work, appeals, and learner data for each qualification.

|                          | MODERATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | VERIFICATION                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Timing                   | <p>Moderation activities take place at the conclusion of a learner's programme following assessment and internal quality assurance by the centre and prior to certification.</p> <p>Moderation must take place before learner results are issued.</p>                    | <p>Verification activities can be undertaken at various points throughout the programme of study.</p> <p>Verification can take place after learner results are issued.</p>                    |
| Frequency                | Continuous, depending on the size of the qualification and length of programme. For centres with registered learners, scrutiny typically takes place every 12 months as a minimum.                                                                                       | Frequency is dependent on the qualification and centre risk rating. For centres with registered learners, scrutiny typically takes place every 12 months as a minimum.                        |
| Sample selection process | All learner records (including learners who have already completed and those still working towards their qualification) are made available to the EQA, who will decide which learners and qualification components will be sampled using GA's sampling strategy.         |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Sample content           | Centres provide all learner work, the assessment and internal quality assurance records, including sampling plans, standardisation meeting records and any other documentation (e.g., pertaining to reasonable adjustments, appeals, recognition of prior learning etc). |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Overall approach         | The process is designed to be rigorous but at the same time positive and supportive and is intended to highlight areas of good practice as well as identify any areas of concern.                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Possible outcomes        | <p>Where the EQA who conducts moderation activities agrees with the assessment decisions made by a centre, certification claims for the sampled cohort(s) can go ahead.</p> <p>OR</p>                                                                                    | <p>Where the EQA who conducts verification activities agrees with the assessment decisions made by a centre, certification claims can continue to be made on an on-going basis.</p> <p>OR</p> |

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           | <p>Where the EQA does not agree with the assessment decisions made by a centre, full feedback is provided, with action points agreed which relate to the centre's areas for improvement.</p> <p>The EQA may change the assessment decision if they feel that the validity of assessment has been compromised.</p> <p>Actions relating to internal assessment must be carried out and the centre subject to continuous moderation.</p> | <p>Where the EQA does not agree with the assessment decisions made by a centre, further investigation into previous and any current claims may be required.</p> <p>This may include a re-evaluation of the centre's risk rating, an extension of the sample size or, depending on the severity of the situation, may mean that an action plan and/or Sanctions are applied.</p> <p>The EQA may recommend that the verification approach should be reverted to moderation. Any identified incorrect results that have previously been issued will be investigated and the process as outlined in Section 15 below followed.</p> |
| Reporting | <p>The outcomes of the scrutiny activity are recorded in a report, which is shared with the centre.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

Moderation may mean that sampling activities are undertaken a number of times throughout the year dependent upon the centre's delivery patterns. This approach means that sampling of learner work at one centre might occur more frequently than at another centre. The result is that successful learners receive their certificates in a timely manner and there are frequent checks of assessment decisions made by centre staff.

The processes of moderation and verification are directly comparable and will enable GA to have confidence in the validity of a centre's internal assessment judgements.

## 9. Selecting the Sample Size

The centre will be advised of the visit to enable them to prepare and make the necessary documentation available. EQA activities are carried out face-to-face or remotely.

In determining the appropriate sample size, a range of factors are taken into account, including:

- the risk rating of the centre
- the level of risk posed by the individual qualification
- the number of learners registered
- the number of assessors and internal quality assurance staff employed by the centre
- the number of assessment sites
- the number of components in the qualification

- the typical evidence generated by a learner in assessments for the qualification (for example, a portfolio of evidence, a performance, or a task/assignment),
- the range of attainment demonstrated by the centre's learners (e.g. where a qualification is graded)

Where there are five or fewer learners per qualification at the centre, the sample size will include all learners.

Where there are more than five learners, the sample size cannot always be dictated by a fixed rule of thumb or set percentage. The following is therefore provided as an indication of the minimum sample size:

| Qualification Risk |                           |                             |                             |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Centre Risk        | High                      | Medium                      | Low                         |
| High               | Moderation<br>Minimum 50% | Moderation<br>Minimum 25%   | Moderation<br>Minimum 25%   |
| Medium             | Moderation<br>Minimum 25% | Verification<br>Minimum 25% | Verification<br>Minimum 10% |
| Low                | Moderation<br>Minimum 25% | Verification<br>Minimum 10% | Verification<br>Minimum 10% |

The findings from the initial sample and other relevant considerations are made to determine the extent to which sampling should be extended.

The GA EQA applies this sampling strategy to ensure that sampling of centre assessments is appropriate and provides a justification of their decision.

## 10. Selecting the Sample Scope

The sample will ensure that marking undertaken by the centre in respect of all components for a qualification is subject to scrutiny, although each component may not need to be the subject of scrutiny every year.

GA defines a component of a qualification as a discrete part of a qualification which focuses on specific areas of the knowledge, skills and understanding assessed, and has a specific set of criteria against which learners' performance will be differentiated.

Where Moderation takes place, all components of a qualification will be scrutinised. Each component will be the subject of scrutiny every year.

Where Verification takes place, all components of a qualification will be scrutinised, although each component does not need to be the subject of scrutiny every year.

The sample may also include observation of assessment and observation of marking by the centre.

## 11. The Centre Assessed Standards Scrutiny Activity

All Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny is carried out by persons who:

- (a) have appropriate competence,
- (b) have been provided with appropriate training, and
- (c) have no personal interest in the outcome of the scrutiny.

In order to undertake a role as a GA EQA and undertake standards scrutiny, the EQA must also be familiar with, and continuously refresh their understanding of:

- any and all current qualification standards relating to the individual qualifications they externally quality assure;
- any and all relevant policies, procedures, legislation and regulations; and
- any and all quality assurance and reporting requirements.

Moderation and verification activities will routinely involve formal scrutiny of the evidence the centre provides. Sampling should enable the EQA to evaluate how assessors have reached their decisions. The EQA must be able to follow clear documentation which clearly shows that the centre has checked that the evidence presented is 'CRAVES':

- **Current:** the work is relevant at the time of the assessment
- **Reliable:** the work is consistent with that produced by other learners
- **Authentic:** the work is the learner's own work
- **Valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **Evaluated:** where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner resulting in improvements in knowledge or competency leading to the award
- **Sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy.

The EQA will also consider:

- any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to assessors and IQAs
- any reasonable adjustments and special considerations which may have been made for individuals or groups of learners
- any requests and decisions made relating to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- any appeals against an assessment decision
- any suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration

### 13. Monitoring of Centre Action Plans

Moderation and Verification activities may lead to the EQA establishing a clear action plan for a centre. Actions are specific, time-bound and designed to support the centre to meet all requirements.

The centre's progress is monitored and checked for completion by either the EQA at the next sampling activity or by GA's Lead EQA, as appropriate.

GA will seek to develop centre practice through support, guidance, and training where these are required.

### 13. On-Going Monitoring Approach

GA's on-going approach to the monitoring of centres consists of on-going moderation and/or verification activities, the annual EQA Review, annual re-approval, as well as taking into account other issues identified through wider centre controls.

Monitoring informs the approach taken to centre assessment scrutiny. Factors taken into consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- where there have been changes to the staff at a centre, or changes in the centre's systems and processes, or where the centre has newly opened satellite centres
- where there is a significant change in the profile of the centre's entries for the relevant qualification, or the number of entries
- where a centre has not put in place, or been slow to put in place, recommendations or actions arising from previous visits or moderation or verification activities
- where GA has established there has been any malpractice or maladministration in relation to the centre's delivery, assessments, or issue of results
- where the criteria against which learners' performance is differentiated are not being applied consistently by a centre, or the centre has made inaccurate assessment decisions
- any considerations which feed into the risk rating of the centre, including, but not limited to, the length of time the centre has been approved, the history of compliance at the centre, the size and scale of the centre's operations and any information received about the centre, which may come to our attention at any point (e.g. information is received from other Awarding Organisations or the Regulator about the centre or conduct of any member of centre staff)

Depending on the severity of any issue identified which impacts on the centre's ability to make assessment decisions, GA will also consider whether it would be appropriate to make other Awarding Organisations aware of the issues.

GA may withdraw centre and /or qualification approval and transfer learners to a different centre or take action to prevent further registration of learners until issues around assessment have been resolved. These steps are not taken lightly but are carefully considered, at all times having the learner's best interest in mind.

The Director and/or Assessment Manager will make such decisions on a case-by-case basis.

#### 14. Incorrect Results given by a Centre

Where GA discovers that a centre has made an incorrect assessment decision and issued those results to learners, we will take all reasonable steps to prevent any Adverse Effect occurring or, where this is not possible, to mitigate and correct any Adverse Effect.

The issuing of an incorrect result is likely to cause an Adverse Effect when it:

- Disadvantages the affected candidate or other candidates, either academically or professionally
- Compromises the integrity or standards of the qualification itself
- Undermines public trust and confidence in regulated qualifications.

In some instances, issuing an incorrect result could cause more than one Adverse Effect and these could happen at different times.

Where the issuing of the incorrect result has had, or could have, an Adverse Effect, the default position is that GA will correct the result. In most cases this will either prevent the Adverse Effect from occurring or otherwise mitigate or correct it.

However, we recognise that correcting the result may have a negative impact such that, balancing this impact against the Adverse Effect(s) involved, it would not be a reasonable step for us to correct the result.

Even where we do not consider the issuing of the incorrect result has had or could have an Adverse Effect, it will have breached a Condition. Correcting the result will help remedy that breach. Again, we recognise that in some cases the negative impact of correcting the result may be such that this would not be a reasonable course of action to be taken.

We would consider all relevant factors in order to:

- identify any Adverse Effects caused (or potentially caused) by issuing the incorrect result; and
- decide what action it would be reasonable to take, balancing any Adverse Effect against any negative impact which may be caused by correcting the result.

The list below indicates the type of factors which we would consider when deciding on a reasonable course of action:

- The impact on the candidate who has been issued with an incorrect result: we will consider whether allowing an incorrect result to stand or correcting the result could prejudice the candidate. For example, prejudice may be caused if the result is corrected where the original result has already been used to make decisions, such as whether to re-take a qualification, enrol in further or higher education, or enter employment. Conversely, in some situations allowing a candidate to rely on a result which he/she has not actually achieved may prejudice that candidate.
- The impact on other candidates: we will consider whether allowing an incorrect result to stand could prejudice other candidates. For example, Candidate A could miss out on a progression opportunity to Candidate B because Candidate B has incorrectly been given a higher result than his/her performance merited.
- Public confidence: we will consider the impact on public confidence in regulated qualifications of issuing an incorrect result and of the actions needed to maintain public confidence.
- Standards: we will consider the impact on the standard of the qualification if we do not correct the error.
- The number of candidates affected: the impact on other candidates, on standards and on public confidence are likely to be greater where a higher number of candidates are affected.
- Reliance on the incorrect result by third parties: where third parties have relied on, or are likely to rely on, the incorrect result, we will consider whether that increases the possibility of an Adverse Effect. For example, if a qualification is a licence to practise, we will consider whether allowing a candidate who may not have demonstrated the level of competence indicated by the incorrect result to keep that result could have an Adverse Effect.
- Timing: the length of time since the result was issued and any indication given by the centre that the result may or may not be final.
- Malpractice: whether the learner's own actions (including malpractice) contributed to the incorrect result being issued.

The extent to which each factor is relevant, and whether there are any others that should be considered, will vary. This could depend, for example, on the purpose of the qualification and how it is used by the learner or other users of qualifications. Consideration of all the factors may not all point towards one action.

We will determine which factors are relevant and give appropriate weight to these in each case when deciding on our course of action.

## 15. Guidance to Centres

GA provides a range of guidance documents to centres relating to CASS and quality assurance activities relating to the minimum expectations they must meet. These include, but are not limited to:



- this policy, the Quality Assurance Policy and other related policies which are published on the GA website
- the Centre Handbook, which is published on the GA website
- the Centre Approval Criteria and Guidance for Centres, which is published on the GA website
- through training and development opportunities, which are made available to centres from time to time, or available upon a centre's request
- information, advice and guidance provided by the EQA Reviewer, External Moderator or Verifier, and from GA central operational and quality assurance staff

Centres requiring specific information, advice and guidance on any aspect of qualification delivery and quality assurance arrangements should contact their GA Centre Administrator in the first instance.

## 16. Conflict of Interests

Identification and monitoring of conflicts of interest and any scenario that could foreseeably lead to a conflict in the future is a key monitoring mechanism GA uses in order to ensure compliance with the General Conditions of Recognition (A4). With regards to standards scrutiny activities, GA requires:

- each EQA to declare any conflict with a centre or any staff working at a centre that is approved by GA
- EQAs to declare any other conflict should it arise as soon as the conflict or potential conflict is identified
- the allocation of EQAs to centres to consider any conflict of interest that has been identified. Any conflict of interest will lead to an alternative EQA being allocated to the centre.

## 17. Policy Review

This policy will be kept under review and revised at least every 24 months to ensure it remains fit for purpose and meets the requirements of Condition H2 on an ongoing basis. Additional updates will be made as and when required.

| Document Specification:  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| Purpose                  | To comply with the Ofqual requirement that all Awarding Organisations put in place a Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) strategy arrangement for all qualifications which are assessed via centre-devised (internal) assessment.                                                                                                                           |
| Accountability           | GA Governance Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Responsibility           | Director                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Version                  | V4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Effective from           | May 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Indicative review date   | May 2027                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Links to Ofqual GCR      | Section H                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Other relevant documents | Quality Assurance Policy/Complaints Policy/Malpractice & Maladministration Policy/Centre Handbook/Sanction Policy/Risk Policy/Centre Risk Register/ Qualification Specifications/Centre Approval Process/EQA visit form/Appeals Process/Conflict of Interest Policy/Design of Qualification & Assessment Policy/Design of Unit Qualification Checklist/EQA Handbook |