Kirkcudbright Academy

Internal Verification Policy

Updated 02/21

What is internal verification and how can it help you?

Internal verification is an approach to quality assurance based on peer support and review that enables staff to integrate quality into internal assessment from start to finish.

Internal verification:

- helps to ensure that all staff understand national standards and can apply them
- facilitates collaboration between staff and with external colleagues
- enables and ensures fair, accurate and consistent assessment judgements
- supports the credibility of internally-assessed Units and Awards with parents, employers, higher education institutions etc.
- allows quality concerns to be captured and addressed
- helps to protect teachers against challenges to professional assessment judgements
- supports preparation for successful external verification

In this policy, the terms 'assessor' and 'internal verifier' are used for ease of reference.

'Assessor' refers to a teacher who marks internal assessments for Units or Course components. They may be using SQA Unit assessment support packs (UASPs) or may devise their own assessment approaches.

'Internal verifier' refers to a teacher who:

- supports other teachers as assessors in understanding and applying national standards
- checks assessment approaches which other teachers have devised to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose (before prior verification by SQA)
- samples the assessment judgements of other teachers to ensure that they are valid and reliable

Within the school there is a three tier responsibility structure for the internal verification of units and courses, that being SQA Co-ordinator, Internal Verifier / PT Faculty and Assessor / Subject Teacher. Where the PT Faculty delegates responsibility to a nominated representative he / she will still retain overall responsibility for ensuring all the duties associated with that role are carried out appropriately.

SQA Co-ordinator (Depute):

- Centre Contact; liaises with SQA.
- Develops and implements improvements to quality assurance systems.
- Arranges for the training of internal verifiers and assessors.
- Co-ordinates the operation of the internal verification system.
- Operates a quality assurance system to ensure all Internal Verifiers / PT's are following centre and authority internal verification procedures (self assessment checklist).
- Arranges for the induction of candidates.
- Co-ordinate external verification activity on behalf of the centre to ensure samples include assessment judgements from all staff delivering courses / levels being externally verified.
- Co-ordinates exceptional circumstances and post results requests.

Internal Verifier/ PT Faculty or nominated representative:

The internal verifier must have an appropriate qualification and/or expertise in the subject area, and must be familiar with the national standard.

The internal verifier is responsible for ensuring that the chosen assessment instrument is valid, fair and practicable. This means they need to have knowledge of different assessment methods and instruments and must have assessment expertise.

The internal verifier can have a developmental role for less experienced assessors by offering advice and guidance. This kind of support should be ongoing throughout the qualification, and not be left to the point of assessment for certification purposes.

- Coordinates meetings to reflect on internal assessment and verification in previous session (post-delivery review).
- Ensures all assessors using most up to date SQA documents.
- Shares understanding standards and key messages information with all assessors (pre delivery form).
- Decides on the sampling methodology/ mechanisms to be used in line with the school and authority policy.
- Operates systems to standardise assessment and ensure the work of all assessors is sampled over a defined period.
- Provides feedback to teachers on assessments sampled.
- Supports assessors by offering guidance and advice particularly in the case of new or inexperienced assessors.
- Monitors consistency of assessment records (support and sampling during delivery).
- Liaises with external verifiers, SQA Co-ordinator (Depute) and PT Faculty (where appropriate).
- Deals with specific queries or pupils appealing assessment decisions in line with school and authority policy.
- Prepare and record a plan for internal verification following the pre delivery, during delivery, post-delivery model.
- Produce records of internal verification for external verification and quality assurance purposes.

Assessor/ Teacher:

- Contributes to the design and review of assessment materials as part of the post-delivery evaluation / reflection.
- Plans the assessment process with the PT / verifier during the pre-delivery stage.
- Assess evidence against the SQA standards and make judgements.
- Complete the assessment records.
- Liaise with other assessors and the internal verifier.

Participates in internal and external verification.

Models of internal verification

The model of internal verification used is at the discretion of the Faculty P.T. The approach to internal verification that you choose needs to work within the context of your own subject.

There are three broad approaches:

- Allocating responsibility to named members of teaching staff for carrying out internal verification of particular Units, as part of a peer-review process. The internal verifier will sample assessments marked by other teachers.
- All members of teaching staff in a department taking responsibility for both assessing and internally verifying Units, as a peer-review process. All staff take part in understanding standards activities and carry out cross-marking of each other's assessments.
- A networking approach to internal verification, allowing professional dialogue and cross-marking between teachers in different schools. This would be most likely to apply in single-teacher or small departments.

The stages of internal verification

Internal verification can be divided into three separate stages:

- pre-delivery — understanding standards
- ongoing support for assessor and sampling of student evidence
- post-delivery reflection and review

The internal verification process allows staff to think about the activities they undertake at each of these stages.

While most internal verification activity will be integrated within existing processes, it is important that key activities are documented. Primarily, this will support staff in managing internal assessment and verification and planning for improvement, but will also allow subjects to demonstrate to SQA that an effective internal verification system is in place.

The tables below provide guidance on the role of the assessor and internal verifier at that stage of verification and should be seen as complementing the duties already outlined above.

Pre-delivery and Understanding Standards

The first stage of internal verification is the pre-delivery stage. This includes:

- planning the management and coordination of internal assessment activities
- planning the management and coordination of internal verification activities
- ensuring a shared understanding of standards
- agreeing on assessment approaches
- preparing learners

Pre-delivery tasks

Role of assessor	Role of internal verifier
Understand roles and responsibilities	Ensure assessor(s) and internal verifier roles and responsibilities are clear Define approach to internal verification, including sampling
Get familiar with standards and conditions	Collaborate with assessor(s) and with SQA Nominee to ensure shared understanding of standards and conditions
Propose assessment approach Assessors can use SQA provided assessment (UASPs or SQA prior verified assessment from the secure site) or devise their own assessments	Collaborate to ensure that assessment approach is valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair Where appropriate SQA's free Prior Verification service should be used
Prepare candidates	Confirm guidance to candidates Ensure that process is in place for candidates who require assessment arrangements

Support and Sampling During Delivery

The second stage of internal verification is the during delivery stage. This includes:

- standardisation activities
- sampling of learners' assessed work
- feedback by internal verifiers to teachers who marked assessments
- consideration of feedback from SQA external verification
- confirmation of results
- supporting assessors, responding to queries

internal verifiers providing a second opinion in internal assessment appeals, cases of suspected malpractice in internal assessments, and on assessment arrangements.

During delivery tasks

Role of assessor	Role of internal verifier
Standardise assessment of candidates with colleagues	Participate in or lead standardisation activities Ensure standardisation activities have taken place
Raise any concerns or queries	Respond to queries, provide support and guidance to assessors
Make assessment judgements/respond to feedback from the internal verifier where required	Review assessment judgements and complete sampling of assessor(s). Provide feedback to assessor(s) Internal assessment appeals process Internal malpractice process
Feedback to candidates	Agree final results

Post-delivery Review

The third and last stage of internal verification is the post-delivery review stage. This includes:

- reflection creating a feedback loop, which can aid improved delivery of the Course
- agreeing and planning any necessary changes in assessment approach for the following session
- agreeing and planning any further understanding standards activities required
- agreeing and planning any changes to internal verification processes for the following session

Post-delivery tasks

Role of assessor	Role of internal verifier
Reflect on assessment approach and judgements in relation to: validity, reliability, practicability and accessibility Reflect on assessment process Reflect on support for candidates Agree action plan	Collaborate with assessor(s) in review of assessment approach, judgements and process Reflect of effectiveness of internal verification process, including sampling Agree action plan

Internal Verification Partnership Arrangements

Where pupil assessment and/or presentation involves collaboration with other agencies eg college links, faculties should ensure that there are agreed procedures and practices planned and quality assured in advance to ascertain compliance with school, Education department and awarding body regulations.

Arranging standardisation exercises

Reliability is a measure of the accuracy and consistency of assessors' judgements. Standardisation is an important part of ensuring the reliability of assessment decisions for all candidates in a subject.

Standardisation exercises identify any discrepancies between assessors in their judgement of candidates' evidence and allow adjustments to be made to remedy these. As well as reducing subjectivity among assessors, it helps to improve the consistency of their judgements and allows internal verifiers to identify and disseminate good practice.

There are different ways of carrying out standardisation, and the internal verifier should make sure that the method used is the most appropriate for the nature of the evidence.

The following examples are standardisation exercises used by faculty.

Agreement trials: Assessors work together to consider examples of candidates' work based on the assessment scheme. By discussing discrepancies and coming to a shared understanding based on the assessment criteria, the assessors reach a common understanding. Involving the internal verifier is very helpful in achieving consensus.

Dual assessment: Two assessors assess the same candidates. Teaming an experienced assessor with a new assessor is not uncommon, but there are benefits for any assessor in checking their judgement, particularly for new qualifications and awards. It also encourages co-operative working.

Cross assessment: Assessors exchange candidate evidence to check each other's interpretation of the standard. This does not mean that different assessors must follow the same assessment procedure or even use the same assessment material.

Cross assessment is often presumed to apply mainly to evidence within a school, but it can also be used across schools.

Evidence review: In this process the internal verifier collates assessed candidate evidence and asks a group of assessors to discuss any discrepancies between their individual judgements. This allows professional development as well as ensuring a shared understanding.

Double marking: Generally used with written evidence, double marking is a form of cross-assessment in which assessors exchange the same candidate evidence to check each other's interpretation of the standard.

Blind marking: Again, mostly used with written evidence, blind marking, is intended to reduce any bias, however unintentional, by an assessor. In one form of blind marking, evidence is marked by two assessors, but each is unaware of the other's mark. Discrepancies between the marks can then be resolved. In another form, evidence can be made anonymous by removing the candidate's details.

Standardisation exercises should take place throughout the assessment process to improve the consistency of assessors' judgements. Records of standardisation exercises, including any feedback to assessors, should be kept as evidence of internal verification activity.

Sampling assessment decisions

The internal verifier should select a sample of candidate evidence to check that each assessor is making consistent decisions in line with national standards.

Sampling must be ongoing through the assessment process, not end-loaded. This allows the internal verifier to review assessment judgements before summative decisions are made. This identifies problems at an early stage and will allow support or training to be provided to assessors.

A range of assessment methods should be included in the sample. The selection of a completely random sample has strengths, but the critical aspect of any sample is that it must be sufficient to ensure consistency of assessment decisions across each qualification.

There are several key features that should be considered in selecting a sample. These include:

- first time delivery of an SQA qualification or award
- range of levels of qualifications
- range of candidate groups
- achieved/not achieved
- revised assessment instruments
- previous issues or problems identified by internal or external verification

The outcomes of internal verification should be given as feedback to the assessors and used to refine assessment. This is why it is essential that sampling takes place throughout the assessment process as it ensures fairness to all candidates.

All assessment that leads to certification must be sampled and 'signed off' by the internal verifier before candidates' results are sent to SQA. This can be done by countersigning the assessor's form, by using the internal verification checklist.

Internal Assessment Appeals

Internal verification applies to qualifications, or elements of qualifications, which are internally assessed. Where a student is unhappy with the result of an assessment element they may appeal the decision of the assessor. It is important that the school has a system in place for recording assessment appeals at each of the 3 stages outlined below. Internal verifiers have a role in this (see Stage 2 below).

The procedure should have three stages, as follows:

Stage 1 — Informal

The appeals process begins with a preliminary informal stage where the student raises their concerns with their teacher (assessor). The teacher would be expected to review the assessment item with the student at this stage. If there is no agreement at this stage the IV Appeals form should be started.

Stage 2 — Informal

If the matter is not resolved with the teacher (assessor), the advice of the internal verifier for the Unit should be sought on the validity of the result awarded. The student should again be involved in the review of the assessment. This should again be recorded on the IV Appeals form.

Stage 3 — Formal

If the matter is not resolved through the informal stages, a formal appeal should be submitted in writing, by the parent of the student, to a senior member of staff, who will investigate the matter and respond. This should be initially the PT Faculty, unless he/she has had a role as Assessor or Verifier, Depute Head/SQA Coordinator or Head Teacher. The subject nominee may be invited into school at this stage to provide impartial advice.

The outcome of Stage 3 should be communicated in writing to the student and parent and records should be retained.

Each stage should have appropriate timescales set for acknowledging receipt of the appeal and responding. There should also be defined timescales for being able to raise an appeal (eg within a month of the assessment in question).

All the students must be made aware of the appeals procedure, and given support in submitting and providing evidence for their appeal, if they require it (eg from a guidance teacher).

Candidate Malpractice

Internal Verifiers should be consulted by the Assessor where there is a case for suspecting malpractice by a student, this would be to provide a second opinion before taking investigations further. The Internal Verifier may also raise concerns with the Assessor where malpractice is suspected during the verification process. Candidate malpractice means malpractice by a student in the course of completing an assessment and can arise in:

- the preparation and authentication of coursework
- the presentation of practical work
- the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence
- conduct during the assessment

Malpractice can take a number of forms and it is important teachers are familiar with the conditions under which Unit Assessment and Internal Assessment components must be undertaken.

Examples:

- Collusion — with others when an assessment must be completed by individual candidates
- Copying — from another candidate (including using ICT to do so)
- Frivolous content — producing content that is unrelated to the assessment in question
- Misconduct — inappropriate behaviour during an assessment that causes disruption to others. This includes shouting and/or aggressive behaviour or language
- Offensive content — inclusion of inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or obscene material in assessment evidence
- Impersonation — pretending to be someone else
- Plagiarism — failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidates own
- Unauthorised aids — physical possession of unauthorised materials (including mobile phones, MP3 players, notes etc)

Where malpractice is suspected the assessor should initially interview the student/s in question to determine whether there is a case for further action. If further action is required the PT Faculty should become involved and the SQA Coordinator informed. It may also be appropriate to inform the students parent/carer at this stage.

Actions available at this stage include:

- A written warning given to the student and a possible further deterrent.
- Resitting the Assessment Outcome using a different Assessment Instrument where available.
- Resubmitting an Assessment Item in the form of portfolio and/or practical item, given an appropriate period to complete the work.
- A fail being recorded for the student in this specific Assessment Instrument, usually where time does not allow for further assessment to be carried out.

In the cases where resitting or resubmission are being are being implemented this should be done in the candidates own time but under supervision of an assessor.

Assessor & Internal Verifier Allocations (IV1)

Subject: _____

Level: _____

Session: _____

Unit/IACCA	Assessor(s)	Internal verifier(s)	Completion Date

Copy to PT Curriculum / Depute Rector (SQA coordinator)

Understanding Standards - Pre Delivery Meeting Form (IV2)

Course name: _____

Unit/Course name(s): _____ **Unit number(s):** _____

Name(s) of assessor(s): _____

Names of internal verifier(s): _____

Documents and points for discussion	Discussed Yes/No	Comments/action points (by whom, by when)	Action completed (initial and date)
Unit/Course Specification(s)			
Unit/Course assessment support packs (UASPs) or IACCA assessment task (where relevant) ♦ Judging evidence tables ♦ Candidate assessment records ♦ Conditions for assessment ♦ Re-assessment			
AND			
Changes for 2021 • Assessment Modification • Element Weightings • Guidance on Gathering Evidence/Est • SQA Academy – Quality Assurance of Estimates			

Understanding Standards - Pre Delivery Meeting Form (IV2)

Documents and points for discussion	Discussed Yes/No	Comments/action points (by whom, by when)	Action completed (initial and date)
Internally verified			
Sent to SQA for prior verification			
Opportunities for combined, holistic and continuous assessment and naturally occurring evidence			
Timing of the assessments during academic year • Class Tests • Topic/Unit Assessment • Project Deadlines • Prelims			
Exemplar assessments/ Understanding Standards materials from SQA			
External verification and key messages from SQA			
Resources and equipment required for assessment			
Accessibility — any barriers to assessment			

Copy to PT Curriculum / Depute Rector (SQA coordinator)

Record of Sampling – Sampling Form (IV3a)

UNIT DETAILS					
Centre Name		Centre Number			
Unit Title & Code		Level			
Teacher (Assessor)		Class / Set			
Internal Verifier		No in set		No Sampled	

LEARNING OUTCOMES			
Outcome(s) being assessed:		Assessment tool description:	

SAMPLING RECORD (written, product or performance evidence)		
Candidate	Outcome/s achieved	Comments (candidate or general)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Record of Sampling – Sampling Form (IV3a)

INTERNAL VERIFIER REPORT	YES	NO *	DETAILS
(i) Verified Instruments of Assessment were used (refer to IV2)			
(ii) All evidence of candidates' achievement is available			
(iii) Assessor judgements are fair and consistent			
(iv) Records of candidate achievement are accurate			

* Specify action required when tick is in NO column.

Signed: _____ (Internal Verifier)

Record of Sampling – Feedback Form (IV3b)

Unit number	
Unit name	
Level	
Name of internal verifier(s)	
Name of assessor(s)	
Date of sampling	
Outcomes covered	

Reason for sampling (please tick)

Routine		New or inexperienced assessor		New assessment	
New unit		Action from previous verification		Action from external verification	

Number of groups	
Total number of candidates	
Number of candidates sampled (identify candidates on CAR)	
Correct unit specification used	
Up-to-date UASP/assessment used	
Assessor judgement of candidate evidence is fair and consistent	

Comments/feedback to assessor

Record of Sampling – Feedback Form (IV3b)

Action Required	By whom	By when	Action completed and confirmed by IV	
			Initials	Date

Signed: _____ (Internal Verifier)

Copy to PT Curriculum / Depute Rector (SQA coordinator)

Record of Internal Verification Activities (IV4)

Subject	
Course	
Level	
Unit(s)	

Checklist of issues for consideration during the year

Issue	**Date discussed**
Any changes to approach to assessment since pre-delivery understanding standards meeting	
Standardisation activities undertaken and any issues arising from these	
Feedback from internal verification sampling, eg parity of standards between assessors, borderline candidates	
Updates, eg from Nominee/SQA/new exemplification/Key Messages Round 1 and 2	
Evidence required for SQA verification (if selected)	
Feedback on SQA verification (if selected) — required actions and/or any recommendations	
Review of resources and equipment for assessment	
Candidates requiring assessment arrangements	
Planning for prelims	
Planning for Course assessments	
Agreement of final Unit results (and IACCA results if applicable)	

Actions

Action	By whom	By when	Completed

Post-delivery review

Date	Issue	Decision	Comment

Kirkcudbright Academy : Internal Verification Policy and Procedures

Single Log of Verification Activities Session 2016-17

Centre	
Department	
Course/Subject/Level/Units	

Model of Internal Verification used (brief explanation):

Allocation of Responsibilities		
Unit	Assessor(s)	Internal Verifier(s)

Pre-delivery verification activities

Meeting date(s): _____

Understanding Standards and standardisation activities undertaken:

Assessment Approaches agreed □
Comments:

Prior verification submissions			
Units/Outcome/AS	Internally verified	SQA Prior Verified	Outcome

Actions and decisions arising from the above activities

Action//Decision	Action by whom	Action by when	Completed

During/Post Delivery Verification Activities

Meeting date(s): _____

Discussed:

Feedback from assessors ☐
Feedback from internal verifiers ☐
Feedback from SQA verification/key messages ☐

Other: _____

Strategy for sampling of candidate assessments

Summary of outcomes of sampling of candidate assessments

Selected for SQA verification Yes/No
Level(s): _____
Unit(s) selected to submit: _____

Outcome of verification: Accepted/ Accepted*/ Not Accepted

Comment:

Any appeals against internal assessment results? Yes/No

Comment/outcome of appeal:

Actions and decisions arising from the above activities

Action//Decision	Action by whom	Action by when	Completed

Assessor retain copy for External Verification

Internal Verification Self-assessment and Evidence Log

Centre: _____ **Department/Course** _____

Internal verification stage	Internal process	Staff involved	Records (*to be provided for SQA verification)	Comments/gaps
Pre-delivery				
Allocation of roles for assessing and internally verifying Units				
Checking most up-to-date SQA documents being used (eg UASP, Unit Specification)				
Understanding standards and conditions prior to assessment				
Internal verification of own centre-devised assessments and prior verification by SQA				
Providing information to pupils on assessment and re-assessment policy				

Internal Verification Self-assessment and Evidence Log

Internal verification stage	Internal process	Staff involved	Records (*to be provided for SQA verification)	Comments/gaps
During delivery				
Sampling of pupils' assessments				
Feedback to teachers on assessment sampled				
On-going standardisation				
Reviewing and acting on feedback from SQA Verification (including Key Messages)				
Dealing with specific queries from teachers or pupil appeals				
Post-delivery				
Reflecting on internal assessment and verification and planning for next session				

For retention by PT Curriculum

Assessment Appeal Record Form

Subject	
Course	
Level	
Unit(s)	

Student	**Initial Date**

Stage 1							
Stage 2							
Stage 3	Written Appeal Received	No		Yes		Date	

Outcome Resolved .. Y/N …….

Signed Student ……

Signed Assessor …….

Copy to PT Curriculum & SQA Coordinator

Guidance on Internal Verification Sampling Strategies

The SQA publication *Internal Verification: A Guide to Centres* gives guidance on a range of standardisation exercises and on sampling of candidate assessment by internal verifiers.

The following examples are standardisation exercises used by centres:

- Agreement trials
- Dual assessment
- Cross assessment
- Evidence review
- Double marking
- Blind marking

Internal verification: sampling assessment judgements

Your sampling strategy will depend on the structure of your department and the range of qualifications you are delivering. The strategy you are using should be recorded.

Sampling might be as simple as two teachers cross-marking a number of candidate assessments which the other marked.

If, however, you have a number of different assessors and groups of candidates undertaking the same qualification you will need to have a sampling strategy which will allow the internal verifier(s) to check that each assessor is making consistent assessment judgements in line with national standards, with each group of candidates over time.

Sampling for internal verification is different from the samples selected for external verification by SQA.

The number of candidates included in the sample for internal verification should be proportionate to the total number of candidates you have. You might choose to use a defined percentage, or the square root of the total.

You also need to have a strategy for sampling from all Units across all levels of National Qualifications.

In the first year of delivery of a new qualification, you should verify assessments from every candidate group marked by every assessor. You might only need to sample a few from each group, or expand on the sample to explore further.

After the first year, the following factors should be taken into consideration in prioritising what to sample:

- New assessors (new to the qualification)
- Any changes to the Unit or assessments since the last delivery
- Any issues identified at the last internal or external verification
- Different approaches to assessment used with different groups
- Different locations of candidates and/or resources used

You may not need to look at every Unit every year, once you are confident that national standards are being applied, and where there have been no changes since the previous year. You could apply a rolling programme of verification sampling to ensure that a check on standards is maintained over time.