

ACCESS SUBJECT MODERATION

GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDERS REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE ON-SITE SAMPLING

The external scrutiny of Access programmes at curriculum level is a requirement of all Access Validating Agencies (AVA) and forms part of the AVA's Access quality requirements with which all Access providers must comply.¹

In 2013-14 the Subject Moderation process developed a differentiated and responsive approach to quality assurance, using an assessment of the level of support required by centres which has been employed by the Gateway Qualifications since 2006 and for Access to HE programmes in particular since 2009. A blend of postal and on-site sampling was selected by the Centre Moderator in response to individual centre requirements.

SAMPLING OF LEARNERS' WORK

It is important that Centres are able to present samples in the manner required for the moderator. Centres should note that, if on-site subject moderation cannot take place as a result of ineffective arrangements, that this may incur additional work for Centre Moderators and Subject Moderators in order to verify the award of credit.

The AVA may need to ask for additional samples or additional visits and, where this is the case, centres will be charged for any necessary additional work incurred.

Moderators are required to scrutinise and report on assessment and internal verification and ensure that academic standards are maintained. It is neither possible nor necessary to externally moderate every learner's work; the Moderator's judgment on this is achieved via sampling of assessed assignments.

ACCESS SUBJECT MODERATION ON-SITE PROCESS

Moderators will visit at a time agreed with the Centre to scrutinise work and report on it to the AVA. Reports will be made available to the Access Coordinator and Quality Manager at each Centre as well as the Access Centre Moderator (ACM). Action points will be noted. The ACM will follow up and track Lead Subject Moderation actions. All Moderation reports are scrutinised by the Access Quality Manager and an overarching report is compiled for the AVA.

¹ Centres which have Approved Internal Verifier Status (AIVS) are approved to make direct claims for Gateway Qualifications (non-Access) qualifications. However this does not apply to the Access to HE Diploma qualification for which External Access Centre Moderators are required to sign off the recommendation for the award of credit (RAC).

Prior to the on-site subject moderation visit, the Subject Moderator may request background information to facilitate the moderation process and to prepare any questions ahead of the visit. This information should always be made available at the time of the visit, but the Moderator may wish to have advance information covering:

- A full list of learners (for all relevant Access courses) including tracking sheets to show the summary of results and grades achieved for all learners thus far (this could be the RAC provided by the AVA or other tracking document)
- The Internal Verification policy and process used for Access to HE Diplomas
- The internal verification sampling strategy completed for the cycle to show the rationale used for sampling
- The internal verification sampling plan for the cycle showing the learners whose work has been sampled or is due to be sampled
- The assessment schedule (to show which units will be completed by which dates)
- The results of internal standardisation of judgements and process i.e. meeting minutes and actions.

The Subject Moderator will visit and review a sample which has been chosen by the Access Centre Moderator (ACM) based on the subjects which are required to be sampled each year and the availability of completed units, as established in consultation with the Course Coordinator using the assessment schedule.

The AVA will select a specific sample from the selection made by the Centre Moderator. The sample should include the following:

- Learners' work which has been internally verified
- Learners' work which has been internally standardised
- Learners' work across a range of grades
- Units carrying significant credit value.

A small number of additional samples may be needed if these requirements have not been represented in the selection made by Gateway Qualifications. These additions should be highlighted for the Subject Moderator on the On-Site Subject Moderation Provider Checklist.

The Centre will have been given notice in good time prior to the visit of the size and nature of the sample the Subject Moderator wishes to see on the day; this will have been agreed between the ACM and the Access Coordinator at the Initial visit.

At the visit the Subject Moderator will scrutinise the sample and the course documentation:

- To ensure that assessment judgements, including those for grading, are appropriate and consistent
- To ensure that the conduct of assessment and the application of assessment regulations is thorough, rigorous and fair
- To ensure that methods of assessment are comparable and applied effectively
- To ensure that the minimum standards required for threshold achievement and performance are consistent with requirements for achievement of the relevant learning outcomes

- To ensure that consistent standards are applied in assessment, so that equivalent student achievement and performance is reflected in consistent recommendations for credits and grades
- To ensure that students awarded the Access to HE Diploma have successfully completed the required learning at the required standard, and their performance is reflected in grades awarded
- To ensure that evidence is valid, authentic, current, sufficient and inclusive
- To ensure that robust internal verification procedures are in place
- To promote standardisation across subjects, centres and the region.

PRESENTATION OF SAMPLES

At the visit the Centre will present a sample of work as designated by the Moderator which will include:

- The relevant unit specification
- The assignment brief(s)
- The assignment feedback sheet completed by the tutor for each piece of assessed work
- Students' assessed work for the entire unit, where applicable
- 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.

Advice for the preparation of the visit:

- A suitable room should be provided where the Subject Moderator can use a laptop where necessary and have internet access
- All samples should be complete, clearly presented and referenced for ease of moderation. It is helpful if subject tutors are available to address any queries which may arise from the moderation, but it should not be necessary for them to explain
- All samples must be checked and collated prior to the Moderator's visit.
- Work should be presented without plastic pockets so that it is easy to access
- There is no need to photocopy work since sampling will take place on-site

REPORTING: ON-SITE SAMPLES

Subject Moderators normally meet with the Access Coordinator at the end of the visit to provide an overview of their findings if there is sufficient time. After the visit, they prepare a Subject Moderation report for the subjects moderated and submit this to the AVA within 10 working days of the visit.

After the appropriate checks have been made, the report will be distributed to the Access Centre Moderator and the Centre.

RETENTION OF SAMPLES FOR STANDARDISATION

Samples are needed by the AVA for subject standardisation. The Moderator may request copies of specific samples from you to use for this purpose. These samples will be anonymised and samples which detail sensitive or personal information will not be requested.

FAQs

How will I know which subjects and units will be needed at the on-site moderation?

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 for both postal and on-site moderation, as appropriate.

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 will need to set up a room with the samples set out in an order which can easily be followed by the Subject Moderator, using the guidance above to provide the correct supporting documents. You won't need to photocopy samples as they will remain on-site.

Our centre has Approved Internal Verifier Status (AIVS). Do we still have to provide samples of Access to HE coursework for an external moderator?

Centres which have AIVS (Approved Internal Verifier Status) are approved to make direct claims for non-Access qualifications and should note 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, and their decisions are informed by feedback from Subject Moderators.