

External Verification Policy

Lead Officer (Post):	Principal and CEO
Responsible Office/Department:	Senior Management
Responsible Committee:	Quality Improvement Committee (QIC)
Review Officer (Post):	Depute Principal
Date policy approved:	01/08/2021
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	01/11/2023
Date policy due for review:	01/11/2026

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request.

Policy Summary

Overview	Setting out commitment to External Quality Assurance activity
Purpose	Compliance with external awarding body quality assurance requirements
Scope	All academic staff
Consultation	QIC / Academic Staff
Implementation and Monitoring	QIC
Risk Implications	
Link with Strategy	

1. Policy Statement

It is College policy to ensure that all procedures relating to the external verification of assessment of students are completed in accordance with:

- The guidelines of the awarding body.
- The College's internal verification procedures.

The Principal and CEO of UHI Shetland UHI is fully committed to ensuring these standards are met, and that staff will give full support to any Qualifications Scotland and other Awarding Body External Verifiers and that access to Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) staff, candidates, records, candidate evidence, resources and any satellite sites used for assessment purposes are granted and facilitated without hinderance. For Qualifications Scotland regulated qualifications, above access shall also be granted to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation and Ofqual staff on request.

2. Definitions

2.1 It is important to note that any External Verification event should be seen as a positive opportunity. They both confirm the centre's professional approach to academic quality assurance, and help further develop the centre's policies, procedures and work practices for the ultimate benefit of staff, and most importantly students.

2.2 Annually the awarding body will contact the Qualifications Scotland Coordinator to agree External Verification/Quality Assurance programme and arrangements for the current academic year.

2.3 There are four types of External Verification:

2.3.1 Systems Audit

This covers all aspects of the centre's quality processes relating to the induction, training, assessing, internal verification, supporting and certification of a candidate as required by the Qualifications Scotland Quality Assurance criteria. The systems audit is carried out by a member of the Qualifications Scotland Quality Enhancement team.

2.3.2 Qualification External Verification (QEV)

A subject specific visit covering one, or more units from a cognate group. This is a much more targeted on the actual delivery and assessment of a unit, or units, although QEV's will also cover some of the wider Quality Assurance (QA) criteria as per the Systems Verification above. A QEV will be an occupationally competent professional and will examine assessment and marking materials, internal verification activities, qualifications of assessors/internal verifiers, and the learning and assessment environment and recourses. They will also interview staff and students as appropriate to the units under review.

2.3.3 Central Verification

Most Graded units are quality assured through candidate assessment scripts, marking and verification materials being sent to a central location where they are scrutinized by subject specialists. A centre will be notified early in the AY if one of their units has been selected for this activity.

2.3.4 New Qualification Approval

Whilst most qualifications/units may be approved either under devolved authority or by the centre having a history of satisfactory delivery of similar qualifications. Many Regulated Qualifications, for example SVQ's, have additional quality requirements which entail a visit by a QEV with experience of that qualification/unit, before approval to add the qualification to the Centre remit.

- **EAL** – Information available from Centre Contact for EAL.
- **In-house Short Courses** - There are no external verification procedures in place except that course are designed in close consultation with industry; therefore, they are effectively verified by industry. All courses are internally verified see Policy and Procedure QA 005 for details.
- **MCA Approved Short Courses** - UHI Shetland is subject to spot checks by the MCA at any time as well as during 5 yearly re-approval visits, and regular short course approval events.

- **MCA Oral Examinations** - All examinations are set and conducted by external MCA approved examiners.
- **RYA** - The RYA conduct telephone interviews of randomly selected students and monitor responses. They also conduct annual audits of the centre.
- **Qualifications Scotland** - SVQ, Skills for work and FA qualifications are reviewed annually by Qualifications Scotland, all other qualification follow a rolling programme over a number of years. External Verifiers act as the guardians of Qualifications Scotland qualification and quality framework standards.
- **SEAFISH** – SEAFISH carry out annual approval/monitoring visits.

2.4 The Qualifications Scotland Coordinator will liaise with the appropriate Head of Section to agree appropriate times scales for visiting External Verifiers. Once an agreed date has been confirmed the External Verifier will forward a visit plan and request for information the Qualifications Scotland Coordinator.

2.5 Where SVQ Programmes are using e-portfolio systems, it is the Head of Section's responsibility to arrange appropriate access to candidate evidence prior to the visit taking place.

2.6 Following the visit, a formal report will be sent to the Qualifications Scotland Coordinator, this is to be forwarded on promptly to the Head of Section who will disseminate among the delivery team. All reports are to be presented to the Quality Improvement Committee for oversight and monitoring progress of any recommendations that have been made.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 In consultation with the Qualifications Scotland Coordinator, the Head of Section is responsible for ensuring that the following are retained for possible inspection by an External Verifier from an awarding body:

- Records of student's achievement (Form QF31).
- Assessment instruments.
- Completed Learning and Teaching templates for each unit (Form QF18).
- Assessment evidence.
- Records of Assessment Judgements made.
- Aids to achieving reliable assessments: checklists, marking schemes, etc.
- Records of internal verification activity (Forms QF1, QF2, QF3, QF4, QF5, QF6).
- Appeals procedure followed (Form QF12).

3.2 All findings and recommendations resulting from verification will be copied to relevant Heads of Section with a minimum of delay and reported annually to the Quality Improvement Committee. The Head of Section will promptly disseminate the findings with their appropriate team members by email and as part of course team meetings.

3.3 The Learning Teaching and Research Committee of the Board of Management oversee quality assurance and will have sight of external verification reports as appropriate and on request.

10. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	01/08/21			Quality Consultant
1	01/11/23		Branding, role titles, addition of clause 3.3	Depute Principal