



Moderation and Assessment Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out the assessment, testing and sampling plan strategy for the Company (see section 2 for definition of terms).

2. Roles and glossary

The Company - The Company refers to **Think Employment Ltd.**

Learner - There are different terms to refer to the people in the learning process: students, learners, candidates. Although there is a subtle difference between the terms, for this paper, the generic term “learner” will be used to refer to any person doing any type of learning and completing any assessment tasks, be it formative or summative.

Tutor / Assessor - This paper uses the term “assessor” mostly when its focus is on the quality of assessment. The role of the assessor is to:

- arrange a summative assessment* that is fair, reliable and valid for relevant learning outcomes,
- mark the learners’ summative assessment work,
- make a judgement on the work of a learner, as a pass, a fail or meeting the criteria, and ensure that it is authentic, current, valid and sufficient,
- give constructive feedback to the learner,
- record assessment decisions and relevant paperwork to evidence achievement of learning outcomes or qualification, and
- follow the Company’s and the awarding body’s internal quality procedures and guidelines.

For an explanation of the terms “fair, reliable, valid, authentic, current and sufficient,” please refer to the **Access to Fair Assessment, Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations** policy.

The term **tutor** is used when assessing is not part of the role of the member of staff, but rather on teaching or training. The tutor’s role is then on supporting the learners and developing their knowledge on a specific subject.

Invigilator – the person invigilating live assessments, i.e. ensuring that learners adhere to the exam conditions as set by the awarding bodies.

Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) / External Quality Assurer (EQA) - The IQA is the preferred term to internal verifier or IV. The IQA role is to ensure that:

- all assessors interpret the standards or mark a live paper in the same consistent manner through moderation and standardisation meetings,
- all assessment methods are valid, fair and reliable,

- all evidence resulting in claiming an outcome is authentic, current, sufficient and valid and that it meets all the relevant criteria,
- all moderation activities and feedback to assessors are recorded, and
- internal quality procedures are in place and respected.

The IQA also liaises with the EQA, which is the preferred term for external verifier or EV, and arranges visits and meeting with the EQA, who is sent by the awarding body. The EQA's role is to ensure that:

- the Company has an internal quality assurance procedures and policies in place and that it is followed,
- the IQAs carry out sampling activities and fulfil their roles as described above, and
- support the Company and the IQAs.

Centre Manager – as defined by the awarding bodies, it is the person who is responsible for the oversight of the qualifications offered by the Company. This role is taken up by the Company's Head of Central Support.

Awarding bodies

The awarding bodies are the organisations that set out the standards for a particular qualification, send EQAs to training providers for quality measures and release certificates upon successful completion of the relevant summative assessments. There are different awarding bodies in England. The Company uses 6 of them:

- City & Guilds (C&G)
- British Computer Society (BCS)
- Skillsfirst
- NCFE
- Ascentis
- ProQual
- British Safety Council (BSC)
- Open Awards
- Training Qualifications UK (QUK)

Summative assessments

Summative assessments are the methods used to evidence that the learners have the knowledge and competence for the qualification. For English and Maths, the summative assessment is the final exam that learners sit. For vocational qualifications where learners have to meet different sets of criteria, the summative assessment is anything that shows that the learners have met the criteria – answers to questions, observations that the assessor has carried out, statements written by the learners etc.

Any pieces of evidence that form part of the summative assessments and that assessors mark are subject to being moderated by the IQA. Any summative assessments that are marked externally, for example by the awarding body, are not moderated by the Company's IQAs and are not subject to this procedure.

3. Test / Assessment Regulations

We confirm that we will adhere to all awarding body test regulations as laid out in their Operational Requirements Manual. The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring the most up-to-date version of this manual is available and followed at all times.

3.1 Test / Assessment Security

The specific content of any test / assessment must remain confidential. It is the responsibility of the Company's centre staff to ensure that this is always the case.

The general principles that must be adhered to, to ensure the above, are:

- Locations used for storing remain secure
- Content will remain secure when in transit
- Only staff that need access to fulfil their role should have access to the relevant content
- Staff who have knowledge of the assessment content must not share this information
- Procedures for issuing passwords to staff and learners that provide access to systems that hold the test questions must be secure. All users, invigilators and learners of the automated system must have individual logins with passwords only known to them.

Any breaches in the security of the tests must be reported to the Centre Manager who will in turn immediately report to the relevant awarding body.

3.2 Proof of Identity

All Learners will be asked to provide valid proof of ID, according to the awarding body's acceptable evidence list(s), prior to the registration of their qualification. This evidence will be recorded on our central recording system and made available for compliance and audit checks.

A learner's identity will again be checked prior to the start of any live assessment and appropriately recorded. Any learner not able to provide this evidence will be stopped from taking the live assessment.

3.3 Recognised prior learning (RPL)

The Company recognises that some learners may come to our centre with knowledge, skills and competence that they have acquired through different life activities, such as community and volunteering activities, family activities, work activities etc., but these are not formally recognised through a qualification.

All learners must go through an information, advice and guidance (IAG) session with one of our trained IAG advisors and complete a skills scan, initial assessment, diagnostic or equivalent to gauge their current knowledge. Some learners may not need to complete the

full training sessions due to their prior knowledge. This must be ascertained at the onset so that the tutors are aware of the sessions that these learners do not have to attend.

RPL can also be claimed when the learner shows that the knowledge, understanding or skills they already have means that they do not need to repeat units or complete additional assessment activity for a qualification. However, for the learners to achieve a qualification, they must evidence that they meet the criteria, as given in the qualification specifications. The evidence may be in the form of witness statements, work produced while on a voluntary position etc.

The RPL evidence must be assessed to the same standard as any other pieces of evidence – this evidence must be current, valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable (For an explanation of these terms, please refer to the **Access to Fair Assessment, Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations** policy) – and mapped to the appropriate criteria. It should then be submitted, along the mapping, to the lead IQA no later than 4 weeks from the learner’s start date. The IQA will then moderate the evidence before submitting an RPL form to the relevant awarding body.

In many instances, though, RPL alone will not be sufficient to cover all the criteria of a unit. If a qualification is achieved through a live assessment (an exam to sit), then there is no alternative for the learners but to complete the live assessment.

The RPL form will be submitted to:

Awarding body	Where to submit the RPL form	Link to the RPL process
City & Guilds	The relevant EQA (Time limit not specified)	Level 1/2/3 Certificate/Diploma in/for [subject / job role] (0000-[00]) (cityandguilds.com)
Skillsfirst	Complete an RPL Application Form and submit it through an Enquiries Form in QMIS	Recognition of Prior Learning policy v2 040918.pdf (skillsfirst.co.uk)
NCFE	N/A – any IQA decisions must be made clear to EQAs during their monitoring visit	recognition-of-prior-learning-rpl-credit-accumulation-and-transfer-cat-policy.pdf (qualhub.co.uk)
Open Awards	quality@openawards.org.uk (No later than 6 weeks from the learner’s start date)	Microsoft Word - Document 10 Access to Fair Assessment Policy incorporating FS Jul 2012 (openawards.org.uk)
TQUK	Complete “Request for Recognised Prior Learning” form, downloadable from Verve, and email it to qualifications@tquk.org	Accredited-and-Recognised-Prior-Learning-Policy.pdf (tquk.org)

3.4 Exemptions

The Company also recognises that some learners may have already achieved some elements or units of a qualification through a recognised qualification. The IAG advisors must ascertain this and liaise with the lead IQA to gauge what elements or units of the qualification can be claimed through exemption – the lead IQA will check rules of combination and the qualification accredited number (QAN) of the unit to be exempted. The learners must supply evidence, usually in the form of a certificate with details of the units achieved, to claim exemption. Any evidence of exemption must be submitted to the lead IQA for approval.

An example: learners have achieved a unit of the Reformed Functional Skills in English qualification, such as the Reading unit, but not the other two units, such as the Writing unit and the Speaking, Listening and Communicating (SLC) unit. In this situation, an exemption for Reading is relevant, as the Reading unit covers the same criteria as the Reformed Functional Skills Reading unit of any other awarding body. This unit, however, is not the same as the Legacy Functional Skills Reading unit, so exemption of a Legacy unit to a Reformed qualification is not possible.

To be noted, exemptions do not attract credit, as the knowledge, skills and competences as detailed in the unit standards have already been recognised through achievement of a certificated qualification that includes the unit(s) to be exempted.

Awarding body	How to exempt the unit(s)	Link to the RPL process
City & Guilds	Through Walled Garden (select “proxy” type) and copy of certificate/unit achievement evidence in portfolio	Level 1/2/3 Certificate/Diploma in/for [subject / job role] (0000-[00]) (cityandguilds.com)
Skillsfirst	Submit an Enquiry Form in QMIS with a copy of the certificate/unit achievement evidence	
Open Awards	Complete the Recommendation for Award of Credit (RAC) form and copy of certificate in portfolio	Microsoft Word - Document 10 Access to Fair Assessment Policy incorporating FS Jul 2012 (openawards.org.uk)
TQUK	Complete “Request for Recognised Prior Learning” form, downloadable from Verve, and email it to qualifications@tquk.org	Accredited-and-Recognised-Prior-Learning-Policy.pdf (tquk.org)

3.5 Credit transfer

The Company acknowledges that some learners may have accumulated credits over a period of time. Credit transfer is relevant where a unit in a qualification is the same (same unit/qualification assessment number) as a unit in another qualification. A practical example of credit transfer would be a learner who achieves an award which is comprised of units ‘A, B & C’ transferring their credits to progress towards a certificate comprised of ‘A, B, C, D and E’. In this case the units in the award have been nested in the certificate enabling the recognition of the previously achieved units.

If on the other hand a learner registered for the Certificate containing units 'A, B, C, D and E' without having done the award, but then withdrew from their programme of learning after completing only 'A, B & C', they could transfer their credits and consequently obtain the Award.

Potential credit transfer must be identified at the IAG stage. Evidence will be required and must be submitted to the lead IQA.

Awarding body	How to exempt the unit(s)	Link to the RPL process
City & Guilds	Through Walled Garden	Level 1/2/3 Certificate/Diploma in/for [subject / job role] (0000-[00]) (cityandguilds.com)
Skillsfirst	Submit an Enquiry Form in QMIS with a copy of the evidence	
Open Awards	Complete the Recommendation for Award of Credit (RAC) form and copy of certificate in portfolio	Microsoft Word - Document 10 Access to Fair Assessment Policy incorporating FS Jul 2012 (openawards.org.uk)
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4. Conflict of Interest

The Company has strict requirements in place in order to avoid and remove any potential conflict of interest. This ensures regulatory requirements are met and protects our centre staff.

The following are examples of potential conflicts of interest:

- For BCS and BSC, a Tutor having any involvement with invigilation, marking or assessment for a Learner who they have taught for that unit (a Tutor is not permitted to be present in the room also, unless they are called upon for technical support, and this must be documented on the Test Incident Log).
- For all awarding bodies, an Invigilator invigilating a Learner personally known to them. However, for the Reformed Functional Skills, for any awarding body, a tutor must not invigilate any exams of his/her subject, even though the learners being invigilated are not known to him/her.
- For all awarding bodies, an observer carrying out an observation of invigilation on an Invigilator personally known to them.
- A member of staff doing a qualification with the Company. The relevant awarding body must be notified (stated in the quality documentation for City & Guilds and for NCFE). The IQA will carry out a 100% sampling for members of staff, whichever colour code is allocated to the assessor (Green or Amber).

The following requirements MUST be adhered to:

Qualification	Tutors/assessors CAN	Tutors/assessors MUST NOT
BCS and BSC qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support their own Learners Invigilate live assessments, only if the Learners are not known to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invigilate their own Learners Invigilate a staff member's live assessment on their own
Reformed Functional Skills English and Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support their Learners Assess sample assessments Assess EL3 live assessments Observe the Speaking, Listening and Communicating activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invigilate live assessments of their own subject, even though the learners are not known to them Internally verify their own assessments
Vocational qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a workshop and support their learners Assess their learner's assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess assignments of learners known personally to them Internally verify their own assessments or assessments carried out by assessors personally known to them
Qualifications taken by staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a workshop and support the staff member Assess the staff member's assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be working in the same centre as the staff member, unless there is no other alternative – to be approved by the Head of Operations Be invigilated by one person – we require 2 Invigilators, one of them being from a different centre to the staff member

The Invigilator is responsible for ensuring the above procedure is followed during assessments. For remote invigilation, the Invigilator is required to consult the **Remote Invigilation Policy**.

The Centre Manager will ensure any conflict of interest in the Approved Centre is identified and recorded on the Conflict of Interest Record.

5. Awarding body registration

All learners are registered with the awarding body prior to a summative assessment being carried out. Head Office registers learners onto the relevant awarding body system for all qualifications and informs the assessors of the learners' registration number.

For Staff Development qualifications through C&G and NCFE, Head Office notifies the awarding bodies on the first session day to inform them of internal staff doing qualifications through the Company as per their guidance.

6. Sampling strategy

6.1 Colour rating system

The AG rating system is used for three purposes:

- *Progression.* Each assessor is graded Amber or Green. All new assessors to the Company are Amber to start with. The promotion or demotion from one rating to another depends on the number of referred portfolios. The IQAs record this in their sampling plans (for English and Maths, there is a separate *Tutor RAG Rating Record* spreadsheet) to evidence promotion or demotion. Promoting or demoting an assessor is decided during the IQA standardisation meetings, which occur every 3 months. This system gives an indication on the performance of the assessors in that if they stay Amber for a longer period of time than expected in relation to the number of portfolios submitted, the IQAs would question this and would investigate as to the reason for this.
- *Sampling strategy.* The number of units sampled depends on the assessors' rating. Full details in section 4.3 below.
- *Performance.* The IQAs use the RAG rating system when moderating units. For each unit referred, they apply a Red colour to the unit if there are major issues (more than 10% of criteria referred for a given unit); if the unit is referred for a minor reason (10% or less of criteria referred for a given unit), they apply an Amber colour to the unit; if the unit meets the standard, meaning the assessment was accurate, they apply a Green colour to the unit. The IQAs keep a *Sampling Plan* spreadsheet to record this.

6.2 Sampling procedure

The IQAs keep a *Sampling Plan* spreadsheet in which they plan their moderation by selecting which units to sample and in which they record the outcome of their moderation by applying a red, amber or green colour as indicated in section 6.1 above. The IQAs endeavour to sample all units across a range of learners' portfolios for all assessors. To facilitate this task, they keep a record of units they have sampled for each assessor in a sampling plan.

6.3 Sampling strategy

The Company has set up a process regarding the number of units to sample for each qualification. However, additional random sampling will also be instigated to ensure the standard of assessing is consistent. In summary, the IQAs will increase the number of units

to sample depending on the quality of the first units sampled. For English and Maths, for each referred unit, another one is sampled.

The below tables summarise the Company's sampling strategy:

6.3.1 Functional Skills (FS)

The Company offers FS qualifications at EL3, Level 1 and Level 2. They are all test based. In Maths, there is only one element, but two parts (Non-calculator and Calculator); in English, there are 3 elements, namely, Reading; Writing; and Speaking, Listening and Communicating (SLC).

At EL3, the learners complete paper-based tests, marked by the assessor and internally verified, whereas at Level 1 and Level 2, they sit an electronic test, which is marked by the awarding body and moderated by them, so no internal verification is required for these two levels, except for the SLC element, observed by the assessor and internally verified.

When SLCs are done remotely (through an online platform), the assessors (observers) are required to video-record the SLC session and include a link to the video recording in the SLC recording form. The IQA will sample the recordings.

The below table summarises the sampling strategy:

	Maths	English		
	EL3	EL3 – SLC/Reading/Writing		L1/L2
AG rating	Any	Amber	Green	Any
Sampling	All tasks	3 units	1 unit	SLC only – all tasks

6.3.2 Staff Development qualifications

The Company offers different internal qualifications to develop the skills of its staff. Amber assessors will undergo 100% sampling while it is roughly 20% sampling for Green assessors.

The below table summarises the sampling strategy:

Number of units per qualification	Number of units to be moderated for Amber assessors	Number of units/learning outcomes/tasks to be moderated for Green assessors	
		Number of units	Number of learning outcomes / tasks
1	1	N/A	1
2	2	N/A	1
3 to 6	All	1	N/A
7 to 10	All	2	N/A

11 to 14	All	3	N/A
15 to 18	All	4	N/A

The above table is a rough indicator as the moderation would also depend on how big a unit is. For example, if a 14-unit qualification has 14 long units, then it is possible to have 2 units moderated instead of 3.

6.3.3 NVQ/QCF/RQF qualifications

The Company will carry out the same sampling strategy as in sub-section 6.3.2, Staff Development qualifications.

7. Portfolios and feedback

There are 2 types of portfolios that the Company use: either electronic or paper based. The preferred type is the electronic portfolio as it allows the IQAs to moderate the portfolios remotely at any time and place.

7.1 Electronic portfolios

Electronic portfolios may be used for any qualifications that the Company offers. However, we recognise that it is not appropriate for some learners and we accept that these learners complete a paper-based portfolio.

7.1.1 Process – assessing and moderating functional skills

The evidence for English and Maths at EL3 is paper based but is then digitalised once marked and submitted to the relevant electronic portfolio. The assessors may type up the SLC record sheets for any level; they are required to scan their learner's preparation notes/research for the SLC and submit them with their record sheets. They then send a message to the IQAs for moderation.

Due to Covid, remote SLCs are permitted. However, they need to be recorded through Zoom. Details of how to carry out remote SLCs are in the Company's **Remote Invigilation Policy**. The assessor/observer is required to add a link of the recording to the SLC recording form. The remote SLCs go through the same moderation process as above, although the IQA will be checking the recordings to ensure quality of assessment and process.

The IQAs send their moderation reports to the assessors by email.

7.1.2 Process – assessing and moderating other qualifications

The assessor and IQA need to refer to the relevant procedure document for the process of electronic portfolios. The lead IQA will be able to direct them to the relevant document.

7.2 Paper-based portfolios

Paper-based portfolios may be used in situations when computers are not available, the learners have low IT skills or for any other valid reasons. However, the assessors are still required to scan the portfolios and submit them electronically to the relevant electronic location.

7.3 Staff Development

Depending on the type of qualifications, the evidence the learners submit may be in an electronic form or paper based (for the latter, usually because the exam is on paper). However, anything the learners submit will be scanned and uploaded to the relevant electronic portfolio.

8. Tracking, completions and achievements

A tracker is used to record the learner's portfolio status – if assessed, sent for moderation, if satisfactorily moderated or referred etc. Assessors and IQAs must update this tracker at each activity.

The IQAs must complete the “Qualification completed” column of the sampling plan when they sign off the portfolios, including a note for the last date of learning, as well as updating the relevant systems (paper based or electronic). This will inform an administrator to achieve the relevant qualifications.

Mitigation:

As of 11/03/2021, there were 3 certificates claimed by mistake. To avoid this re-occurring, the following process was put in place:

- The administrator must check that there is a last learning date note. If this is missing, the achievement must not be processed until this is verified with the relevant IQA. Rationale: the first certificate claim error was due to the IQA completing the wrong cell in the sampling plan – completing the “Qualification completed” column instead of the previous unit column. The cell did not have a last learning date, so this should have been checked by the administrator.
- The sampling plans were amended to clearly separate the unit columns from the “Qualification completed” column by adding a coloured column. Rationale: the second certificate claim error was due to the IQA completing the “Qualification completed” column and having added a last day of learning. The coloured column will hopefully create a psychological barrier, such sending the message to the IQA that before the coloured column is the moderation in itself and after, it is the completion.
- The lead IQA will check the sampling plan and the certificates claimed to ensure the right qualifications were claimed. Rationale: the third certificate claim error was due to the administrator misreading the sampling plan – claiming a certificate for a learner that was in the row above rather than in the relevant row.

9. Standardisation

There are two types of standardisation meetings: the IQA standardisation meeting gathers all the IQAs only and the common standardisation meeting gathers the assessors and the IQAs.

9.1 IQA standardisation meeting

The IQA standardisation meeting's aim is to:

- discuss the quality of portfolios
- raise concerns and discuss them to find a solution
- share good practice
- discuss the criteria of qualifications and agree on a standardised approach to moderating them, through a joint moderation activity
- review the assessors' performance and, when appropriate, agree on an action plan for the assessor

To help with reviewing the assessor's performance, the lead IQA will analyse the sampling plan and will calculate the number of referred units, Red and Amber, and the number of passed units. The analysis will be kept in Team Drives > Internal Quality – moderation folder.

These meetings are held every 3 months.

9.2 Common standardisation meetings

Due to the disparate nature of all the qualifications offered, the standardisation meetings do not gather all the assessors for all the qualifications together. For best practice, the Company welcomes other relevant third parties (such as quality teams of other providers) to attend the standardisation meetings. There are separate meetings for English and Maths, for Staff Development qualifications and for vocational qualifications.

The purpose of the standardisation meetings is to:

- share good practice and highlight areas of improvement
- ensure that all assessors interpret the criteria of different qualifications in the same manner
- ensure that all assessors understand and follow the relevant procedures in relation to assessing
- alleviate any concerns and discuss solutions to problems

Standardisation meetings may happen remotely (through an online platform) or onsite, depending on the availability of the assessors/IQAs, practicality and as part of our Sustainability & Environmental Policy.

All assessors and IQAs involved in a given qualification are required to attend the standardisation meeting.

9.2.1 English and Maths

Standardisation meetings occur 3 or 4 times a year, depending on the assessors' needs.

9.2.2 Vocational qualifications

Standardisation meetings for vocational qualifications occur every 3 or 4 months with all the relevant assessors.

9.2.3 Staff Development

Internal qualifications are not delivered on a regular basis due to different factors, mainly staff already holding the relevant equivalent qualifications or issues with staff coverage. Due to this, there are, at times, long periods of time when there are no learners undertaking a qualification. For this reason, standardisation meetings are held when required and when appropriate between the relevant assessor and the relevant IQA.

9.3 Minute taking

All minutes for all standardisation meetings are taken, shared with the relevant parties and uploaded to the Company's shared drive. At each meeting, the actions of the previous meeting are checked to ensure that they are achieved or to discuss the reasons as to why they are not achieved.

10. Observation

Please refer to the **Observation Policy**.

11. Review of the procedure

A Senior Manager will review this procedure annually or more frequently where there are significant changes in circumstances.

To be disseminated to: All Staff		Policy Ref: 022
Authorised by: Lead IQA Performance & Quality Manager	Issue Date: June 2017	Review Due: December 2021
Amendments: March 2019 – 'Test / Assessment Regulations' (section 3) & 'Conflict of Interest' added (section 4) August 2019 - Subject tutors not allowed to invigilate live assessment of their own subject (English and Maths) January 2020 – Removed OneFile, added new awarding bodies and shorten the description of processes when duplicated by another document November/December 2020 – Removed any apprenticeship-related information (as no longer offering apprenticeship); added staff members completing a qualification with the Company as a conflict of interest; added RPL, exemptions and credit transfer; added remote SLCs moderation March 2021 – Added point 8 Tracking, completions and achievements, including mitigation		

May 2021 – Replaced “pre-employment qualifications” with “vocational qualifications”; added TQUK