

# ACCESS SUBJECT MODERATION

## GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDERS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT POSTAL SAMPLES

The external scrutiny of Access programmes at curriculum level is a requirement of all QAA-licensed Access Validating Agencies (AVA) and forms part of the AVA's Access Quality Standards with which all Access providers must comply. The external moderation of specific curriculum areas within Access programmes takes place in part through the postal submission of samples to Subject Moderators appointed by the AVA.

It is important that Centres are able to complete the subject moderation requirements within the given timescale as the outcomes of subject moderation sampling are also used by Centre Moderators to inform the focus of their visits, their action planning with Centres and their ability to verify the award of credit. Centres should note that, if subject moderation cannot take place through late or non-submission of samples, that this may incur additional work for Gateway Qualifications or Centre Moderators in order to verify the award of credit. Where this is the case Centres should be aware that they will be charged for any necessary additional work incurred e.g. Moderator visits or additional moderation of samples outside the timetable.

### ACCESS SUBJECT MODERATION PROCESS

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Sampling of assessment and learner achievement is achieved in part through the annual submission by post of a sample of assessed learners' work for each of the subject areas listed later in these guidelines.

- During the Initial Visit Centre Moderators agree the subjects and units to be sampled in Subject Moderation with the Coordinator, using the centre's assessment schedule
- The AVA is notified of the units selected on the Subject Moderation Sample Planning Form and the specific sample is selected from the registrations for those units. It is useful if the centre retains a copy of this planning form to help with the preparation of the sampled work.
- The centre prepares the samples according to the guidance (see later in this document) with a Subject Moderation Provider Checklist attached to each sample. A small number of additional samples may need to be added if the range of student performance is not covered or if there is no evidence of IV'd work in the samples selected by the AVA
- These samples are sent to the AVA by a given date by each Access Centre required to do so.
- Samples are then checked, sorted and sent to the Access Subject Moderators, who submit a report on the samples sent by a given date.

- Subject Moderation reports are copied to the Access Coordinator and Quality Manager at each Centre as well as the Access Centre Moderator (ACM), and action points noted.
- The ACM will follow up and track Subject Moderation actions. All Subject Moderation reports are scrutinised by the Access Quality Manager and an overarching report compiled, together with individual feedback to a sample of Subject Moderators.

## SAMPLING OF LEARNERS' WORK

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Access Subject Moderators and Centre Moderators are required to scrutinise and report on the assessment process, internal verification and learner achievement. It is not possible to externally moderate every learner's work, and it is not considered necessary to do so; the Moderator's judgement on this is achieved via sampling of assessed assignments. Sampling is an essential feature of both internal verification and external moderation arrangements.

The purpose of sampling is:

- To ensure that assessment judgements at different levels are appropriate and consistent
- To ensure that assessment judgments relating to grade components are appropriate and consistent
- To ensure that the grading model for the Access Diploma is consistently applied across subject areas and centres
- To ensure that methods of assessment are comparable and applied effectively
- To ensure that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved
- To ensure that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the appropriate grade has been achieved for the unit
- To ensure that evidence is valid, authentic, current, sufficient and inclusive
- To ensure that robust internal verification procedures are in place
- To promote consistency and standardisation across subjects, centres and the region.

## PRESENTATION OF SAMPLES

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In order to facilitate the moderation process, centres are requested to ensure that the following measures have been taken in the preparation of the samples:

- **All samples should be clearly presented, easy to read and easy to moderate.**
- All samples must be checked and collated with materials as stipulated in the postal samples checklist for providers, prior to sending to the AVA
- Centres should aim to undertake an internal standardisation meeting to check through the samples to make sure that everything is complete, prior to sending

- Please send photocopies only (*unless submitting electronically – see instructions below*). The assignments and feedback sheets must not be originals as they are retained by the AVA. Please ensure that photocopies are legible.
- Please do not put the samples of work in plastic wallets, as this adds time to the task for the Administrator and Subject Moderators. Work may be stapled together or held together with treasury tags.
- It is important for you to keep your own copy of the samples and documents sent. This will help you when you go through the Subject Moderator's Report and can be used for staff training and development.

## ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

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In order to facilitate the electronic submission of samples, centres are requested to ensure that the following measures have been taken:

- No scan and send .pdf documents should be submitted for the moderation process. Scanned documents often make work illegible and changing orientations within the document adds time to the task for the Administrator and Subject Moderators.
- It is preferred that Centres send complete word processed reports as samples for moderation.
- Samples can be saved on to a memory stick and posted to the address at the end of this guidance or emailed to [quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk) ensuring that the email and attachments are sufficiently labelled to identify the information being presented.
- Please contact [quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk) if you require additional help in submitting your sample electronically.

## RECOMMENDED ORDER FOR EACH SET OF SAMPLES

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Each set of samples should follow this order and documents must be referenced to correspond with the Subject Moderation Provider Checklist:

A checklist for each set of subject samples must be completed and will function as a contents list for the Subject Moderator. This should provide accurate information about the contents of the sample, with notes for the Moderator if the sample is unusual in any way e.g. if it is smaller or larger than expected, reasons if there are gaps in the sample.

- A.** A full list of learners (all courses) including tracking sheets to show the summary of results and grades achieved for all learners in the group (for comparison and to ensure that a representative sample has been selected).
- B.** The relevant unit specification and additional unit information (AUI).
- C.** The assignment briefing sheet. Please ensure that this clearly identifies which Access programme, course or course the learner is on.
- D.** Assignment feedback sheet completed by the tutor for each piece of assessed work. Please ensure that this clearly identifies the assessment criteria which have been met, the level achieved, indicative grade, feedback to learners etc.

**E.** If the assessed work does not cover the whole unit, provide clear information about how the rest of the unit is to be assessed in a Grading Assessment Plan.

The Grading Assessment Plan should specify which Grade Descriptors (GD) and which individual grading components of the descriptors will be used in each assignment used for the unit.

It should also provide information for the student on the performance expected to gain a Merit or Distinction. This information may be included in the revised assignment brief for the unit or this may be a separate guidance sheet.

*For more information please refer to Gateway Qualifications Access to HE Diploma: Guidance on Grading.*

**F.** Students' assessed work.

**G.** Internal Verification policy document/guidelines policy and procedure for the Access to Higher Education Diploma. Centres only need to provide one copy of this information – the AVA will copy this and send to all Subject Moderators.

**H.** Records of internal verification procedures relating to the sample, including IV feedback and any outcomes /actions from the IV process. Where IV has resulted in actions such as reassessment or remarking, this should also be included in the sample.

All the above can be emailed or sent in the post via memory stick as word processed documents.

## COMPONENTS OF THE SUBJECT SAMPLES

You need to include:

- A representative sample of work.\* This is a minimum of 5 examples of assessed work from one (the same) unit for each subject area listed\*\*. This means marked assignments from at least 5 different learners for the same unit which has been completed recently.
- A representative range of achievement for the unit and the student cohort e.g. Level 3: Pass, Merit, Distinction

plus

Borderline Level 2/3, Level 2 resubmission (with accompanying documentation)\*

You may also include:

Representations and/or referrals if appropriate (with accompanying documentation)

- The same assignments for all the learners in each sample to allow comparison of assessment and learner achievement in that subject / unit / assignment.
- The sample should include learners whose work has been internally verified and at least one which has not. You should include an additional sample which has been subject to IV if the selection made by Gateway Qualifications does not include an example of IV'd work

- All assessed work for that unit and evidence for the achievement of all the learning outcomes and the grade for the selected unit. Choose units which have been fully completed where this is possible.

Where this is not possible, i.e. where some of learning outcomes for the unit are to be assessed later in the year, you should include in the sample the tasks / assignments / briefing sheets for the outstanding learning outcomes and grade descriptors so that the Subject Moderator is clear about where and when the remaining evidence of achievement will be collected and to which learning outcomes and grade descriptors this applies.

Please note, the AVA fully expects that all providers should be able to send samples for a completed assignment in each subject area. Incomplete samples should only be submitted in very few exceptional cases.

*\*The summary of results for all learners in the group will act as a check that a representative sample has been selected. Centres should include one or more additional samples if the range of student performances is not covered in the sample selected from the unit registration by Gateway Qualifications.*

*\*\*Where cohorts are significantly larger than 25 students Centres will be requested to provide a sample equivalent to the square root ( $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$ ) of the cohort for that unit.*

## CURRICULUM AREA SAMPLES

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Where different courses in the same Centre offer different subject units in the same curriculum area, e.g. different Biology units used on Access to HE (Science) from those used on Access to HE (Nursing), Centres may wish to send a separate sample from both units. Centres should inform the AVA if they intend to do this and mark on the checklist where a double sample has been submitted. Moderators will report separately on these.

## FAQs

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### How will I know which subjects and units will be moderated?

Your Centre Moderator will discuss the Subject Moderation selection with the Centre Coordinator. Using the assessment schedule, you will both agree which units from the prescribed subject list will be completed and assessed by the moderation deadline date. The Centre Moderator will complete a Subject Moderation Planning form which will record the subjects and units selected.

### How do I choose and prepare the sample correctly?

The sample will be chosen by the AVA, based on a minimum number of 5 students' work for each unit selected. For cohorts larger than 25 students, the square root of the total number of students for that unit will be used. You will be sent a list of students whose work is required for sampling for each unit; if the lists do not cover the range of performance within individual units or there is no evidence of work which has been subject to IV, additional samples should be included to cover this. You should note these additional samples on the Subject Moderation Provider checklist.

### **How do I deal with units assessed through another subject (integrated assessment)?**

It may be the case with some units, such as study skills units, that the learning outcomes are not assessed discretely, but through assignments completed in other units (integrated assessment). In these cases, assessed work from a different curriculum area will be accepted, as long as the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the particular unit can be clearly referenced and is identified on the assessment brief and feedback sheet.

### **How will units which are used on more than one course be sampled?**

The sample will be drawn from the names of all students registered for specific units. For units used in more than one Access course, such as study skills, or units in Biology, History, Psychology and Law, the sample selected should include work sampled from each course offering that unit. You should mark on the checklist where this is the case and include an additional sample if a course has not been represented in the selection made by Gateway Qualifications.

BUT there is no need in this case to send entire samples from each course.

### **Our programme has different Biology units used on Access to HE (Science) from those used on Access to HE (Nursing). Will I be asked to send two sets of samples?**

Your Centre Moderator will discuss the selection of the subject units with you at the Initial Visit. If different courses on your programme offer very different subject units in the same curriculum area you may decide to select a separate sample from both units. The Centre Moderator will identify the two separate units to be moderated on the Sample Request sheet and the centre should record both units on the checklist submitted with the samples of work. Subject Moderators will report separately on these units.

### **Our centre has Approved Internal Verifier Status (AIVS). Do we still have to send samples of Access to HE coursework?**

Centres which have AIVS (Approved Internal Verifier Status) are approved to make direct claims for non-Access qualifications and should note that that this does not apply to the Access to HE Diploma qualification. External Access Centre Moderators are still required to sign off the recommendation for the award of credit (RAC) for all Access to HE Diplomas.

## **GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREAS**

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Art and Design is not sampled by post; a Subject Moderator in Art and Design will visit centres to look at samples of work. However, samples from core subjects on Art and Design programmes may be requested for postal moderation and should be submitted in the same way as other samples in the same subjects.

## RETENTION OF SAMPLES FOR STANDARDISATION

Samples are needed by the AVA for subject standardisation. You are asked to sign on the Subject Moderation Checklist to say that the samples may be used for this purpose. Samples will be anonymised as far as practicable and will only be used by the AVA for standardisation events within the region. If you feel that they contain sensitive or personal material which you do not wish to be shared, you should indicate this clearly on the sample.

**Please check with the Access Quality Manager or your Access Centre Moderator if you are not clear about how to present the sample selection.**

**Incomplete or poor quality samples will be returned to you and Subject Moderation may be delayed or subject to additional checks, which could incur costs for the centre.**

## ACCESS SUBJECTS

The following subjects will be sampled each year (*this list is not exhaustive*):

<b>Specialist subjects</b>	Art and Design Biology Business Studies Chemistry Education/Teaching English Language and Literature Health History and Humanities (including Cultural Studies, European Studies) Hospitality ICT/Computing Journalism Law Literature Logistics Maths Nursing Physics Psychology Social Work Sociology Travel and Tourism
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### PLEASE NOTE OUR POSTAL ADDRESS

All samples should be submitted to:

Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House, 3 Tollgate Business Park, Colchester, CO3 8AB

OR

[quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk)