



BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification

2023 - 2024

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Introduction

Internal verification is a quality control mechanism that ensures internally assessed units/components:

- have assignment briefs that are fit for purpose
- are assessed accurately to national standards against the unit/component criteria
- are consistently assessed and graded across the programme.

Internal verification is a key part of the BTEC quality assurance process in ensuring learners are assessed accurately to the national standard. It is not a standardisation activity and for assessment decisions, will be undertaken after assessment has taken place.

Remember

Assessors cannot internally verify their own work whether this is an assignment or the assessment of learner work.

The Lead IV will organise the process and may be involved but *they are not* the only member of the team who can undertake internal verification activities.

Which Qualifications does this Guide Cover?

This guide provides essential information for *BTEC programme teams* on the planning and implementation of internal verification for the following BTEC qualifications:

- BTEC Level 1 / Entry Level Introductory Suite
- BTEC Level 1/2 Firsts
- BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Awards (from 2017) *
- BTEC Level 2 and 3 Technicals
- BTEC Level 3 Nationals

* Engineering only

Successful Internal Verification

Internal verification can be undertaken in several ways, but it should be a recognised activity and supported consistently across your centre.

To ensure a rigorous and robust approach to internal verification, you will need to have the following in place:

- A Lead Internal Verifier in place to oversee quality assurance for that subject
- A recognised team of Internal Verifiers, who meet regularly to ensure standardisation of procedures
- An internal verification policy which promotes a rigorous commitment to quality improvement
- A risk-based approach is taken to planning internal verification
- Internal verification processes that are agreed and published so that they are clearly understood by all members of staff delivering and assessing BTEC qualifications
- An internal verification process which is monitored at a centre level by the Quality Nominee and for the subject area by the Lead Internal Verifier.

The following are examples of best practice:

- BTEC internal verification forms are standardised across the centre
- Internal verification schedules are drawn up to ensure timely implementation of the process
- All experienced Assessors are involved in the internal verification role
- Standardisation meetings are recognised as pivotal to staff development
- The time required to carry out internal verification is acknowledged.

For detailed guidance on the role of the Lead Internal Verifier please see the Centre Guide to Quality Assurance [here](#).

Retaining Documents

Internal verification documentation, along with other BTEC assessment documentation must be stored securely for a *minimum of three years* after the date of certification, either physically or electronically.

Learner work must be retained for a *minimum of 12 weeks* after the date of certification (unless specifically advised longer due to unforeseen circumstances). *Please note that the 12 weeks starts once the certificates have been received by your centre.*

Certification

The date of certification is the date that certificates are received by your centre.

BTEC Documentation to Retain

- Assessment plans
- Assignment briefs
- Assessment records (learner feedback)
- Learner authentication records
- Internal verification records
- Assessment tracking of learner achievement

Frequently Asked Questions

Can we store BTEC assessment documents electronically?

Yes. These documents can be stored securely electronically.

I'm the only BTEC Assessor in my centre. How can I approach internal verification?

We would encourage you to link up with an experienced centre who can support you with this activity. This would be arranged locally between the two centres and does not need prior Pearson approval. If this is not an option then a non-BTEC colleague in your centre would need to internally verify your decisions, however they will need to be familiarised with BTEC assessment and the requirements of the unit/component through standardisation activities. They should also participate in the standardisation exercise with the Assessor who will be the Lead IV in this case.

Our [Subject Community Pages](#) host forums where you may be able to find support for this scenario.

If we have an Assessor for a specific subject, can they also register as the Lead Internal Verifier?

Yes. The Lead Internal Verifier has overarching responsibility for the quality assurance of and overview of the programme delivery and assessment, ensuring standards are met and assessments are accurate. This can be the Assessor for a specific subject however they cannot internally verify their own assessments.

Can the Lead Internal Verifier teach on the programme?

Yes. Your Lead Internal Verifier can also teach and assess on the programme.

Should the Lead Internal Verifier complete all internal verification activity?

No. They don't need to complete all internal verification activities but are able to undertake the activity and should also sub-sample other Internal Verifiers.

Internal Verification of Assignment Briefs

Resources needed

- the unit/component specification
- the assignment brief/s
- internal verification of assignment brief form. A template can be found [here](#)

The Internal Verifier should check that the assignment brief:

- has accurate unit/component and programme details
- has clear deadlines and an appropriate timeframe for assessment
- has a suitable vocational scenario or context
- shows all relevant assessment criteria for the unit/component(s) covered in the assignment
- indicates relevant assessment criteria targeted by the assignment
- clearly states what evidence the learner needs to provide
- is likely to generate evidence which is appropriate and sufficient.

If you plan to re-use an assignment from the previous academic year, you should check that the assessment dates are updated, and that the assignment is appropriate for the new cohort of learners.

You will need to review assignments annually, prior to use, to ensure they remain fit for purpose and to make any improvements based on your experience of delivering and assessing the units. This includes the completion of an internal verification record on an annual basis. Instances of plagiarism and malpractice can be reduced when the assessment format is changed annually.

Key Point

All assignment briefs must be internally verified before being issued to learners.

Authorised Assignment Briefs

Please refer to the following table to confirm how Authorised Assignment Briefs (AABs) should be internally verified:

Assignment Brief Type	Internal Verification Activity
Pearson Authorised Assignment Brief 'off the shelf' as published	The Internal Verifier must ensure that hand out dates and submission deadlines are appropriate only
Adapted Pearson Authorised Assignment Brief to suit the needs of your learners	The Internal Verifier must ensure the full assignment brief is fit for purpose
Your centre's own assignment briefs	

Giving Feedback to the Assessor

Internal Verifiers should use the general comments section on the form to provide advice and guidance to the Assessor *if appropriate*. Any actions identified must be detailed by the Internal Verifier in the actions required section. Internal Verifiers should make any actions clear, using SMART principles.

If an action is identified by the Internal Verifier, the Assessor must complete this and return it to the Internal Verifier for sign off prior to an Assignment being issued to learners.

Timing

Assignment briefs must be internally verified, with any issues addressed, before being distributed to learners.

Assignments from other sources

There may be occasions where assignments may be used which have come either from published material or from other centres. These assignments still need to be internally verified to ensure that they match the specification on which the learners

are registered, that the assignments are appropriate for your learners and that requisite resources are in place.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do we have to use the Pearson internal verification templates?

No. This is not a requirement, and you can design your own. However, you should ensure that any centre devised templates contain the minimum requirements in terms of content as the Pearson templates.

I'm using last year's assignment brief which was sampled by my Standards Verifier. Do I still need to internally verify the assignment?

Yes. You need to be sure that the assignment is still relevant, suitable for the new cohort of learners and has an appropriate timeframe for assessment.

Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions

Resources needed

- the unit/component specification
- the assignment brief/s
- learner tracking documents (to select a range of achievement)
- assessed learner work and accompanying assessment record
- internal verification of assessment decisions form. A template can be found [here](#)

The Internal Verification Sample

During the lifetime of the programme, internal verification of Assessor decisions must cover the following as a minimum:

- every Assessor
- every unit/component
- learner work from every assignment
- learner work from every assessment site (for multi-site and consortia centres).

There is not a requirement that all learners must have been internally verified during the lifetime of a programme., although it is good practice to sample as wide a range as possible.

There is no prescribed sample size, but a well-constructed sample should consider the following and use a risk-based approach:

- the full range of assessment decisions made (pass, merit, distinction criteria and not yet achieved), should all be included in the sample if possible
- the experience of the Assessor. New or inexperienced Assessors should have more decisions internally verified than an experienced Assessor
- new BTEC programmes. When a unit/component or programme is first introduced, the internal verification sample should be increased
- the size of the group of learners so that the sample is representative.
- known issues arising from previous internal verification or standards verification activity

Assessment Standardisation

When a programme is delivered and assessed by more than one person, standardisation should be carried out before any formal assessment and internal verification has taken place. The aim of the standardisation process is to agree the standard of learner work by discussing and mutually assessing a sample of learner work as a team to reach consensus. This should be done with reference to the assessment criteria and assessment guidance provided by Pearson in the qualification specification.

Once agreement has been reached, the Assessors can then individually assess the work of their learners, after which internal verification will take place.

Standardisation should be undertaken prior to an assessment taking place, as well as at the start of the academic year. We provide Centre Standardisation Materials (CSMs) for each subject area, which the Lead Internal Verifier can access via the OSCA site on Edexcel Online.

Where the programme is delivered by one Assessor then the person acting as the Internal Verifier should standardise with that Assessor.

The Internal Verification Sample Size

We are often asked questions such as “how much internal verification do we need to do” or “what percentage of work needs to be internally verified”?

There isn't a definitive answer to such questions – there are many factors that need to be considered when determining the size of the internal verification sample.

Lead Internal Verifiers should ensure that an appropriate internal verification process is undertaken which is based on risk. This will ensure support is provided to colleagues who need it.

We recommend that all BTEC programmes have an internal verification plan at the start of the course/unit to identify an appropriate sample size.

This will be based on risk factors such as:

- standards verification feedback about the assessment decisions made for the unit/component in previous years
- Assessor experience
- whether the unit/component has been delivered and assessed before
- any significant changes to the delivery of the unit/component.

Internal verification plans are simply this, plans. We know that things are subject to change so teams may need to reflect on the internal verification sample size once delivery and assessment of the programme has commenced.

As a Lead IV or Internal Verifier, you will become aware of a range of issues that will need to be considered when it comes to selecting an internal verification sample. These include:

- grades awarded by Assessors
- quality of the assessment feedback provided to learners
- staff issues such as absence or role changes
- feedback obtained from other Pearson quality assurance processes
- other stakeholder feedback e.g., OFSTED, parents, colleagues at other centres etc.

Once assessment has taken place, you may choose to change the number of learners sampled for internal verification. For example, if the group has been awarded high grades you may choose to increase the number of learners sampled at this grade. You need to identify learners *after* assessment has taken place, rather than before as the internal verification process is about the assessment decisions made rather than the learners themselves.

The internal verification of assessment decisions process

The Internal Verifier reviews the Assessor's judgements against the learning aim, unit/component content, assessment criteria and assessment guidance as published in the qualification specification.

This will include checking:

- the assessment criteria - this represents the national standard and all BTEC learners are measured against it
- the learner work against the assessment criteria and judge whether it has been assessed accurately

- coverage of the unit/component content in conjunction with the assessment guidance to see if the Assessor has taken this into account.

Please Note: It is not a requirement of the specification that all the content is assessed. However, the indicative content will need to be covered in a programme of learning to enable learners to be able to meet the standard determined in the assessment and grading criteria.

- the feedback from the Assessor to learner is accurate, linked to the assessment criteria and to confirm the level of feedback provided to the learner is appropriate.

Remember

Feedback should show which criteria have been achieved and which have not, giving clear reasons.

Feedback should not give specific instruction on how to improve the work for a higher grade.

Where learners have achieved the higher-grade criteria, it is not necessary to give full feedback on the lower criteria achieved by default. e.g., if D3 is achieved there does not need to be detailed feedback on the M3 and P3 criteria that flow into this.

Following internal verification, if there are any assessment concerns, feedback should be provided to the Assessor with any actions applied to the whole cohort and not just the learners in the internal verification sample.

Identifying the use of AI during Internal Verification

As has always been the case, and in accordance with section 5.3(j) of the [JCO General Regulations for Approved Centres](#), *all work submitted for qualification assessments must be the students' own*;

For specific guidance on Assessments and AI use/misuse, please see out our [BTEC Centre Guide to Plagiarism](#).

Internal verifiers can promote the ethical use of AI by establishing guidelines and standards for its implementation at centre level with Assessors. Internal Verifiers should ensure that if learners are using AI to support their studies or assessments that the use of this aligns to Pearson BTEC's principles of fairness, reliability, and validity. Internal Verifiers could facilitate training sessions during standardisation

meetings to familiarise assessors with AI technologies and how these might be used by learners during assessment.

Some key areas to consider when Internally Verifying assessor decisions:

- Does the assessment record template contain a descriptor in the learner declaration about the use of AI (*this is mitigated if using Pearson's own Assessment Record Template*).
- Has the assessor identified in annotations/feedback on learner work where AI has been used?
- Has the use of AI been accurately referenced and picked up by the assessor?

Has the assessor picked up on AI misuse by the learner, for example:

- copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the student's own.
- copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content.
- using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation, or calculations.
- failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information.
- incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools.
- submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.

Timing

For internal verification of assessment decisions to take place, learner work must have been formally assessed. Internal verification must take place shortly after the assessment decisions have been made and before learners receive confirmation of their achievement and feedback. If any inaccuracies are identified by the Internal Verifier, these must be corrected by the Assessor before achievement and feedback is issued to learners.

Internally verifying resubmissions

If a request for a resubmission is made and providing there have been no issues with the Assessor's decisions at the first submission stage, then the resubmission does not need to be internally verified if the learner's grade has not improved. The Lead Internal Verifier should however check the decisions if the learner's grade has shown improvement, to safeguard against any potential malpractice issues.

Similarly, if the first submissions from learners show only pass criteria achievement and higher-grade criteria are awarded for the resubmitted work, then a sample of the resubmissions must be internally verified to ensure that the award of the higher-grade criteria is accurate as this would not have been seen in the internal verification of the initial submissions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are electronic signatures acceptable for learner declarations and on Internal Verification documents?

Yes, Electronic signatures *are permitted on all assessment documentation* if there is an audit trail to support its authenticity. This also includes learner and parental signatures where required.

To provide authentication for online work please ensure that signatures are electronic and take the format of a centre issued email address for both the learner and the LIV. Note that a change of font style is not considered an electronic signature.

Alternatively, you could validate through:

- an email from the learner/Assessor with the record attached to show that it has been sent from them
- a system log to show that the learner/Assessor has submitted the record.

Other Essential Guidance

BTEC qualification specification

The specification for each BTEC qualification is the document that programme leaders and teams should use as their first point of reference for all planning and assessment. Specifications are accompanied by important assessment and delivery guidance which provide instructions and advice for each unit in the qualification. All BTEC specifications are freely available on the BTEC website under the relevant subject page.

Forms and templates

We publish a range of useful forms and templates [here](#) for you to use in your centre. These templates are not mandatory, and you can devise your own.

They include:

- Assessment Plan
- Internal verification of assignment briefs
- Assignment briefs
- Internal verification of assessment decisions
- Assessment Record
- Record of Activity and guidance

You should also view our policies for centres, which can be found [here](#) and our guidance on policies which can be found on the [Quality Assurance webpage](#).

If you have a question, please contact BTEC Assessment or your Vocational Quality Assurance Manager via [The Pearson Contact Portal](#).

In addition, you will find further information on our [Quality Assurance webpages](#).