

# Quality Assurance Principles, Elements and Criteria

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# Contents

Foreword	1
Overview of Assessment and Quality Assurance	2
Quality Assurance Principles	6
Quality Assurance Elements	6
General Criteria	8
Approval as a TVET Council Centre	9
Approval to Offer Specific TVET Council Qualifications	11
Validation of TVET Council Qualifications	12
Internal Verification of Internal Assessment	14
External Verification of Internal Assessment	15
Quality Control of External Assessment	17
Monitoring of TVET Council's Quality Assurance Elements	18

# Foreword

The assessment and quality assurance policy outlined in this publication is the result of consultation with the stakeholders in industry and vocational education and training along with the guidance of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

The TVET Council will work in partnership with centres to ensure that all of its qualifications are subject to rigorous quality assurance and has drawn up a number of quality assurance principles to maximise the effectiveness of its partnership. Specific elements of quality assurance are based on these principles, and each element consists of a number of criteria. The elements and criteria are designed to ensure that all TVET Council qualifications are assessed to national standards.

By reading this publication, staff in centres should develop an understanding of the criteria and of ways of working together to ensure that all TVET Council qualifications meet the requirements of the people of Barbados.

# Overview of Assessment and Quality Assurance

# 1 Introduction

This document sets out the TVET Council's quality assurance principles, elements and criteria. Responsibility for meeting some of the criteria falls mainly on the TVET Council itself, while other criteria falls more on the centre.

The TVET Council's monitoring of the manner in which a centre carries out its responsibilities depends on the type of centre and the type of qualification being offered. For a qualification which is internally assessed, responsibility is shared with the centre, so a different range of quality assurance procedures is required.

The most important objective of TVET Council's assessment and quality assurance principles and procedures is to ensure that assessment of TVET Council's qualifications is valid and reliable; i.e. that candidates who have demonstrated the competencies required by a qualification receive certification and that those who have not demonstrated competence do not. This has to be achieved in a practical and cost-effective manner, and every effort has been made to keep the quality assurance demands on centres to the minimum. The rest of this section provides an overview of how quality assurance will be carried out in the various contexts in which TVET Council qualifications are assessed.

# 2 Training Institutions

#### Approval as a TVET Council NVQ Centre

Training institutions will require approval in order to become an NVQ centre. Full registration with another awarding body should result in an abbreviated approval process.

#### Approval to offer specific qualifications

The approval process will depend on the centre's track record in the specialist area from which the qualification is drawn. If the centre is new or has not offered qualifications in the specialist area before, a visit by an External Verifier will be necessary. If the centre has experience in the specialist area and a good track record, and has made an approval submission, which provides satisfactory information, then a visit may not be necessary.

#### Validation

Responsibility for validating National Vocational Qualifications will rest with the TVET Council. Training institutions' involvement will focus on their willingness to release staff on request to serve on national development groups, and to respond to consultation on proposals for introducing new qualifications or revising existing ones.

#### Internal verification

It is important that training institutions ensure that internal assessments are made in a consistent manner. The TVET Council will assume that all candidates entered for the same qualification are assessed to a common standard, so methods of ensuring that assessments are consistent should therefore be applied. It is also important that any new member of staff has access to all the relevant TVET Council documentation.

Where external verification reveals a significant problem in internal assessment, the External Verifier may examine the way internal verification is carried out. This may lead to a visit by a Systems Verifier if the problem appears to extend beyond a specialist area.

#### **External verification**

Training institutions should be familiar with external verification. NVQs will be subject to visiting verification.

External verification will focus on the validity, reliability and practicability of the training institution's assessment of the candidates' evidence. Development visits will be part of the system.

#### **External assessment**

This will not be a typical feature of NVQ assessment, but may be introduced as a form of external quality control and used where appropriate and necessary.

#### 3 Employers

#### Approval as a TVET Council NVQ Centre

All employers will require individual approval to become a NVQ centre and will be visited to ensure the centre criteria are met, and to discuss how their systems and TVET Council's can dovetail together. Full registration with another awarding body should result in an abbreviated approval process.

#### Approval to offer specific qualifications

The approval process will depend on the centre's track record in the specialist area from which the qualification is drawn. If the centre is new or has not offered qualifications in the specialist area before, a visit by an External Verifier will be necessary. If the centre has experience in the specialist area and a good track record, and has made an approval submission, which provides satisfactory information, then a visit may not be necessary.

#### Validation

Though responsibility for accrediting and re-accrediting NVQs can not be devolved, employers will have the opportunity to make representations to Industry Lead Bodies to develop NVQs. Staff may also be invited by TVET Council to assist in developing qualifications comprising occupational standards.

#### Internal verification

It is important that employers ensure that internal assessments are made in a consistent manner. TVET Council will assume that all candidates in a centre entered for the same qualification are assessed to a common standard, so methods of ensuring that assessments are consistent should be applied. It is also important that any new member of staff has access to all the relevant TVET Council documentation.

Where external verification reveals a significant problem in internal assessment the External Verifier will look into the way internal verification is carried out. This may lead to a visit by a Systems Verifier if the problem appears to extend beyond a single specialist area.

#### **External verification**

The TVET Council will externally verify employers offering NVQs. External verification will focus on the quality of the centre's assessment of the candidates' evidence. Development visits will be a part of the system.

#### External assessment

This will not be a typical feature of NVQ assessment, but may be introduced as a form of external quality control and used where appropriate and necessary.

# **Quality Assurance Principles**

The TVET Council is committed to quality assuring all its qualifications to ensure recognition and credibility through the maintenance of standards. The TVET Council's quality assurance is based upon the following principles:

- the TVET Council's assessment and quality assurance system should be understandable to stakeholders, effectively administered, publicly accountable and cost-effective to operate.
- qualifications should be accessible to all candidates who have the potential to achieve them.
- the criteria which define the performance required of candidates for them to achieve qualifications should be appropriate to purpose, explicit and in the public domain.
- each unit and NVQ Award should be unique and necessary, and should comply with the relevant qualification specification.
- assessments should be valid, reliable and practicable, and assessment results should be in line with qualification criteria.
- qualifications should be offered in centres which have the resources and expertise to assess candidates against the qualification's criteria.
- staff in centres should be provided with effective support in assessing candidates for certification.
- procedures for the approval of centres should take due account of their track record and approval gained from other quality-regulating organisations.

# **Quality Assurance Elements**

In order to ensure that the qualifications the TVET Council offers are designed and delivered and assessed to acceptable and national standards, quality assurance elements based on the principles stated above have been defined. These elements underpin all NVQs, and are the mechanisms through which national standards are established and maintained. Quality provision requires an effective partnership, based on the quality assurance elements, between the TVET Council and staff in centres.

The elements represent the requirements or criteria for which TVET Council and centres have corresponding responsibility. Quality provision requires an effective partnership,

based upon the quality assurance criteria, between TVET Council and centre staff. Some criteria relate to all of the elements and they have been extracted and described separately.

The elements are:

- Approval of NVQs
   The Council will put in place formal procedures to approve each proposed NVQ against explicit criteria to ensure fitness for purpose
- Approval as a TVET Council centre The Council will publish criteria that relate to the management procedures which underpin the implementation and assessment of TVET Council qualifications in centres
- Approval to offer specific TVET Council qualifications The Council will publish criteria that relate to the resources required of centres for the implementation and assessment of specific NVQs
- Internal verification of internal assessment The Council will publish criteria that relate to the processes by which centres ensure that all internal assessment is valid, reliable, practicable and cost-effective
- *External verification of internal assessment* The Council will establish external processes by which it ensures that internal assessment is in line with the national standards set out in the qualifications
- *Quality control of external assessment* The Council will, where appropriate, put in place external assessment to ensure that national standards are adhered to
- *Monitoring TVET Council's quality assurance elements* The Council will ensure periodic monitoring of all processes, which are used to measure the success of the quality assurance elements in supporting a consistent application of national standards

#### **General criteria**

The following criteria are implicit in *all* of the quality assurance elements and have therefore been set out separately.

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
A1 Processes which support all TVET Council qualifications are reviewed and continuously improved	<ul> <li>continuously monitors quality assurance processes and updates them in line with qualification and centre requirements</li> <li>consults with stakeholders and takes action on feedback</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>reviews and updates internal quality assurance processes as required</li> <li>identifies staff roles and responsibilities</li> <li>facilitates staff participation in consultation exercises and takes action on feedback from staff</li> </ul>
A2 All main processes are in the public domain and information and guidance are provided	<ul> <li>gives targeted information and guidance to centres and other stakeholders as required</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>disseminates information to staff, candidates and other stakeholders as required</li> </ul>
A3 Special assessment and certification arrangements are made for candidates who require them (e.g. candidates with permanent impairment)	<ul> <li>provides guidance on possible special assessment certification arrangements for candidates</li> <li>makes fair and consistent decisions on individual cases submitted by the centre</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>seeks TVET Council approval for special assessment certification arrangements and implements these arrangements as agreed</li> </ul>
<i>A4</i> Data processes are accurate and timeous	<ul> <li>maintains a comprehensive record of candidate achievement</li> <li>issues results data and certificates accurately and timeously</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>allocates the Candidate Number (CN) to new candidates only; ensures existing candidates use correct CN</li> <li>submits entry data timeously</li> </ul>

#### Element: Criteria for Approval as a TVET Council Centre

Criterion	<b>TVET Council</b>	The Centre
<b>B1</b> Quality assurance is managed effectively	<ul> <li>provides information, guidance and support on quality assurance requirements to centres</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>manages effectively the internal processes which underpin TVET Council provision</li> </ul>
<b>B2</b> Information is managed effectively within the centre and between the centre and the TVET Council	<ul> <li>provides information on TVET Council requirements eg qualification information including arrangements documents and unit specifications</li> <li>processes information received from centres on candidate registration, enrolment and results</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>stores information on TVET Council qualifications, procedural requirements and candidates</li> <li>disseminates TVET Council related information to staff and candidates as appropriate</li> <li>records information about candidates, qualifications and procedural requirements</li> <li>submits information to the TVET Council accurately and timeously</li> </ul>
<b>B3</b> Resources are managed effectively	<ul> <li>approves assessment and quality assurance processes within centres and monitors them for continuing compliance</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>ensures that staff are competent in the subject /cognate/occupational areas within which they operate and that they are competent to assess</li> <li>provides accommodation, reference material, equipment, learning and assessment material which supports the assessment of TVET Council qualifications</li> <li>fulfils corporate/statutory obligations</li> </ul>
<b>B4</b> There are arrangements in place which facilitate external and internal quality control of TVET Council qualifications	<ul> <li>makes available information on external and internal quality control requirements</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>ensures that staff understand the process and TVET Council requirements</li> <li>allows access for TVET Council representatives</li> <li>makes available relevant materials in the appropriate locations</li> </ul>
<b>B5</b> Candidates are provided with induction, guidance and support	<ul> <li>monitors processes within centres</li> <li>provides guidance to centres and candidates</li> <li>makes curricular, vocational and</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>demonstrates a commitment to equal opportunity in the selection, admission and assessment of candidates</li> <li>makes material relating to TVET Council qualifications available</li> </ul>

All potential centres must demonstrate the potential to fill the criteria.

Criterion	<b>TVET Council</b>	The Centre
	qualification-related guidance and support available to candidates	<ul> <li>ensures that candidates undergo an induction process</li> </ul>
<b>B6</b> There is a satisfactory appeals procedure for candidates	<ul> <li>approves the centre appeals process for internal assessment decisions and monitors it for continuing compliance</li> <li>deals with appeals unresolved within the centre</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>operates a satisfactory internal assessment appeals procedure for candidates</li> <li>disseminates information on the appeals procedures to staff and candidates</li> <li>maintains records of appeals</li> </ul>

# Element: Criteria for Approval to Offer Specific TVET Council Qualifications

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
<b>C1</b> An approval process for specific TVET Council qualifications is defined	<ul> <li>defines procedures for obtaining approval for specific qualifications</li> <li>operates an approval system to meet the requirements of centres and qualifications</li> <li>monitors the effectiveness of the centre's approval system</li> <li>records and stores information relating to specific qualification approval</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>defines internal processes which underpin specific qualifications approval</li> <li>records and stores information on obtaining approval for specific qualifications</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>C2 Resources meet the requirements of:</li> <li>the qualifications</li> <li>the method of assessment</li> <li>the number and needs of candidates</li> <li>the mode(s) of delivery</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>gives guidance on the resources required for specific TVET Council qualifications</li> <li>approves resources for specific qualifications and monitors them for continuing compliance</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>provides accommodation and equipment which is suitable for the qualification and takes account of technical/specialist needs</li> <li>provides sufficient numbers of qualified/experienced staff to assess and internally verify internal assessments</li> <li>provides all candidates with access to reference and learning materials which support the qualification</li> <li>uses assessment material which is appropriate to the requirements of the qualification</li> </ul>

#### Element: Criteria for the Validation of TVET Council Qualifications

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
NVO		
<b>D1</b> The qualification conforms to the TVET Council design rules and other technical requirements which are current at the time of its submission for accreditation	<ul> <li>develops design rules and other technical requirements which comply with the NVQ criteria and associated guidance published by the TVET Council</li> <li>develops NVQs based on standards developed by national standards-setting bodies</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>is not involved in NVQ validation</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>ensures by a validation process the NVQs comply with the design rules and other technical requirements prior to submission to the Standards Approval Committee for approval</li> </ul>	
<b>D2</b> There is a demonstrable need for the NVQ which fills a gap in the qualifications framework and makes a valuable and unique contribution to the TVET Council's portfolio of qualifications	<ul> <li>provides, in consultation with stakeholders, NVQs which add value to the Barbadian qualifications portfolio</li> <li>has a feedback system through which it collects stakeholders views in order to regularly review the NVQs for which it is awarding body, in accordance with the criteria for re-accreditation</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>provides feedback to TVET Council on the extent to which the qualifications in the NVQ catalogue meet this criterion</li> </ul>
<b>D3</b> The qualification is accessible to all candidates who could potentially achieve it	<ul> <li>ensures that NVQs it submits for accreditation are free from unnecessary barriers to achievement</li> <li>has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which NVQs meet this criterion</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>strives to serve the best interests of prospective candidates and does not create artificial barriers to achievement</li> <li>provides feedback to TVET Council on the extent to which the qualifications in the NVQ catalogue meet this criterion</li> </ul>
<b>D4</b> The qualification requires a candidate to demonstrate significant, achievable outcomes in an occupational area and in the conditions of the workplace	<ul> <li>ensures that NVQs it submits for accreditation are based on approved national occupational standards</li> <li>ensures that NVQs it submits for accreditation have</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>provides feedback to TVET Council on the extent to which the qualifications in the NVQ catalogue meet this criterion</li> </ul>

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
	<ul> <li>assessment arrangements appropriate to the outcomes which candidates must demonstrate and to any assessment strategy defined by the national standard setting body</li> <li>has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which NVQs meet this criterion</li> </ul>	
<b>D5</b> The qualification is coherent and its title accurately reflects its content	<ul> <li>ensures that qualifications which it submits for accreditation meet this criterion</li> <li>has a feedback system to collect stakeholders' views on the extent to which NVQs meet this criterion</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>provides feedback to TVET Council on the extent to which the qualifications in the NVQ catalogue meet this criterion</li> </ul>

#### **Element: Internal Verification of Internal Assessment**

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
E1 The internal verification system ensures that centres' assessments of internally assessed qualifications are valid, reliable and practicable	<ul> <li>provides guidance on best practice for internal verification as it applies to different types of qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>ensures that the chosen assessment instruments and assessment schemes are valid and applied consistently by all assessors for the same qualification across all candidates</li> <li>ensures that the final assessment decisions made by assessors are accurate, reliable and recorded</li> </ul>
<i>E2</i> The internal verification system is reviewed to ensure efficient and effective deployment of internal verifiers		<ul> <li>monitors the effectiveness of the internal verification system and implements any necessary changes</li> </ul>
<i>E3</i> The internal verification system reflects developments in assessment policy and procedures	<ul> <li>issues guidance in relation to any amendments to policy and procedures relating to internally assessed qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>implements any changes made necessary by changes to TVET Council's policy and procedures</li> </ul>

#### **Element: External Verification of Internal Assessment**

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
F1 The external verification system ensures that there is an appropriate level of verification conducted for each qualification area	<ul> <li>designs and maintains an algorithm which will select for each qualification those centres which should be verified</li> <li>determines a minimum quota of verification for each qualification</li> <li>samples centres for verification, for a particular qualification, according to criteria including if the centre:         <ul> <li>is offering the qualification for the first time</li> <li>did not offer the qualification in the previous two years</li> <li>had its assessments 'not accepted on the last occasion the centre was verified</li> <li>has not been selected for a period of years</li> <li>requested information and this was agreed by TVET Council</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>informs TVET Council of the qualifications it is delivering, at the appropriate time</li> <li>informs TVET Council of any changes to completion dates or candidates undertaking the qualifications selected for verification</li> </ul>
F2 The verification system ensures that there is adequate cover of verifiers to allow verification to take place	<ul> <li>recruits, appoints and trains sufficient personnel with the appropriate subject and assessment expertise</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>releases, where possible, personnel to act as verifiers</li> </ul>
F3 The verification system ensures that centres' assessments of internally assessed qualifications are valid, reliable and practicable	<ul> <li>selects the appropriate form of verification for the particular qualifications being verified</li> <li>notifies centres whether or not they have been selected for verification within the published period from the date of requested certification</li> <li>makes the necessary arrangements for the verification of the selected centres</li> <li>oversees the conduct of verification and the performance of verifiers</li> <li>accepts centres' assessment decisions which are in accordance with the national standards and assists centres in achieving national standards where their assessment decisions have not been accepted</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>retains appropriate evidence until agreed disposal dates</li> <li>makes available to TVET Council assessment instruments, assessment schemes, candidate evidence and assessment decisions in relation to the national standards for a nominated sample of candidates when requested by TVET Council and in the format requested</li> <li>where appropriate, sends the above materials when requested to TVET Council</li> <li>provides adequate support for the visit of a verifier:</li> </ul>

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
	<ul> <li>provides feedback to centres regarding the result of the verification</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>co-operates in arranging a date within the given period</li> <li>provides suitable accommodation/equipm ent</li> <li>notifies all concerned</li> <li>makes available all requested documentation</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>where appropriate, acts on any verification feedback provided by TVET Council</li> </ul>
<i>F4</i> The verification system ensures that records of all verification activity are complete and accurate	<ul> <li>records and stores reports on each verification conducted to inform future selections</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>retains information on processes and evidence of outcomes of External Verification</li> </ul>
F5 The verification system is reviewed to ensure efficient and effective deployment of verifiers	<ul> <li>monitors the performance of verifiers</li> <li>operates a feedback system to:         <ul> <li>identify any team or individual training needs</li> <li>meet any identified training needs</li> <li>ensure that verifiers are consistent in verification decisions and are kept abreast of current assessment practice in their subject/qualification/ cognate area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>assists TVET Council by providing feedback on verification when requested</li> </ul>
<b>F6</b> The verification system reflects developments in assessment policy and procedures	<ul> <li>keeps verification under review</li> <li>notifies all parties concerned of any policy and procedural changes relating to verification</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>identifies and meets training needs for verifiers as a result of any amendments or new policy and procedures introduced in relation to internally assessed qualifications</li> </ul>	

#### **Element: Quality Control of External Assessment**

The TVET Council has no immediate plans to introduce external assessment as a form of independent quality control. However, if adopted at a later date the following criteria will be effected:

Criterion	TVET Council	The Centre
<b>G1</b> External assessment procedures are defined	<ul> <li>explains its external assessment procedures and publishes specific information in good time</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>disseminates internally, and stores information on external assessment procedures and timetables</li> </ul>
<i>G2</i> Resources are sufficient to support external assessment	<ul> <li>maintains systems for processing external assessment</li> <li>appoints and trains sufficient personnel with appropriate expertise to carry out the appropriate roles.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>nominates invigilators</li> <li>on request, releases staff to TVET Council where possible</li> <li>provides suitable accommodation for the conduct of external assessment and safe storage of materials until dispatch</li> </ul>
G3 Assessment instruments are valid, practicable and cost- effective and their marking (of assessment) is reliable	<ul> <li>ensures that its assessment instruments conform in all respects to the assessment arrangements</li> <li>scrutinises the quality of work of each marker and takes action where required</li> <li>criteria for competence are decided using all relevant information and expertise in order to maintain comparability from year to year and across similar qualifications</li> <li>seeks systematic feedback from centres on the quality of external assessment procedures</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>ensures that candidates understand the assessment criteria and form of assessment by which they will be assessed</li> <li>submits accurate entry details and estimates of performance for each candidate</li> <li>responds to requests for feedback</li> </ul>
<b>G4</b> Awards may be reviewed through an Assessment Appeals process	<ul> <li>a pre-results review of awards is carried out for all candidates</li> <li>post-results Assessment Appeals are carried out and the outcomes are reported timeously</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Assessment appeal requests are submitted where supported by assessment evidence</li> </ul>

# Element: Monitoring of TVET Council's Quality Assurance Elements

<b>Criterion</b> <i>H1</i> Each quality element is periodically subject to qualitative and quantitative evaluation	<ul> <li><b>TVET Council</b></li> <li>develops and implements a systematic review of the effectiveness of the quality element according to a rolling programme</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>◆ contributes to the evaluation by co-operating with the evaluation exercise</li> </ul>
<i>H2</i> Standards are monitored across qualifications at the same level and over time	<ul> <li>develops and implements a systematic review of candidate evidence sampling across qualifications and from an archive</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>where possible, provides candidate evidence on request</li> </ul>