



Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council

# GUIDANCE ON INTERNAL VERIFICATION

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide explains the ideas behind internal verification and offers advice on how it can be carried out effectively and efficiently.

## **Internal verification in context**

In the context of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) internal verification of the assessment of candidates is a quality assurance process carried out by a centre that is approved by the TVET Council to offer one or more of the above qualifications. The purpose of internal verification (IV) is to ensure that assessment of candidates for NVQ awards managed by approved centres:

- is consistent within the centre and any of its satellite sites, and
- aims to meet the national occupational standards of competence (NOS) on which the NVQs are based

If the process is to work smoothly, those staff in centres who are responsible for:

- managing the assessment process
- internally verifying internal assessment
- assessing TVET Council qualifications

should be familiar with this guide document, so that all such staff are aware of the contribution they make to the internal quality assurance of TVET Council qualifications.

In this document the terms 'Internal Verification' and 'Internal Verifier' are used. These terms have the same meaning as 'Internal Moderation' and 'Internal Moderator' respectively, which are used by some other examining and awarding bodies.

## **Internal verification in context.../Continued**

In approving centres, the Council's prime responsibility is to check that any centre wishing to enrol candidates for an NVQ can meet the criteria for:

- the initial approval of a centre (determined by the Council's systems verifier, subject to approval by the Quality Assurance Committee)
- approval to offer a specific NVQ (determined by the Council's external verifier, subject to approval by the Quality Assurance Committee)

The internal verification system proposed by the centre will be scrutinised as part of the approval process.

### **1.1 Principles of Internal Verification**

In order to ensure that consistent and accurate standards are being applied and maintained, internal verification focuses mainly on:

- the validity of assessment instruments
- the reliability of assessment decisions
- the practicability of applying assessment instruments
- the consistency of the quality of assessment practices within the centre over time

Internal verification is one part of the overall process of assessment verification, which comprises internal verification and external verification. Internal verification is the responsibility of, and is managed by, the centre. External verification is the responsibility of, and is managed by, the Council. External verification procedures are detailed in a separate Council publication.

## **1.2 Stages of internal verification**

There are broadly three stages in the internal verification process:

- design, aimed at providing the most relevant assessment instruments matched to the needs of the national occupational standards
- implementation, aimed at optimising the conduct and outcomes of the assessment process
- review, aimed at confirming that design and implementation have succeeded, through a process of revision and iteration if required

## **1.3 Internal verification practice**

Internal verification practice should reflect good quality design and implementation to give consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with:

- the provisions of any general or specific assessment strategy set out by the industry lead body for an occupational sector as a whole or for one or more specific occupations
- any assessment criteria defined in the Council's NVQs.

The Council will assume that where candidates are entered for a qualification, consistent and accurate standards of assessment are being applied in practice. Unless the system of external verification reveals a significant problem or inconsistencies with candidates' results, it is assumed that internal verification is being carried out effectively in centres. Where difficulties emerge with a particular NVQ, the Council's external verifier will normally investigate the matter. If centre-wide difficulties emerge, the Council's systems verifier will normally investigate the matter, and centres are expected to produce evidence that internal assessments have been subject to effective internal verification as part of satisfactory performance of the centre's overall quality assurance system.

## **1.4 The Role of the Internal Verifier**

The Internal Verifier is at the heart of Quality Assurance in NVQs, both within the national framework and within the quality and management systems of each approved Centre. The role, in terms of managing assessment so that it consistently meets national standards, is central to maintaining public confidence in each and every NVQ issued.

The internal verifier is responsible for internal quality assurance, mainly through assuring the quality and consistency of assessments by the assessor or assessors for whom they are responsible. Internal verifiers therefore need to have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as sufficient technical understanding related to the standards and qualifications for which they are verifying assessments, and knowledge of the Council's awarding body system and documentation. Assuring the quality of assessments will require collaboration with assessors as they undertake the task of developing assessment instruments and materials that are appropriate for measuring the national occupational standards. Assuring consistency of assessment will require reaching agreement with assessors on a common interpretation of national occupational standards as contained in the NVQs. It should be noted that even if only one assessor is engaged by a centre, his or her work will still require to be internally verified.

## **1.5 Recruitment**

IVs will normally be recruited from within the staff of the approved centre. Their work will be made easier if they are perceived by assessors and candidates as a natural choice for selection due to their inherent qualities e.g. being in a managerial or supervisory position, or having more extensive experience at the competence level of the assessors, or being involved in a training function within the centre. It will be the responsibility of the approved centre to select, appoint, deploy (and train if necessary) assessors and internal verifiers. Centres should ensure, prior to appointment, that such personnel can be given sufficient time, and have the authority, to discharge their duties effectively. In turn, this requires that centre management estimates the loading on staff carrying out these duties and ensures that alternative staffing arrangements, if necessary, are in place while assessment and verification activities are being undertaken.

## **1.5 Recruitment.../Continued**

The Council will record the appointment of a centre's assessors and internal verifiers either directly or through the external verifier.

## **1.6 Qualities of internal verifiers**

The qualities associated with an internal verifier will vary, but all should have good analytical and communication skills as well as sufficient technical expertise in their occupational area to command respect from assessors and candidates. This will be particularly important in dealing with any negotiations with assessors e.g. where there is disagreement amongst or with assessors, and in handling appeals from candidates against decisions made by assessors. If a number of assessors are involved, team working and team managing qualities will be important to ensure that all are committed to the pursuit of quality. There will be a requirement for rigorous attention to development and/or maintenance of documentation so that an audit trail of the internal quality system can be easily followed when the Council applies external verification procedures.

## **1.7 Continuing Personal and Professional Development**

The Council expects that each approved centre will provide development programmes and opportunities for its assessors and internal verifiers to maintain their technical and occupational knowledge and expertise. The Council intends to assist with the provision of development programmes, workshops, seminars, etc, to promote good practice, quality and consistency in assessment. The continued occupational competency of assessor and verifier centre personnel will be subject to scrutiny by the Council, usually through the external verifier network. Quality Network meetings organised by the Council involving centre staff, Council staff and external verifiers, are expected to contribute to the process of continuing personal and professional development.



## 1.8 Summary of responsibilities of internal verifiers

The responsibilities of IVs may be summarised as:

- liaising as necessary with assessors to give guidance on standards, advising and supporting them in their role, managing their workload and identifying any training needs that they may have
- confirming that proposed assessment material is valid, reliable and practicable
- ensuring by observation and an effective sampling procedure that candidate interview and assessment decisions made by assessors are consistent
- carrying out standardisation exercises in group sessions with assessors, including checklists, model questions and answers, banks of materials for common use, and dual assessment
- verifying that the standards attained are in accord with those stated in the relevant national occupational standards as detailed in the NVQ
- confirming the authenticity of candidates' submissions for assessment
- providing feedback to assessors on the validity, reliability, practicability and sufficiency of evidence presented for assessment purposes
- monitoring assessment procedures and records of assessment to confirm adherence to agreed procedures and accuracy of records
- maintaining effective relationships with the assessor or assessors, the NVQ co-ordinator and external verifiers
- dealing with internal disputes and appeals and contributing to the Council's external appeals procedure as required
- participating as required in external Quality Network meetings or communications concerning standardisation or review of standards
- liaising with the external verifier as required on centre visits/re-visits
- ensuring that all external quality assurance requirements are met

## **1.8 Summary of responsibilities of internal verifiers.../Continued**

Ongoing liaison with the NVQ co-ordinator will be a feature of the IV's responsibilities, as the NVQ co-ordinator is responsible for a number of features associated with internal verification e.g. training of assessors and IVs, ensuring that the IV has ongoing meetings with assessors, maintaining documentation for candidate records of registration, enrolment and results and acting as an intermediary between the IV and the Council and/or the external verifier.

There are three main aspects of the Internal Verifier role:

- verifying assessment
- developing and supporting assessors
- managing quality of NVQ delivery

Each of these key areas is discussed on the following pages with ideas and guidance on accepted best practice.

## **2. Verifying Assessment**

In the context of NVQs, assessment may be defined as the measurement of evidence of candidate attainment of competence against the national occupational standards as described in the units that comprise the NVQs. There may be two modes of assessment: Internal and External. Internal assessment is where centres devise and apply assessment instruments and make assessment decisions about candidate evidence. In some cases, if there is a need or added value, the Council may devise assessments. External assessment is where the Council takes on these duties and centres administer assessment activities on behalf of the Council. There are currently no plans for the Council to engage in external assessment of NVQs – all NVQs for the time being will be internally assessed and verified before they are externally verified.

The Council aims to ensure that assessment of NVQs, as well as being valid, reliable and practicable, is as far as possible flexible and cost-effective.

### **2.1 Validity**

Each assessment should be designed so that it provides candidates with the opportunity to produce evidence to show they have the knowledge and skills they need to meet the requirements of the qualification.

An assessment is valid when it:

- is appropriate to purpose (e.g. a practical assessment should be used to assess practical skills)
- allows the production of the evidence of candidates' performance which can be measured against standards defined in the qualification
- allows candidates to produce sufficient evidence of all the skills and knowledge required to satisfy standards in the qualification
- facilitates the making of reliable assessment decisions by all assessors for all candidates
- is accessible to all candidates who are potentially able to achieve it.

## **2.2 Reliability**

To be reliable, assessment decisions on candidates' performance must be consistent between all assessors and for all candidates undertaking the same assessment task. In any assessment system, procedures have to be put in place to ensure this.

Assessment decisions are reliable when they are based on evidence that is:

- generated by valid assessments
- generated under consistently-applied conditions of assessment (eg supervised or invigilated)
- the authenticated work of the candidates being assessed

Additionally, assessment decisions are reliable when they are:

- taken on the basis of clearly defined performance criteria
- consistent across the range of assessors applying the assessment in different situations and contexts, and with different candidates
- consistent over time

## **2.3 Practicability**

For assessments to be practicable (i.e. capable of being carried out both efficiently and cost-effectively) there has to be adequate resources and time. IVs should check that the assessment system has the flexibility to meet the needs of all candidates.

Examples of issues associated with practicability are:

- in the context of oral assessments or interviews, balancing the need for assessment reliability with considerations of staff and candidate time and potential stress
- in the context of assessing practical skills, bearing in mind any resource implications

## 2.4 Verifying Assessments

Verifying assessment is concerned with maintaining the quality of assessment for all candidates. In most centres this forms the core part of the Internal Verifier's duties, and is by far the most time consuming. There are three strands to verifying assessment:

- sampling assessment
- monitoring assessment practice
- standardizing assessment judgements

Internal verification should provide checks and support for the three key stages of assessment:

- selecting and/or devising and/or modifying assessments (including marking schemes)
- applying assessments
- making assessment decisions

The way that the centre organises this layer of internal quality assurance will reflect local needs, though it will be in line with any national criteria and guidelines published by the Council. Subject to availability, it may be possible for the Council's external verifier to be involved in advisory or development visits prior to approval to offer a particular NVQ, or to give further advice post approval. Such visits or advice could, for example, produce a sampling strategy and scheme for effective sampling of assessments by the internal verifier.

An internal verification system should include:

- the sampling of assessment evidence
- continuous review of assessment practices
- continuous review of internal verification

and should include an appraisal of the extent to which there is open access to assessment for candidates and potential candidates.

## **2.4 Verifying Assessments.../Continued**

Internal verification processes are working effectively in a centre when staffs responsible for the key stages of assessment are qualified, experienced, and able to call on the support of colleagues in an organised and systematic way. All internal assessment materials should be subject to centre-wide scrutiny, expertise and endorsement.

While, in most contexts, internal verification relates to internal assessment decisions, it is equally important when applied to candidate evidence which has been produced in the centre for any external assessment that the Council may decide to put into practice in the future.

The desired output of internal verification processes should be that all assessors are assessing to the national standards as detailed in the NVQ units. Following the steps outlined below should help ensure that this is achieved.

### **Evidence requirements**

Internal verifiers should become familiar with any documents which set out the requirements for the evidence which candidates must be able to generate (the documents can specify how much evidence must be produced, and in what contexts it must be produced). This information can be found in, for example, the evidence requirements specified in the national occupational standards or in any additional or alternative arrangements contained in the detail of the NVQs. There may also be assessment guidance produced by the Council. The industry lead body's assessment strategy for a particular NVQ or suite of NVQs may also contain requirements, recommendations, or helpful advice.

## Instruments of assessment

Where a centre is devising assessments, it should:

- be clear who has overall responsibility for the assessment of a particular qualification within the centre (i.e. who has responsibility for internally verifying the NVQ or occupational area).
- check the qualification standards carefully to see if any type of assessment instrument is expected or suggested, e.g. a case study, or a practical assignment. The assessment instrument should be fit for purpose.
- start devising assessments and assessment (marking) schemes early enough to allow time for them to be internally verified (i.e. subject to a centre-wide process of scrutiny and endorsement).
- ensure that all elements of each unit are covered (i.e. the assessment is valid) to the appropriate level of demand (as described by performance criteria).
- where possible, combine the assessment of elements by grouping related tasks to a particular problem solving situation or scenario.
- work together as a team which involves all those assessing the qualification. All candidates taking the qualification should be assessed by an internally-verified assessment instrument.

Instruments of assessment must:

- be fit for purpose (e.g. where a practical skill needs to be demonstrated, choose a practical assessment).
- allow candidates to produce enough evidence of the skills and knowledge specified in the qualification and ensure adequate coverage of all the outcomes.
- generate evidence which can be measured against the standards specified in the qualification.
- help all assessors of all candidates to make reliable assessment decisions where the same assessment task has been applied.

**Note:** where a choice of assessment instruments is offered to candidates, care must be taken to ensure that the options are of equal demand — otherwise a candidate's result could depend on which option was chosen.

## **Acceptable evidence**

It is important to consider what will be acceptable as evidence and how this will be marked or measured. Ideally, assessment schemes ('marking instructions') should be devised at the same time as the assessment - this will ensure they complement each other. For example, for a practical skills test, an observation checklist could be used, defining the skills and activities expected to be demonstrated during assessment.

For a written test, assessment schemes must cover all (or an example of) possible valid responses and how they will be marked. If there is a notional pass score (or 'cut-off' score) it may need to be adjusted in the light of candidate evidence — sometimes a test can turn out to be easier or more demanding, or less/more comprehensive than the standards require.

All the acceptable responses or categories of response to questions should be anticipated. In other words, where an open question is used, make sure that the solution identifies all the acceptable responses from candidates. For a short-answer question, there may only be one correct answer. Ensuring that marking instructions match questions in this way is an important reason why assessment schemes should be tried out before being applied to all candidates.

## **Assessment specifications**

While the task of writing assessment specifications may have been delegated to one member of staff, it is important that others delivering the unit have a chance to vet the assessments and assessment schemes before they are finalised. This will help to ensure that they are fit for purpose, valid and practicable. Where this vetting results in a change to part of the assessment, care must be taken to make a corresponding change in the assessment scheme and ensure that all assessors are aware of any such changes. It is important that marks allocated to tasks reflect both the importance of the knowledge or skills tested and the relative 'size' of the task in the overall assessment instrument.



## **Assessment specifications .../Continued**

One way of ensuring that assessments are appropriate is to consult with a more senior member of staff who has responsibility in that occupational area. As all centre-devised internal assessments are subject to internal verification, it is the responsibility of the internal verifier to oversee the assessments. This involves the internal verifier in confirming that the assessments are of a suitable standard and apply to current unit descriptors (specifications) for the NVQs being offered. It is also important at this stage for the IV to check that simulation, if used, conforms to the industry lead body assessment strategy for the occupational sector and the particular NVQ.

Even after an assessment has been applied, further adjustments may have to be made. For example, after a few candidates have been assessed for process or practical skills, the observation checklist might need to be amended. For a written test, where a group of candidates are completing an assessment at the same time, changes to the marking instructions may be required to include further valid answers. These changes can often be made informally, but it is essential that all assessors are aware that any changes require the support of the internal verifier before being communicated to all assessors.

### **2.5 Verifying candidate evidence**

By this stage, the internal verifier's records should confirm that valid and practicable assessments have been generated. However, valid assessments can be used inappropriately, and the IV needs to be aware of how the reliability of assessors can have a bearing on the fair and consistent assessment of candidates. Assessment decisions are reliable when:

- they are based on evidence produced by valid assessment instruments
- they are based on evidence produced under assessment conditions which have been applied consistently

## 2.5 Verifying candidate evidence.../Continued

- a range of assessors have reached consistently accurate decisions applying the assessment in different situations, in different contexts, and with different candidates
- they are consistent over time (e.g. irrespective of whether they were assessed/marked early in marking period or later)

### Conditions for assessment

Before applying an assessment, assessors should be made aware by the internal verifier if there are any conditions which need to be created at the time in order for the assessment to be valid and reliable. There are many different types of assessment conditions, but what they all have in common is that they must be applied consistently and effectively to all candidates within centres if national standards are to be maintained. Unit specifications may be prescriptive on such conditions.

For example, in a written test involving a number of candidates, IVs may have to ensure that assessors have:

- provided a quiet environment for candidates to complete the assessment
- applied the same time restrictions (if any) for all candidates unless there are arrangements for special assessment requirements
- arranged for invigilation to ensure silence and non-collaboration
- made candidates aware of when they are able to use support material e.g. consult reference manuals, manufacturers' handbooks, legislation, regulations or codes of practice, or use calculators.

Decisions about interpreting assessment conditions should be made and applied by the internal verifier on a centre-wide basis, after consultation with assessors where relevant, and not left to individual assessors to decide.

## **Conditions for assessment .../Continued**

In assessments involving observation of practical skills, the IV should check that the assessor briefed candidates beforehand so that :

- they knew when they were to be assessed
- they knew what skills or activities they were expected to demonstrate, and
- they were aware that observation by the assessor and/or internal verifier, would be as unobtrusive as circumstances warranted.

For assessments such as projects, where candidates may be asked to complete practical assignments, case studies or portfolios, the IV should check that the assessor briefed candidates beforehand so that they were aware of:

- the extent to which they could confer amongst themselves or work as a team
- the need to identify their contribution to any group discussions or collaborative work
- the level of support that could be offered by the assessor
- the extent to which they could use support material e.g. consult reference manuals or manufacturers' handbooks, legislation, regulations or codes of practice, or use personal computers

## **Authentication**

Internal verifiers are required to confirm the credentials of those providing authenticity of evidence on behalf of candidates. Where an assessor has not had the opportunity to observe a candidate carrying out activities or producing evidence at first hand, it is necessary to confirm that the evidence was produced by the candidate. This process is referred to as 'authentication'. Authentication can be achieved by one or more of these methods:

## **Authentication.../Continued**

- oral questioning
- use of personal logs
- personal statements produced by the candidate
- peer reports
- witness testimony
- write-ups under supervised conditions
- countersigning of work by candidates, and/or by supervisor

The internal verifier should ensure that the assessor has been rigorous in establishing authenticity, preferably by corroboration of the candidate's evidence from more than one source where there is room for doubt.

### **2.6 Verifying assessor consistency**

#### **Assessor bias**

Internal verifiers need to make judgments about the reliability of assessment decisions, and should be alert to the fact that such decisions can be biased by factors which should have no bearing on the assessment process. These factors may include an assessor's subconscious personal prejudices. For example, some assessors may find females easier to teach or neater in their work, and may therefore assess their evidence more generously.

Appearance or dress sense should not be allowed to influence the assessor's decision unless these are of significance in the qualification - where a dress code is to be taken into consideration, this will be explicitly stated in the standards.

## **Assessor bias .../Continued**

Another factor which could affect an assessor's judgement is the 'halo and horns' effect. The halo effect may emerge when good performance in the past leads the assessor to assume the candidate is performing well at present. The opposite of this is the horns effect where, no matter how well a candidate is performing, poor performance in the past continues to influence assessment decisions now.

Another way of ensuring that assessment decisions are objective and consistent, and based only on the criteria laid down in the national standards, is by the IV checking that there is clear separation between the role of a candidate's adviser (where such support is being given) and the role of that candidate's assessor. An adviser (i.e. a buddy, coach or mentor) cannot make assessment decisions about the candidate's evidence.

There is no formal need for a candidate to have an adviser, nor is there a need for such a person to be qualified, as assessment decisions can only be made by the qualified assessor. Also, where there are few available staff in a centre to undertake adviser and assessor duties, there may be resource implications for centres in attempting to provide an adviser for every candidate.

### **2.7 Verifying final assessment decisions**

After assessors have carried out the assessments and have sufficient, relevant, and authenticated evidence showing that candidates have met the standards, they are in a position to make and record the final assessment decisions. At this point the IV's role is to confirm those decisions. However, in reviewing the evidence prior to confirming the decisions, there may be some part of the evidence which, in the IV's judgment, requires re-assessment.

## **Re-assessment**

Where candidates are judged to have been unsuccessful in demonstrating their attainment of skills, knowledge or competence, they can be re-assessed.

Whether candidates need to re-take the whole assessment or only part will depend on:

- the assessment instrument that has been used
- the purpose of the assessment

For example, in demonstrating a practical skill or in completing a practical assignment, it may not be possible to re-assess only those parts of the performance in which the candidate failed to demonstrate competence. Otherwise, the assessment process becomes fragmented and it may be impossible to make a judgement about the candidate's performance in the outcome or unit as a whole.

In assessments which test knowledge and understanding and other cognitive skills, it would be bad practice to give candidates the same assessments repeatedly, and to ask them identical questions - they would be able to rehearse the expected answers without knowing why they were acceptable. In these situations, alternative assessments need to be available that other candidates have not undertaken recently. In all cases of re-assessment, the assessment must be of equal demand to the original assessment.

For written tests designed to identify the candidate's knowledge at a given point in time or as a single entity, it may also be necessary to reassess the whole unit since it may not be possible to extract some of the items for re-assessment.

Where it is possible to isolate an outcome which has not been achieved, it should be possible to re-assess just that outcome. Where parts of several outcomes are involved, it would be more straightforward to present the candidate with a complete new assessment.

## **Re-assessment .../Continued**

Where the evidence is generated over a period of time, such as in a long-term project, it may be possible to re-do parts of an assessment. It may, for instance, be feasible for the candidate to resubmit the part of the project where there is a problem and for this then to be incorporated into the final submission.

However, where a project has been designed as an integrated assessment, the candidate may be required to undertake the whole assessment again to show ability to complete the project as a single complex task. In such cases, the candidate may have to work to a different project specification.

### **2.8 Sampling**

Sampling assessments should involve reviewing the quality of Assessors' judgements at both interim and summative stages.

**Interim sampling:** It is important that the Internal Verifiers “dips in to” the assessment process undertaken with the candidate at different stages in that process. This includes reviewing the candidate work perhaps (a) before decisions have been made on any unit and (b) looking at portfolios with one or two completed units. It will entail checking the progress review report given to candidates by assessors; this will enable the Internal Verifier to evaluate the quality of formative guidance on assessment and the effectiveness of assessment planning.

Interim verification will enable the Internal Verifier to pick up problems at an early stage and so avoid the situation of turning down final decisions. It will also highlight individual Assessor needs for support or training which in turn may be used to develop the assessment team as a whole. Similarly it provides an opportunity to identify and so share good practice within the Centre, particularly where one or more of the Assessors have wider experience.

## 2.8 Sampling.../Continued

**Summative sampling:** Correct summative sampling should entail reviewing the quality of the assessment decision by evaluating how the Assessor has reached that decision. The Internal Verifier must be able to follow an audit trail which clearly demonstrates that the Assessor checked that the evidence presented - whatever its form - meets the “rules of evidence”. This includes evidence collected via portfolio, computer aided compilation, video/audio tape or evidence identified via alternative assessment. Evidence must have been confirmed by the Assessor as:

- √ valid – relevant to the standards for which competence is claimed
- √ authentic – produced by the candidate
- √ reliable – accurately reflects the level of performance which has been consistently demonstrated by the candidate
- √ current – sufficiently recent to be confident the same level of skill/understanding/knowledge exists at the time of claim
- √ sufficient- meets in full ALL the requirements of the standards

There are a number of sampling strategies and sampling techniques. For example, it is possible for the IV to sample interim results and the complete work of candidates to a greater or less degree depending on:

- the total number of candidates at the centre
- different categories of candidate e.g. by age or experience, by gender, by ethnic origin, with/without special needs
- the number of sites (if relevant)
- the number and experience of assessors
- whether a hold on particular results has been placed by an external verifier on a previous visit
- the sampling strategy adopted by the EV on a previous visit



## 2.8 Sampling.../Continued

Techniques adopted should include sampling:

- the assessments made by different assessors for the same unit(s)
- the work of new assessors more extensively than that of experienced assessors
- the range of assessment methods e.g. observation, witness testimony, products or artefacts, oral and written questioning, projects and assignments

The IV should then review the findings overall against the system for internal standardisation in the centre to ensure that they are in accord. It should be noted that the Council has decided that the ideal minimum size of sample for external verification should be 12 candidates (or all candidates if the number at any centre is fewer than 12) always provided that the above can be adequately covered. The eventual size of a sample taken by an external verifier is likely to reflect:

- the experience of the centre in delivering NVQs
- the level of confidence in the centre's quality assurance process for internal verification
- the outcome of sampling on the visit

An example of a Sampling Plan and the accompanying Sampling Report is given at *Figure 1 and 1a*. Further information on external verification is given in a later paragraph in this document.

## 2.9 Presenting and recording evidence

IVs may wish to consider promoting the following steps for assessors presenting and recording evidence, and for their own internal assessment decisions:

## **2.9 Presenting and recording evidence .../Continued**

- being consistent in the approach to presenting evidence and recording assessment decisions. This helps to clarify what is expected of candidates and other assessors involved in the assessment process. For example, consider producing some standard forms for recording questions (and candidates' responses). These can help to ensure that the national standard is maintained for those candidates doing the same qualification.
- using an Index of Evidence at the front of large pieces of documented evidence, e.g. a folio with space to number, describe, and indicate where the evidence can be found, helps all those involved in the assessment process, including internal verifiers, to keep track of the evidence.
- encouraging the candidate in the process of collecting and presenting the evidence (where appropriate) helps them to become more familiar with the standards.
- cross-referencing evidence back to the national standards as required. This is to ensure that all parts of the standards have been assessed.

## **2.10 Monitoring Assessment Practice**

The second strand to verifying assessments is to monitor assessment practice. This aims to:

- ensure that national standards of assessment are adhered to by all assessors
- identify problems where Assessors require advice/development
- ensure that candidates are aware of and satisfied with the assessment process.

## 2.10 Monitoring Assessment Practice.../Continued

Monitoring assessments includes the Internal Verifier literally **observing Assessors** in action, looking at how they conduct an assessment and giving them feedback on their performance. It also included reviewing the internal verification records completed with each Assessor and evaluating all aspects of their performance as recorded in the internal verification records.

The Internal Verifiers should aim to monitor all the Assessors within a **given 6-12 months depending on the size and level of activity of the assessment team**. He/she needs also to select different assessment methods to monitor, the most obvious being observation of candidate performance, professional discussions and simulated exercises. When selecting the monitoring sample the Internal Verifier must be aware of safety, confidentiality, security and any additional organizational requirements that could be affected by their presence. These items should be discussed with the Assessor before arranging to monitor them.

The quality and accuracy of assessment plans as well as assessor records/reports should be included in the review. The Internal Verifier should also look at the individual Assessor's assessing and interpersonal skills, with a view to noting any areas which would benefit from advice or further training/development. Internal verifiers must also note any problematic areas (e.g. within the NVQ which could create difficulties for other Assessors).

Following the monitoring exercise, it is important that constructive and positive feedback – including praise - is given to enable the Assessor to develop. The discussion should be held in private and should be related to the candidate or other Assessors. The Internal Verifier should keep a record of this and ensure that it forms part of the Assessor's Individual Development Plan

The Internal Verifier must keep records of all the monitoring of assessment (and verification, where applicable) practice undertaken. A Monitoring of Assessment pro-forma available to assist in the process is shown at **Figure 2**.

## 2.10 Monitoring Assessment Practice.../Continued

Monitoring also creates an opportunity to liaise with candidates to ensure that their assessment needs are being properly met. In particular Internal Verifiers should check that the candidate:

- knows which NVQ they are working towards and has a copy of the standards
- understands the assessment process
- knows what progress they have made towards achievement
- is aware of their right to unit certification
- understands their role in evidence generation, collection and cross-referencing
- has confidence in their Assessor
- understands the appeals process
- has no unmet current learning needs

An example of a Candidate Interview pro-forma is given at *Figure 3*.

## 2.11 Standardising Assessment Judgements

The third strand to verifying assessment is to standardize assessment judgements. This aims to ensure that:

- each Assessor consistently makes valid decisions
- all Assessors make the same decision on the same evidence base
- all Candidates are assessed fairly.

The internal verification process should ensure that assessors and IVs carry out checks on the on-going application of standards. This will establish that part-way through assessing candidate evidence, the assessment decisions have not become too harsh or too lenient. Standardisation methods will depend on the nature of the evidence.

The simplest means of completing a standardization review is to collate copies of evidence presented for unit accreditation and ask each Assessor to make a decision based on what is in front of them. It is also helpful to ask them to note any query they may have e.g. further information needed or authentication of a piece of evidence.

## **2.10 Monitoring Assessment Practice.../Continued**

This enables the Internal Verifier to check that Assessors are asking the right questions when looking at portfolio evidence as well as arriving at the correct decision i.e. that the **process as well as the judgement is sound.**

The following examples should provide ideas for Internal Verifiers to carry out such an exercise.

### **Example A**

Select a “problem” unit from a qualification, which many of the team assess and ask each to bring along two examples of completed units they have signed off. The units are then passed around the group and each Assessor completes an assessment feedback form as if they are assessing a unit and providing feedback to a candidate. Discussion follows. Sheets are collected and evaluated by the Internal Verifier and feedback given to individual Assessors, confidentially, at a later date.

### **Example B**

Concentrate at one session on particular types/sources of evidence and how they are assessed, including the recording of the assessment. For example, each Assessor could bring a number of witness testimonies from their candidates’, or examine observation records. The group then share constructive criticism about items tabled (which may be made anonymous for the purpose of the exercise).

### **Example C**

If, on the introduction of new standards, there is a unit(s) in the new qualification which appears to be similar to a unit(s) from the old standards, take the evidence brought forward for the old unit by a number of candidates. As a team, then evaluate the evidence against the new standards. Aim to highlight the different requirements between old and new standards.

## 2.10 Monitoring Assessment Practice.../Continued

### Example D

Enable Assessors to share with colleagues an “alternative” form of evidence, which most have not encountered or are unfamiliar with, by presenting the evidence to the team and forming a consensus view of its acceptability or otherwise against the standards.

These exercises should be repeated at intervals to ensure that messages are reinforced.

Where a Centre has a senior or Coordinating Internal Verifier, benchmarking or standardisation exercises must be extended to include the Internal Verifiers, so that consistency of verification judgements is monitored across all team members.

## 3. Developing and Supporting Assessors

The second duty for the Internal Verifier is to guide, support and ensure the continuing professional development (including occupational updating) of his/her team of Assessors. This is likely to be critical at certain stages: -

- when an Assessor is new - to the team, to the Centre, to NVQs
- when standards change or guidance is revised
- following External Verifier visits

New Assessors should receive an appropriate level of induction. This depends on their previous experience, both of NVQs generally and/or a particular suite of awards. As with candidate induction the process is more effective if it is coherent and structured and it may help to have a checklist or pack. An example of an Assessor Induction pro-forma is given at *Figure 4*.

The Internal Verifier must ensure that all Assessors in the Centre have access to:

- copies of all national standards they are to assess
- TVET Council Guidance on Assessing NVQs

### 3. Developing and Supporting Assessors.../Continued

- a set of all assessment tools (e.g. observation records, underpinning knowledge questions), report forms, guidance notes used by the Centre
- copies of the Centre's Appeals Procedures, Equal Opportunities Policy and other relevant organizational procedures e.g. Quality Manual, Health and Safety Policy, Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- information about available candidate and Assessor support resources/equipment/facilities e.g. video, interview room, library
- information about the TVET Council and the External Verifier
- information about their candidates including
  - existing achievement/accreditation
  - special learning or assessment needs including adaptations
  - workplace details including supervisor/manager
  - any other relevant information e.g. any time constraints
- contact point for advice from Internal Verifier or another (named) Assessor

The Internal Verifier must also check and hold on file the following information for each Assessor:

- personal profile or C.V. demonstrating occupational competence at an appropriate level and current/recent relevant industrial or commercial experience

It is good practice to maintain a "Centre File" with this information.

*If an Assessor has not yet received training and certification in assessment practice it is important that the Internal Verifier agrees a realistic target date for them to achieve certification and a Personal Action Plan is drawn up. In the interim period all their assessment decisions must be validated by a qualified Assessor. It is good practice to establish a mentor/buddy system for newly appointed Assessors; this should not be the internal verifier.*

### **3. Developing and Supporting Assessors.../Continued**

The Internal Verifier must also increase the level of sampling and of monitoring assessment practice for newly appointed Assessors - with or without certification. This ensures that the new Assessor has additional access to support and enables the Internal Verifier to identify any training/development needs. If the newly appointed Assessor is experienced e.g. he/she may have worked in other centres, this period of additional sampling may be quite short. Whatever the level of experience, the incoming Assessor will value additional support whilst they become familiar with the Centres systems. Similarly there should be a mentoring process for newly appointed Internal Verifiers.

The External Verifier will expect to see evidence that the Internal Verifier has identified and addressed learning and development needs for each Assessor. To do this a system of continuous professional development must be in place and be maintained. This may include specific training e.g. guided discussion techniques, alternative assessment methods, updating on TVET Council /standard setting body requirements. It may also include opportunities to update vocational knowledge or even secondment into industry.

Where the Centre has a large team, including a number of Internal Verifiers, it is beneficial to appoint a Senior or Coordinating Internal Verifier. With this model, the Senior Internal Verifier would also monitor performance and maintain development plans for the other Internal Verifiers.

### **4. Managing the Quality of NVQ Delivery**

The third and final duty for the Internal Verifier is to manage the quality of NVQ delivery. Clearly this is an ongoing responsibility and the systems and processes described in preceding sections are designed to maintain quality of assessment. However, the Internal Verifier also has a wider management role:



## 4. Managing the Quality of NVQ Delivery.../Continued

1. To ensure assessment resources - including personnel- are effectively managed and planned.
2. To provide a quality assurance role.
3. To provide a link between the Centre and the TVET Council.

It is good practice to ensure that there is a formal system in place for allocating Assessors to candidates and to set out performance requirements for the Assessor e.g. frequency of reviews, assessment reports, attendance at team meetings etc. An example of an Allocation of Assessor to Candidate pro-forma is given at *Figure 5*.

### 4.1 Managing the assessment team

The Internal Verifier should have a full role in managing the assessment team. To do this effectively the Internal Verifier must have accurate and meaningful information on a number of key points - candidate needs, location, and current workloads of Assessors. An essential part of this should be a systematic evaluation on entry of each candidate's additional or special learning/development needs, including technical aids or physical adaptations (e.g. large print materials, I.T. equipment) extra support, "unsocial " hours assessment etc. An example of a simple pro-forma for recording such an Initial Resourcing Assessment is given at *Figure 6*.

Thereafter, the Internal Verifier should have up-to-date information on individual candidate progress as well as an overall picture of potential new candidates, average timescales for different awards, and Assessor availability both current and projected. The Internal Verifier should be able to call meetings of the assessment team, and have the support of management to require attendance. An example of a Standardisation and team meetings pro-forma is given at *Figure 7*.

## **4. Managing the Quality of NVQ Delivery.../Continued**

### **4.2 Managing resources**

Management of resources should also include forward planning to ensure that candidates will continue to have access to assessment and appropriate materials/equipment/facilities 6, 12 or even 24 months along the line. This has budgetary and staffing implications. Internal Verifiers should be regarded as sufficiently “senior” within their organisation to influence financial and personnel planning. Centres should ensure that, when seeking approval to deliver NVQs they provide scope for appropriate input from their Internal Verifier(s) so that continuing access is assured.

### **4.3 Assuring and ensuring quality**

The Internal Verifier clearly has a key role in assuring and ensuring quality standards in the delivery and assessment of NVQs. As such their duties and responsibilities should be included as an integral part of the organisations quality procedures and manuals. Internal Verifiers should be in a position to report directly to the senior management of the organisation on all aspects of the Centre’s NVQ programmes. Internal Verifiers should also have explicit responsibility for carrying out self-assessment of the Centre’s performance. An example of an Initial Self-Assessment Checklist of the Centre’s internal verification system is included at *Figure 8*.

Finally, the Internal Verifier acts as a link between the Centre and TVET Council. Internal Verifiers must ensure that they have up to date information/guidance issued by relevant bodies –TVET Council, standards setting bodies, industry and professional bodies - and that this information is passed on to all the Assessors.

### **4.4 External Verification**

All NVQs are subject to external verification prior to the award of qualifications to candidates. When candidates have completed their qualifications and the centre has informed the Council, the Council will carry out external verification in the form of a visit by an external verifier to the centre, or by requesting that material is submitted to the Council, or by a combination of both methods.

## **4. Managing the Quality of NVQ Delivery.../Continued**

### **4.4 External Verification.../Continued**

Internal verification processes should ensure that the candidate evidence, assessment materials and records are maintained and/or dispatched to the Council in line with any published external verification requirements.

The External Verifier's first "port of call" is the Internal Verifier, and he/she will be expected to have a range of information to hand: -

- numbers of current registered candidates per NVQ/level
- candidate Centre enrolment and Awarding Body registration details
- Assessor details - specifically C.V.s, Assessor qualifications, development plans, workloads
- candidate progress reviews and achievements, special assessment requirements
- assessment records and plans
- candidate support resources available
- assessment sites
- satellite, franchise arrangements
- internal verification sampling strategy
- internal verifier records including feedback to Assessors, discussions with candidates
- records of claims for certification
- candidate evidence files/portfolios

The NVQ co-ordinator in the centre will be involved in negotiating a date and time for an EV visit. The agenda for the visit is likely to be flexible, to accommodate any audit trails that the EV may wish to follow as a result of preliminary findings, but it will cover:

- human resources
- learning resources
- centre management of resources
- the internal verification system

#### 4.4 External Verification.../Continued

The External Verifier's review of the IV system will include an audit of the management and administration of the system (e.g. qualifications and/or experience of IVs, number of IVs, candidate records, assessment records, records of meetings organised by the IV) as well as the extent to which the IV has fulfilled his or her role in ensuring the:

- validity and practicability (efficiency and cost effectiveness) of assessment instruments
- validity and standardisation of assessments
- reliability of assessment decisions

The audit will also cover:

- evidence of flexibility in assessment, where appropriate
- methods used by the IV to sample candidate assessments
- materials used
- specifications to be met in the standards
- overall standards of candidates' work

Satisfactory coverage of all of the above features will ensure that the internal verification system and the work of the internal verifier are acceptable to the Council for the award of NVQs to the centre's candidates.

Creating and maintaining good information channels is particularly important following an External Verifier visit where an Action Plan has been agreed. It is important that action points raised by the External Verifier are acted upon within the timescale specified. Failure to do so will result in a quality issue being noted on the Centre files, and may lead to access to certification being blocked.

#### 4.4 External Verification.../Continued

*Because of the security implications, it is extremely important that no claims for certification are made without the “clearance” of the Internal Verifier for the award.*

*Of equal importance is the need to maintain security of candidate files and their assessment records. Candidate evidence files/portfolios for candidates who have been certificated in between External Verifier visits must be kept intact until the next External Verifier visit so that they can be examined or produced for inspection purposes if needed. Assessor records must be retained for at least 3 years and be made available for the purposes of external verification and to allow for any appeals to be progressed and resolved.*

### 5. Documentation

Documentation for assessment and internal verification should include:

#### **For assessment -**

- candidate lists (names and candidate numbers) for each unit to be assessed
- summary of candidates’ results for each unit
- detailed list of assessments and results within each unit
- a system of referencing evidence e.g. at the front of a portfolio, and cross-referencing evidence where it contributes to more than one unit e.g. where integrated assessment is being applied

#### **For internal verification -**

- record of meetings with assessors to agree assessment instruments, materials and marking schemes that offer flexibility and are cost effective in implementation wherever possible, without compromising quality
- record of outcomes and decisions of further meetings with assessors that confirm the validity and practicability of assessment instruments, and the reliability, sufficiency and authenticity of assessment evidence

## **5. Documentation.../Continued**

### **For internal verification -/Continued**

- record of any assessment practices that offer flexibility and promote cost effectiveness
- record of, and justification for, sampling techniques selected and implemented
- record of the results of sampling and subsequent action taken by IV and assessors.

## Internal Verification Policy and Procedures

Procedure Number	IVII/01/001
Management Area	Quality
Author	Ian Verify

Revision Date	Details	Approved By

## **1. Purpose**

This document sets out the policy and procedures for Internal Verification of assessment of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) at Innovations Inc.

## **2. Context**

- a. The assessment process must be fair both in intent and outcome, and therefore must address the basic principles of consistency, transparency, validity and reliability in the application of national standards for assessment and internal verification. Innovations Inc will negotiate special arrangements with the TVET Council for candidates with specific needs in securing appropriate arrangements for access to and support in the assessment process as laid down in their procedures;
- b. The roles and responsibilities of assessors and internal verifiers are recognised as being essential to the delivery and quality assurance of NVQs. Sufficient time will be allocated so that the assessment and internal verification team can carry out their duties effectively;
- c. Senior management supports the quality assurance processes and will ensure that the requirements of the TVET Council are followed.

## **3. Objectives**

To...

- a. Ensure consistency, transparency, reliability and validity of assessment processes, ensuring that standards and specifications are implemented/achieved.
- b. Give quality assurance in assessment processes by establishing quality control mechanisms for assessment through a system of internal verification.
- c. Provide candidate-centered approaches to assessment which provides appropriate opportunities for candidates to record evidence of achievement.
- d. Identify the staff development issues concerned with assessment processes through appraisal, observation and mentoring.



#### 4. Management Responsibility

- i The Internal Verifier will be responsible for managing quality assurance at Innovations Inc.
- ii The Centre Coordinator will be responsible for liaising between Innovations Inc and the TVET Council.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. The **Internal Verifier** takes responsibility for planning of the IV schedule for designated NVQs, for example this may be the shift leader, supervisor or divisional manager. This role also:
  - Identifies and allocates assessors
  - Recognizes training needs in relation to satisfying the TVET Council's requirements for Assessor/Internal Verifier training and development activity
  - Monitors the assessment of NVQ programmes carried out by Assessors and should act in a supportive and encouraging role, identifying and highlights good practice as well as concerns.
  - Ensures that any necessary support mechanisms have been put in place prior to an External Verifier's visit.
  - **Assessors** carry out NVQ assessment and contribute to the maintenance of quality NVQ delivery at Innovations Inc.

#### 6. Assessor and Internal Verifier Competences

- i Assessors and Internal Verifiers selected to deliver NVQs at Innovations Inc will meet the minimum requirements as set out in the respective NVQ Assessment Strategy documents. In addition Internal Verifiers will have sufficient experience of having conducted assessments of the specific national occupational standards (where appropriate) they are verifying or an appropriate and related occupational area.

## **6. Assessor and Internal Verifier Competences.../Continued**

- ii In the event that human resources at Innovations Inc is unable to satisfy the requirements or are insufficient, efforts to address the gap by way of training and development or external arrangements will be made.

## **7. Candidate Registration and Assessment Procedures**

### *7.1 Candidate Registration*

- i Persons wishing/selected to pursue NVQ certification will be referred to the centre contact who will provide an orientation to the NVQ process.
- ii Once the candidate wishes to proceed with the NVQ the IV is notified and registration of the candidate commences.
- iii The IV will assign an assessor to the candidate who will be responsible for:
  - Ensuring that the candidate completes the appropriate registration forms and also that the candidate is registered with the TVET Council. Completed registration forms are to be returned to the NVQ Coordinator for countersignature.
  - Providing the necessary induction session as determined by the assigned assessor. The candidate and assessor are to sign-off the completion of induction. This form is to be available for verification purposes.
  - Assessors will be notified by the IV of their posting.

### *7.2 Assessment*

Assessment at Innovations Inc will aim to promote learning and achievement of candidates from entry, through to unit/NVQ achievement.

The assessor will be responsible and accountable for:

- Managing the system of assessment from assessment planning, through to judging evidence and recording assessment decisions, as required by the awarding body
- Maintaining accurate and verifiable candidate assessment and achievement records, as required by the awarding body

## 7. Candidate Registration and Assessment Procedures.../Continued

### 7.2 Assessment.../Continued

- Ensuring that assessment processes are consistent, transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and that judgment of evidence is valid and reliable.
- i Assessors are to ensure that candidates review the units to be completed and develop an assessment plan for assessment purposes. This plan is to be available for verification purposes.
- ii Assessors will provide support and guidance to the candidate as required and this will be evidence by their signatures on the completed assessment and/or assessment feedback documentation. This information is to be available for verification purposes.

The assessor is to provide updates on candidate progress to the IV according to the agreed time-scales, which will be dependent upon the level of assessment activity within Innovations Inc.

- iii Should the candidate disagree with an assessment decision/assessment activity, the assessor in the first instance is to make every effort to resolve the issue in accordance with the Appeals Procedure. If this fails then the assessor is to refer the matter to the IV who will then act in accordance with the Appeals Procedure.
- iv All evidence once complete is to be accompanied by an authentication statement signed by the candidate and countersigned by the assessor. No evidence will be accepted by the IV for summative verification without this statement.
- v On completion of a unit of competence/NVQ the assessor is to complete the requisite summary documentation and forward it to the IV so that he/she can organize internal verification and/or claim certification.

## 8. IV Procedures

The following procedures will assure the quality of assessment and internal verification through:

- a. Evaluating assessors by sampling performance and documentary evidence of their activities;
- b. Supporting and advising assessors;
- c. Monitoring the conduct of assessment
- d. Sampling evidence to verify assessment decisions;
- e. Keeping records up to date;
- f. Assuring the quality of the systems and procedures used for assessment and verification through monitoring and review which will provide information for analysis by the institution and the awarding body.

*All NVQ programmes delivered at Innovations Inc will be guided by the publication entitled 'Guidance on Internal Verification' (TVET Council – reference copy found in the NVQ Quality Assurance file and on the Company's Intranet).*

### 8.1 Conduct of Internal Verification

- i The IV processes will be planned within the agreed work schedule by the Internal Verifier and Assessors.
- ii The Internal Verifier and Assessors will decide and agree on the schedule for verification. Innovations Inc will conduct routine verification on a six (6) month cycle. Verification activity conducted outside of this cycle will be determined by the IV and agreed by the relevant assessors.

The agreed schedule should be included on a Sampling Plan and filed in the appropriate NVQ file and a copy distributed to the assessment team.

## 8. IV Procedures.../Continued

### 8.2 *Advising and Supporting the Assessment Process*

#### a. Advising and Supporting Assessors

The IV will schedule one-on-one sessions with the assessors at times suitable to both parties involved. He/she will ensure that they are available for consultation by the assessor if required. The IV will ensure that assessors have the requisite information/documentation to conduct assessment. All new assessors will be assigned a workload commensurate with their experience and will be mentored by an experienced assessor.

#### b. Induction and Training of Assessors and IVs

- i Innovations Inc. will ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of NVQs will be provided with the necessary developmental activity to enable them to competently perform their roles.
- ii All new assessors and IVs will undergo a minimum of 9 hours of training before they conduct assessment or verification. The nature of the induction will be determined by TVET Council and will include, but not be limited to, such aspects as the:
  - Qualification requirements
  - Innovations Inc Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures
  - Assessment and IV records to be completed

At this session all relevant documentation (or where to find that documentation) will be provided and an action plan for the personal development of the assessor and IV will be agreed on.

#### c. Standardisation and Team Meetings

Internal Verifiers will conduct regular team meetings at times convenient to parties involved to address the needs and issues of the Assessors and the organization e.g. updates from TVET Council and monitoring and review. The minutes of these meetings will be recorded and filed in the Assessor and IV Development file in the main office.

## 8. IV Procedures.../Continued

### 8.3 Monitoring and Verifying the Assessment Process

#### a. Internal Verification Sampling Strategy

- i The IV will sample according to the guidelines prepared by the TVET Council. The IV **will** inform the relevant assessor of any changes in the agreed sample size and the reasons for such.
- ii The IV sampling plan will include direct observation of assessment practice e.g. observations conducted by the assessor, reviewing evidence collected and assessment decisions.

In identifying the strategy, the IV will take the following into account:

- Size of sample needed to ensure reliability
  - Assessors – numbers, experience, workload and location
  - Range (if any) of assessment sites, satellites
  - Candidate cohorts, e.g. different employees, different programme start date – particularly where enrolments are at set times
  - All units and particularly focusing on any problem unit (s) and assessment method
- iii The frequency of sampling will be determined by the internal verifier – the nature of the NVQ being assessed will dictate.
  - iv All assessment and (trainee IV) decisions made by new assessors and IVs will be reviewed and countersigned by their mentor.
  - v Once there is sufficient evidence submitted by the candidate to meet the NVQ assessment standards for a unit, it is retained for Internal Verification. The evidence will be internally verified by the IV for validity and sufficiency.
  - vi IVs will record the sampling of assessment decisions using the appropriate candidate Assessment/Internal Verification recording forms. It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure that all assessment records are kept secure and confidential and are available for verification.

## 8. IV Procedures.../Continued

### b. Review and feedback – assessor practice and QA mechanism

The IV will provide constructive feedback any issues arising to the relevant assessor (trainee IV). In this regard the IV will:

- i Observe the assessor (trainee IV) conducting assessment (verification) activities, the number of which will be determined by the level of competence of the Assessor and the nature of the NVQ. The schedule of observations will be agreed on and feedback on these sessions will be conducted no later than 24 hours after the observation has taken place.
- ii Recommend training and development activity to strengthen assessment practice in identified areas.
- iii Ensure that there is an annual review of the assessment and Internal Verification policy and procedures. Any changes/decisions resulting from the review are communicated to the centre contact and are recorded in the NVQ Quality Assurance file.

### c. Standardisation

- i IV will be responsible for conducting standardization sessions as part of the regular team meetings. Issues to be addressed at these meetings will include:
  - Access and fair assessment
  - Review of assessment materials
  - Changes in qualification requirements
  - Difficulties in interpretation of the standards
- ii. The IV will establish an Assessment Development team who will develop assessment materials for NVQ Units. Assessment materials produced by assessment teams are validated by the Internal Verifier and recorded on the Assignment Checklist (procedure development is at Appendix A).

## 8. IV Procedures.../Continued

### 8.4 Managing External Quality Assurance Requirements

The IV is responsible for maintaining the link between the Centre's assessment team and the Centre Coordinator and will manage and maintain the NVQ systems in the Centre.

- a. Record keeping
  - i Good record keeping is paramount to assurance of quality of NVQs. IVs will ensure that relevant and accurate record keeping is done. All assessment and internal verification documentation (original/certified copies) completed in the delivery of the NVQ will be filed in the respective assessment and internal verification files.
  - ii Assessors and Internal Verifiers will be using the TVET Council's and Innovations Inc proformas for Assessment and Internal Verification (See appendix B)
  - iii The IV will ensure that the agreed upon records of assessment and internal verification are kept to include:
    - Internal verification records
    - Assessment records
    - Training and development activity e.g. signed-off induction sessions forms
    - Development and standardization of assessment materials
    - Action plans
    - Appeals dealt with.
  - iv As a general rule all records are to be submitted to the respective party e.g. assessor, internal verifier, where appropriate at least 36 hours after the assessment and internal verification activity to facilitate preparations for External Verification.
  - v Documents are stored for a minimum of five years, and will only be disposed of with the authority of the Centre Coordinator.



## 8. IV Procedures.../Continued

### b. Certification

- i Once the IV is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence from the candidate and that the NVQ Assessment Strategy standards have been met, the assessor forwards the list of units completed by the candidate to the IV, who completes the Request for Certification Form. The form is passed on to the NVQ Co-ordinator, who signs and submits it to the TVET Council. Claims for certification should be completed no later than one week after the summative IV has taken place
- ii A copy of the claim for certification list will be filed in the respective NVQ Quality Assurance file – NVQ claim for certification. This will be clearly marked ‘copy for information only’.

### c. External Verification Visits

- i The IV and NVQC will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant documents e.g. assessment and IV records, samples of portfolios and other evidence and general documentation is available to the EV in preparation for and during the external verification visit.
- ii The IV will ensure that the Centre Self Assessment Report Form is completed at the beginning of each Verification cycle and submitted to the EV.
- iii The IV is responsible for ensuring that any actions resulting from previous and/or preparatory action for external verification visits are conducted. He/she will liaise with the assessment team to ensure that the agreed action plan resulting from any Internal/External Verification report is implemented before the next sampling window, including any recommendations from the External Verifier.

### d. Appeals Procedure

The IV will ensure the effectiveness of the Innovations Inc. appeals procedure. A copy of the procedure will be made available to all parties at their induction sessions.

## 9. General Policies NVQ Delivery

### 9.1 Training and Development

- i Innovations Inc. will ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of NVQs will be provided with the necessary developmental activity to enable them to competently perform their roles. Staff training as assessors or internal verifiers must be mentored and have their work counter-signed by a fully qualified IV.
- ii Staff will be required to attend to TVET Council/Innovations Inc sponsored training (at least once a year) and Quality Network meetings if they are to continue to perform the duties of Internal Verifier and/or Assessor.

### 9.2 Resources

#### i Time

Innovations Inc recognizes that time needed will vary depending on the amount of candidate work to be examined and will allocate the time required to perform assessment and internal verification duties.

#### ii Physical and Financial

Innovations Inc recognizes that to remain and NVQ Centre that it will need to ensure that the necessary physical and other resources will need to be available. The IV and Centre Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the requisite resources are available for the delivery of NVQs at Innovations Inc, by ensuring that this matter is addressed during the annual review meetings and that any action plans are followed-up.

**End.**

**Internal Verifier:..... Date:.....**

**Head of Centre: ..... Date: .....**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION SAMPLING PLAN</b></p>
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A sampling plan should be developed which covers each of the following:

- Each assessor
- The full range of assessment methods
- Each candidate
- The full range of units
- Each assessment site.

The Internal Verifier sampling plan should take the following issues into account:

- Different stages of the candidate progress
- The experience of assessors
- The experience of individual candidates in assessment methods
- Coverage of the range of units in the relevant awards
- The achievement and progress of candidates
- The quality of audit trails produced by the assessor
- The quality of the assessment planning
- The quality of advice given to the candidate.

The Internal Verifier should ensure that action is taken when there is deviation from the plan.

A Sampling report should be completed after verification of portfolio evidence.

**INTERNAL VERIFICATION - SAMPLING PLAN**

Centre/site:..... Internal Verifier:.....

Qualification/level:.....

Date	Assessor name	Candidate name	Unit & Element	IV Method	Assessment Method	Report number	Comments

**Notes for guidance**

This document should be completed as internal verification takes place.

**Key to IV method:**

**A** = Verification of judgements with assessor present:

**C** = Verification by IV and team at cross-moderation meeting:

**B** = Verification of assessor judgements from documentary evidence only:

**D** = Verification of completed portfolio

**Key to assessment method:**

Observations

**OB**

Video

**Vid**

Report

**R**

Tests

**T**

Professional Discussion

**PD**

Audio Tape

**Aud**

Questions

**Q**

Simulation

**S**

Witness Testimony

**WT**

Product

**P (Specify)**

**Assessor Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

**Internal Verifier Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

EXEMPLAR

Figure: 1a

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION SAMPLING PLAN REPORT</b></p>
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There should be an Internal Verification Sampling Report following each internal verifier activity shown on the plan. The feedback should be given to the assessors involved in the activity sampled.

The feedback should be constructive and developmental and should include comments to ensure that assessment decisions are:

- Valid
- Fair
- Reliable
- That national standards are adhered to.

Issues and problem areas identified on the Internal Verifier feedback report should be discussed at standardisation meetings.

A copy of the feedback report must be kept in the centre Internal Verifier file. A copy should also be given to the relevant assessor.

<b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION SAMPLING PLAN REPORT</b>
---

Internal Verifier:.....Report.Number:.....

Assessor Name..... Candidate Name:.....

Qualification name and level:.....

Unit/Element.....

This is an Interim/Summative sample internal verification report:.....

**Sampling of portfolio**

**Was competence demonstrated by:**

- Real work   
  Simulation   
  Product   
  APL   
  Questioning   
  Professional Discussion

	Yes	No
Was the candidate observed directly by an assessor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was knowledge and understanding assessed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the work product evidence available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has an ongoing record been kept of advice given to the candidate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the candidate assessment records being completed on an ongoing basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Assessment Decisions**

Unit	Element	Assessment method(s) key: O: observation WT: Witness testimony QC: questioning of candidate PS: personal statement WA: written answers to questions WP: work product CH: Case history PD: professional discussion QW: questioning of witness					Valid	Authentic	Sufficient	Relevant	Current	Assessor decisions correct?	
		Assessment Methods										Evidence title	Yes
		O	WT	QC	PS	WA							
		WP	CH	PD	QW								
		O	WT	QC	PS	WA							
		WP	CH	PD	QW								
		O	WT	QC	PS	WA							
		WP	CH	PD	QW								
		O	WT	QC	PS	WA							
		WP	CH	PD	QW								

**FEEDBACK:**

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY ASSESSOR:**

**Internal Verifier Signature:.....**

**Date:.....**

**Assessor Signature:.....**

**Date:.....**

**External Verifier Signature:.....**

**Date:.....**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION MONITORING OF ASSESSMENT</b></p>
--

The Internal Verifier Monitoring of assessment Form should be completed when the Internal Verifier observes an assessor conducting any activity that contributes to the candidate's experience on the programme. These are likely to include:

- Assessment
- Planning
- Advisory meetings
- Observation
- Assessment meetings
- Professional discussion.

A copy of the completed reports should be kept in the centre Internal Verifier File and a copy should be given to the relevant assessor.



<b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION MONITORING OF ASSESSMENT</b>
---

Assessor: ..... Trainee  Qualified

Candidate:..... Location:.....

Assessment Activity observed:.....

Qualification/ level:.....

Unit/Element.....

Internal Verifier:..... Date:.....

Did the assessor:	YES	NO	Comments
Give clear information on the assessment process to the candidate?			
Inform the candidate of the centre Appeals Procedure?			
Encourage the individual to identify and present evidence?			
Refer to the specified national standards?			
Use the specified assessment documentation?			
Remain as unobtrusive as was practicable/			
Use questions that were clear and did not lead the candidate?			
Use sufficient, justifiable questions to infer competence?			

Invite the candidate to contribute in his/her own assessment?			
Consider all feasible sources of evidence?			
Accurately judge evidence against units, elements, performance criteria, range, underpinning knowledge, and evidence require requirements?			
Ensure that the evidence can be reliably attributed to the candidate?			
Clarify and resolve any inconsistencies in the evidence?			
Confirm the outcome of the assessment and feedback as soon as was practicable?			
Encourage the candidate to ask questions?			
Record evidence and assessment decisions according to verification procedures?			

Feedback to assessor:

  
  

Action required:

  
  

Assessor's signature:..... Date:.....

Internal Verifier signature:..... Date:.....

All action points, as stated above have now been completed and the evidence requirements satisfied.

Assessor signature:..... Date:.....

Internal Verifier signature:..... Date:.....

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION CANDIDATE INTERVIEW RECORD</b></p>
--

The Candidate Interview Record' should be completed to ensure that the candidate has understood all centre procedures and policies and that the assessment needs of the candidate are being met. Internal verifiers should check that the candidate:

- Knows which NVQ they are working towards and has a copy of the standards
- Understands the assessment process
- Knows what progress they have made towards achievement
- Are aware of their right to unit certification
- Understands their role in generating, collecting and cross-referencing evidence
- Has confidence in their assessor
- Understands the Appeals procedure process
- Has received acknowledgement of specified learning needs requirements

**INTERNAL VERIFICATION  
CANDIDATE INTERVIEW RECORD**

**Candidate:**..... **Assessor:**.....

**Qualification/level:**.....

**Internal verifier:**..... **Date:**.....

When did you begin the programme?	
How were you introduced to the programme? What topics were covered in your induction?	
Was any of your prior experience considered/used towards the qualification?	
Did anyone find out about any training you needed?	
Did you have any training/mentoring whilst working towards your qualification? If so what?	
Who gave you the training? Where and when was it carried out?	
Was the equal opportunity policy explained to you? Did you understand it?	
Was the centre appeals procedure explained to you? Did you understand it?	

Was the process of getting your qualification explained to you? If so, what do you understand this process to be?	
Did you draw up a plan to achieve the qualification with your assessor/supervisor?	
Does your assessor/supervisor involve you in planning assessments in advanced?	
When, where and how does assessment take place/	
What types of evidence have you collected so far?	
Do you understand what aspects of your NVQ the evidence covers?	
How soon after you started was your first assessment?	
Who assesses your evidence? Does anyone else see your portfolio?	
How often do you see your assessor? Do you feel that this is often enough? If not, how often would you like him/her to visit?	
Does your assessor give you feedback after assessment? Is this feedback in written form?	
What units have you completed so far? Have you signed any document to confirm completion?	

What kind of help and guidance have you received to put your portfolio together?	
Do you think the qualification will help you in your work now and in the future?	

I agree that the contents of this form may be shared with my assessor.

**Candidate signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

**Internal verifier Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

## **INTERNAL VERIFICATION ASSESSOR INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

Assessors should be assisted with their continuous professional development through guidance and support from their internal verifier. Especially during critical stages such as:-

- An assessor who is new – to a centre, a team, to NVQs
- When standards are updated or guidance is received from an awarding body
- External verifier visits

An assessor induction session is likely to be more effective if the process is structure and it may help to have a checklist or pack.

The internal verifier must ensure that an assessor has access to the following:

- Copies of all standards they are to assess
- Information about the TVET Council and a copy of ‘TVET Council Guidance’ on assessing NVQs
- A set of all assessment documentation and tools
- Copies of the Centre’s Appeals Procedures and any other relevant organisational procedures
- Information about resources, materials, equipment and facilities available to the candidates and the assessors.
- Details about External verification
- Details about their candidates

**ASSESSOR INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

**Assessor:**.....

**Date:**.....

		<b>Signed by Assessor</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
1.	Initial contact made by verifier		
2.	Production of <b>sample signature</b> and <b>certificates</b>		
3.	Received <b>Centre Procedures and Assessment Guidance</b>		
4.	Centre documentation and procedures explained and understood		
5.	Received Centre <b>Assessment and Verification Documentation</b>		
6.	Internal quality assurance procedures explained		
7.	Role of the <b>TVET Council</b> explained and understood		
8.	<b>Monitoring Procedures</b> explained and understood		
9.	Made aware of centre resources available		
10.	Received <b>Centre Appeals Procedures</b> which was explained and understood		
11.	Received personal copy of <b>NVQ standards</b>		
12.	Received NVQ guidance on occupations competence		

**Internal verifier Signature:**..... **Date:**.....



**INTERNAL VERIFICATION  
ALLOCATION OF ASSESSOR TO CANDIDATE**

It will be beneficial to ensure that your centre has a formal system for allocating assessors to candidates in were you set out the specific performance requirements for the assessor.

This could include:-

- initial contact procedures
- assessments reports
- frequency of reviews
- sampling procedures

EXEMPLAR

Figure: 5

Dear

**Allocation of assessor to candidate**

I am pleased to inform you that you have been allocated the following NVQ candidate.

Name:..... Qualification/level:.....

Work placement:.....

Home address:.....

Telephone numbers: (W)..... (H).....

I suggest that you arrange an orientation visit within the next three weeks. The main purpose of the visit will be:

- For you to meet the candidate and check they have a full set of relevant standards/evidence requirement documents, including the optional units.
- For you to find out as much as possible about the candidates work setting.
- Check that the candidate fully understands the process of assessment, which should be candidate led as much as possible, with the candidate identifying different sources of evidence. Check too that the candidate is in the process of starting their portfolio.
- To work out an outline timetable for assessment visits. This plan should not be rigid and should be reviewed regularly.
- Please complete NVQ Candidate review sheets and return to me at the end of each month. Inform me of assessment dates so a sampling visit can be arranged.
- If you have any problems please do not hesitate to get in touch at any time.

Yours sincerely

Internal verifier

**INTERNAL VERIFICATION  
INITIAL RESOURCING ASSESSMENT**

On entry, a recorded assessment must be carried out to determine a candidate's additional or special learning needs and or developments. This could include the need for:-

- Technical aids
- Physical adaptations
- Extra support
- Unsocial working hours for assessment
- Extra time for assessment

**INTERNAL VERIFICATION  
INITIAL RESOURCING ASSESSMENT**

Candidate name:.....

Qualification aiming for:.....

Occupational background/area of expertise:

  
  

Relevant qualifications held:

*Tick if yes*

**Particular assessment requirements identified**

- Physical impairment                       Lacking confidence                       Language barrier  
 Sensory impairment                       Learning difficulty

Other (specify) E.g. time available, shift work.....

**Requirements identified**

- Physical aids                                       Technical aids                                       Mechanical aids  
 Extra time for assessments                       Specially devised/adapted assessments  
 Additional learning/training needs

Comments:

**Skill scan completed**

Candidate signature:.....                      Date:.....

Assessor signature:.....                      Date:.....

<p><b>INTERNAL VERIFICATION STANDARDISATION AND TEAM MEETINGS</b></p>
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The Lead Internal Verifier at the Centre must ensure that there are regular team meetings to discuss **standardisation** and other issues. These should include:

- agreeing on reasons for assessment decisions
- Sharing best practice
- Tracking information relating to candidates progress
- Feedback from candidates relating to training needs or problems
- Ensuring that the team are familiar with awarding body requirements
- Ensuring the team are familiar with new developments and changes to standards
- Giving feedback on External Verifiers visits
- Learning from action points or External Verifier appeals
- Discussing and revising centre procedures
- Discussing issues relating to national standards
- Preparing for an External Verifier visit or other external audit.

In a larger Centre there may be separate team and standardisation meeting. In small centres it is likely that team and standardisation meetings will be combined.

It is recommended that the following agenda items are standard items for **team** meetings:

- Apologies for absence
- Update on awarding body and regulatory body issues
- Internal Verifier report
- External Verifier report and action points
- Candidate progress
- Report on standardisation exercise
- Report and issues
- Health and safety report issues
- Complaints and appeals
- Review of internal quality assurance
- Any other business.

Copies of the agenda and minutes of the meeting must be retained in the Centre for examination by the External Verifier and other auditing bodies

**(Centre Name)**

**Meeting Agenda**

**(Date)**

**(Time)**

**Type of meeting:**            *STANDARDISATION*

**Facilitator:**

**Minutes taken by:**

**Attendees:**

**Please read:**

**Please bring:**

---

**Agenda:**

1.    **Apologies for absence**
2.    **Matters arising from previous meeting**
3.    **Internal verifier report/s and issues arising**
4.    **Review of internal verifier samples**
  - i.     **Review of assessment plans**
  - ii.    **Review of procedures for making assessment decisions**
  - iii.   **Review – validity, reliability of decisions**
  - iv.    **Check consistency of assessment decisions between assessors with different candidates**
  - v.     **Frequency and consistency of assessment reviews**
  - vi.    **Frequency and effectiveness of assessor feedback to candidates**
  - vii.   **Accuracy and security of assessor record keeping**
5.    **Review of internal verifier sampling process**
6.    **Adjournment and date of next meeting**

**INTERNAL VERIFICATION  
CENTRE SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

It is the responsibility of the internal verifier to ensure that the quality standards in the delivery of NVQs are adhered to by the centres. In order to do this effectively the duties of the internal verifier should be an integral part of the organisations quality procedures and they should report directly to the centre's senior management on all aspects of the centre's NVQ programme/s.

It will be the responsibility of the internal verifier to carry out a self assessment of the centre's performance in regards to assessing whether quality standards are being met

<b>CENTRE SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST</b>
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The following checklist summarizes the main principles of Internal Verification. Internal Verifiers should use it to see whether they meet these principles or to identify where they could improve their practice.

KEY INDICATOR	YES	NO	COMMENT
<b>Internal Verifier Competence</b>			
Have I achieved unit V1?			
Have I kept my occupational background up-to-date?			
Do I fully understand the occupational standards and have I resolved any queries with the external verifier?			
Do I understand the awarding body requirements for offering the NVQ?			
Am I up-to-date with current best practice and documentation for the NVQ system as a whole?			
<b>Monitoring Assessment Practice</b>			
Do I make sure that all the assessors meet, and continue to meet, the awarding body's criteria for becoming assessors?			
Do I decide on how I will monitor assessment practice, based on the most suitable approach for the centre?			
When I monitor an assessor's assessment practice, do I give clear and constructive feedback afterwards?			
Do I identify development needs for the whole assessment team when monitoring the assessment practice of individuals?			
<b>Verifying Assessment Decisions</b>			
Do I check that evidence used for assessment is valid, authentic, reliable, consistent and sufficient?			
Do I consider whether assessment is happening in the most cost-effective way?			
<b>Sampling Assessments</b>			
Do I decide on a sampling strategy reflecting the characteristics of assessments within the centre?			
Do I keep records of the sampling strategies used and assessments looked at?			



Do I make information on sampling available to the external verifier before external verification visits?			
<b>Supporting And Advising Assessors</b>			
Do I fully brief assessors when they first start assessing?			
Am I in regular contact with all the assessors to check they have all the information and advice they need?			
Do I take a lead in deciding what information and advice assessors need, as well as responding to requests for information?			
Do I help assessors identify their own development needs?			
Do I provide development activities for the assessment team as a whole?			
Have I agreed assessor allocation with those involved?			
<b>Internal Verification Records</b>			
Do I make sure that internal verification and assessment records are fit for purpose and use existing systems where possible?			
Do I make sure that records show who assessed what and when, and how evidence is linked to the candidate?			
Do I keep records securely and confidentially?			
Do I make sure that documentation and records are reviewed regularly to check that they are still useful?			
<b>Access And Fair Assessment</b>			
Do I provide guidance to assessors to make sure that they do not discriminate against any candidate?			
Do I monitor assessment practice to make sure that discrimination is not happening?			
<b>Appeals</b>			
Do I know what to do if there is an appeal from a candidate?			
Do I keep records of any appeals which happen?			

**Internal Verifiers Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

**External verification signature:** .....

**Date:** .....