

**Pearson's Self
Regulated
Framework (SRF)
Quality Assurance
Handbook**

2018-19

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Introduction

Pearson's Self Regulated Framework (SRF) provides guidance and support to help learners achieve their learning and development goals for qualifications they choose to take that sit outside of any nationally recognised framework. These qualifications may be suitable for learners whose needs cannot be met by any national framework (for example, to meet a local need). However, they do not automatically enable learners to progress, are rarely publicly funded, and are not eligible for consideration by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) under any circumstances.

The SRF lets you design the qualification that best meets your learners' needs. Your qualifications can be composed from existing regulated BTEC units. Alternatively, they can be built from brand new units specifically designed for your particular needs or units you have written. Your organisation can certificate on a small or large block of learning, and can customise qualifications to specific employment or industry needs. The qualifications can provide the knowledge, skills and understanding that underpin a particular sector in the [National Occupational Standards](#).

This handbook provides an overview of the quality assurance processes for SRF qualifications, to help you understand the requirements that apply. This handbook will help you work with us to ensure high quality, consistent and rigorous standards. All staff involved in the delivery, assessment and verification of qualifications on the SRF should read and understand this handbook. You should only use this handbook if you are approved to deliver, or you are seeking to be approved for, a customised qualification that is on Pearson's Self Regulated Framework (SRF). If the qualification sits on a nationally recognised framework, such as the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), or the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the relevant UK and International handbooks are available on our [website](#).

This handbook should be read alongside Pearson's Self Regulated Policy which can be found [here](#). There is also further information on the Self Regulated Framework available on our [website](#).

Qualifications that sit on the SRF are customised to meet specific needs not met by regulated qualifications, and are not regulated by Ofqual, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) or any other regulatory body. Although SRF qualifications are not regulated, they may still need to meet the regulatory requirements of bodies such as Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and other professional bodies.

A customised qualification is developed for you and tailored to your needs. However, the quality processes outlined in this handbook must be followed.

If your SRF qualification is approved to display the BTEC brand then you should also refer to the relevant [BTEC Quality Assurance Handbook](#) available on our website.

Qualification	Handbook
Level 1-3 SRF programmes	BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Assessment
Level 4-7 SRF programmes and SRF Higher Nationals	BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment Levels 4-7

Centre Communications: Quality Nominee

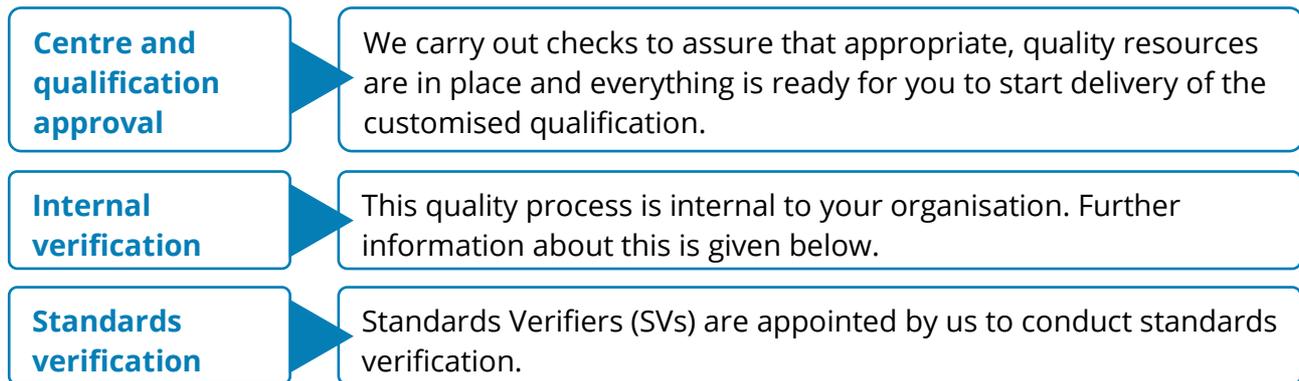
You should appoint one member of staff, called the Quality Nominee, to be responsible for all Pearson vocational provision. This will include all SRF programmes. The Quality Nominee will receive information from us, including details about the appointment of your Standards Verifier (SV).

The Quality Nominee will need to liaise with your Internal Verifiers, Programme Leaders, and programme teams to ensure that quality is embedded in your SRF provision.

The Quality Assurance Model

We operate a robust quality management system and we are committed to quality in everything we do.

The quality assurance model has three parts:



It is a system designed to ensure that the assessment methods that you are using are fit for purpose and that the assessment decisions made by your centre's Assessors are valid, reliable and consistent with qualification criteria for achievement. It is carried out at an appropriate time during the 11 month period from 1st October to 31st August. Further information about standards verification can be found below. External Examiners for SRF Higher Nationals also have the right to attend Assessment Boards, but as an observer only.

Please note that the terms Standards Verifier (SV) and standards verification are used for all SRF qualifications at Levels 1-7 (excluding SRF Higher Nationals), whereas the terms External Examiner (EE) and external examination are used for SRF Higher Nationals only.



Centre and qualification approval

Stage 1 – Qualification approval

The customised qualification must first be developed by our Qualification Development department. Your Pearson representative will help you to complete form SRQ1 which will outline your proposed qualification. We will work with you and plan how your requirements can be put into the right format. The customised qualification will be mapped to a single level on a recognised level framework (e.g. RQF, NQF, QCF, NICATS, CEFR, EQF), but will not be regulated by any regulatory body. SRF Higher Nationals are also aligned to the Framework for

Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements.

Stage 2 – The specification document

A qualification specification document will be produced which gives the structure and requirements of the qualification. It is your centre's responsibility to keep the master copy of the qualification specification in a safe and secure location. Copies should be easily accessible by centre staff, learners, the Standards Verifier (SV) and any other interested party.

You will be able to view the qualification structure on Edexcel Online (EOL). It is important that you comply with the structure as approved, otherwise certification will be affected.

- units described as Core are compulsory and must be taken
- the total value of guided learning hours (GLH)/total qualification time (TQT) across units for each learner must match to the specified total hours required for the SRF specification
- Pass, Merit and Distinction grading must be used where a unit has been defined as graded
- if the customised qualification has used standard Pearson units you must operate these as published and you may not amend them
- you may apply to amend a customised qualification specification. However, all but the most minor amendments will require the issue of a new programme number. If you would like to make a change, you should contact your Pearson representative for advice at the earliest possible opportunity. Any proposed amendments to the qualification must not be taught before approval is sought and obtained from Pearson
- your customised qualification will be mapped to a single level on a recognised level framework (e.g. RQF, NQF, QCF, NICATS, CEFR, EQF). It may be that your approved qualification has been mapped to non-UK level frameworks and it is most important that staff are aware that the assessment of levels will be checked during standards verification.

Stage 3 – Centre approval

Your organisation must gain centre approval from us before you start to deliver and assess a customised programme.

If you are not currently a recognised centre that is approved to deliver vocational qualifications with us, your organisation needs to gain centre approval as well as approval to deliver the customised qualification. You can find more approval information on our [website](#).

At the centre approval stage, you will be asked questions about:

- centre management systems

- support that you give to your learners
- how you will accurately register your learners on time
- how you will validate your learners' identities
- centre records and systems
- policies and procedures that you need to have
- your staff resources
- the physical resources at your centre.

Your Pearson representative will support you to complete the Centre Approval Application form which they will provide to you.

Stage 4 – Qualification approval

Apart from centre approval you will need approval to deliver your customised qualification. You will be asked questions about:

- the qualifications and experience of the staff who will deliver, assess and internally verify the programme
- the physical resources for this specific programme
- the assessment that you will give to the learners - we will ask you for examples
- how you will plan and perform internal verification
- distance learning provision (if applicable).

Your Pearson representative will support you to complete the Qualification Approval Application form which they will provide to you.

When you have received centre and qualification approval, you will see the title of the customised qualification and its programme number on the Edexcel Online (EOL) system.

Qualification approval is time constrained (normally for 3 years). At the end of this time, we will work with you to make sure that the qualification continues to be up to date and fit for purpose. The expiry date of the qualification is published on Edexcel Online (EOL) and it is your centre's responsibility to be aware of this date and work with us in good time if you want to continue to deliver the programme after the expiry date.

Internal verification

Definition

Internal verification is a quality assurance process carried out in your centre. Its purpose is to ensure the consistency and accuracy of assessment. It will confirm that the assessment tasks will allow learners to generate evidence that can be assessed accurately against the assessment criteria. This will involve:

- the scrutiny of all assessment tasks prior to them being given to learners
- monitoring the quality of Assessors' decisions and providing appropriate feedback to Assessors, with an action plan where necessary
- monitoring consistency across Assessors on one or several sites through a standardisation programme
- ensuring that there is an internal verification plan that is carried out.

A person can act as an Internal Verifier when they have sufficient knowledge of a unit being assessed by another Assessor. The Internal Verifier must be able to make an informed judgment about whether assessment tools are at the right level and fit for purpose. They must also be able to check whether assessment decisions made by an Assessor are accurate or not. Assessors can also be Internal Verifiers but no person may act as Internal Verifier for their own assessment judgments.

Where there are several Internal Verifiers, a Lead Internal Verifier must be appointed. The Lead Internal Verifier should take responsibility for ensuring that internal verification is planned and that all internal verification processes are carried out.

Internal verification should result in a documented, professional conversation between the Assessor and the Internal Verifier.

Planning internal verification

The Internal Verifier plan should cover:

- all units
- all Assessors
- all types of assessment
- all cohorts/groups of learners
- all assessment locations.

There are two significant points in delivery that should be planned:

Before an assignment is given to the learners, the Internal Verifier should be sent a copy, to check that it is fit for purpose. The Internal Verifier will need to check:

- the format of the assignment
- the content, to confirm that it matches what is required for assessment which is detailed in the specification and that the assessment criteria are matched to the tasks
- the level, to confirm that it is at the level of the qualification
- the language, to ensure that the learner will understand what is being asked.

If necessary, amendments or improvements must be made before the assignments are distributed to learners.

After assessment decisions have been made by an Assessor, a sample of these decisions should be checked by an Internal Verifier. If one Assessor assesses more than one unit, the assessment decisions must be checked for every unit that that Assessor deals with. All Assessors must be internally verified. The sample size must take into account the:

- range of assessment decisions made (Pass, Merit, and Distinction if appropriate)
- size of the cohort of learners assessed
- experience of the Assessor.

Both aspects of verification (assignments and assessment decisions) should be recorded. Forms are available on our [website](#) to assist this process.

Standardisation

Where units are only being assessed by one Assessor, there is no formal requirement for standardisation.

If more than one Assessor is involved in the assessment of one unit, the assessment must be standardised to ensure that all Assessors are making the same assessment decisions, e.g. that they accept the same range of evidence and the same quality of performance. This could be achieved by cross-sampling as part of a team activity or through feedback from an Internal Verifier appraising a sample from all Assessors.

Standardisation should take place at the earliest opportunity in order to prevent the need to revisit assessment decisions.

During standardisation or internal verification, it may be identified that an Assessor's decisions are incorrect. All assessment decisions made by that Assessor must then be remade to ensure that all learners have been correctly assessed. The Assessor's decisions should be re-sampled to ensure that assessment decisions are now being made accurately.

You are advised to complete initial standardisation and internal verification before the outcomes of assessment are given to learners. This ensures smooth running of assessment and reduces the possibility of appeals.

Non-standard assessment

All types of assessment, including observation of performance are subject to internal verification.

Observation records

Full records of observations should be kept including an observation record sheet and relevant supporting evidence, e.g. tapes, artefacts. Internal verification may be based on the recorded evidence but there should be actual observation by an Internal Verifier of some learners, particularly for less experienced Assessors. The Standards Verifier (SV) will want to see all records.

Witness statements

For Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or performance of tasks in the workplace, you may make use of witness statements. These are made by people who are not Assessors and their commentaries should be reviewed by Assessors in relation to the unit assessment criteria.

Assessor judgments made against witness statements are still subject to internal verification. It is unwise to award entire unit achievement on the basis of witness statements alone. The Standards Verifier will want to see records.

Keeping records

You are required to make sure that you have access to all of the learners' portfolios until after standards verification is complete. After this, learners have ownership of their own work, subject to any stipulated centre policy related to appeals.

For all SRF programmes, all learner work must be retained for **a minimum of 12 weeks following certification**. In certain cases, due to the nature of the evidence produced, such as for practical assignments, it may be more feasible to retain good quality photos or videos rather than the original evidence itself.

You need to keep assessment and verification records for **3 years following certification**. This is in case any learners have questions relating to their certification or if Pearson needs information in relation to programme quality and performance.

Standards verification

Please note that the terms Standards Verifier (SV) and standards verification are used for all SRF qualifications at Levels 1-7 (excluding SRF Higher Nationals), whereas the terms External Examiner (EE) and external examination are used for SRF Higher Nationals only.



Purpose

The key purpose of standards verification is to check and report on the quality of assessment offered by your centre. To do this, Pearson appoints experienced subject experts who are known as Standards Verifiers (SVs). Each year they are trained, updated and standardised. All Standards Verifiers are experts in assessment methodology and processes and are able to review learner performance against benchmarks. We would expect the Standards Verifier to remain with a programme for 3-4 years where possible.

Registrations of learners on Edexcel Online (EOL) tell us that you have started to deliver the customised qualification. We will allocate a Standards Verifier who will contact you to arrange either a visit or a postal (electronic) sample. For SRF Higher National programmes, we will allocate an External Examiner (EE) who will arrange an annual visit to carry out a sample.

UK centres located in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland

If you are newly approved to deliver the customised qualification, the Standards Verifier (SV) will visit your centre to conduct standards verification. You will receive one visit per academic year until certificates are released. The quality assurance model will then switch to postal (electronic) sampling.

You will then be asked to send a postal (electronic) sample to your allocated Standards Verifier. Postal (electronic) sampling will continue, year on year, unless a quality issue is found,

at which point a visit will be reinstated. If your Standards Verifier blocks certification for your customised qualification, they will conduct second sampling within the same academic year and this will be postal (electronic). Standards verification visits will then be reinstated commencing with the first sampling to take place in the new academic year, and will continue until certification is released.

Please note that certain customised qualifications, such as those in the Security sector, will remain as an annual visit and not be sampled remotely.

SRF Higher Nationals (HNs) programmes follow the same quality assurance model as regulated HNs, although they are not regulated by any regulatory body. SRF HNs receive one visit per academic year by an External Examiner (EE). If a quality issue is found, certification will be blocked and a second sample will be required, which will take the form of a postal (electronic) sample. Upon completion of the second sample, the EE will either release certification or block certification again. If certification is blocked for a second time, this will trigger involvement from a Principal Standards Manager (PSM), a member of Pearson staff who will work with you to create a remedial action plan. Only once the actions from the remedial action plan have been completed will the PSM release certification.

People involved in standards verification

The Standards Verifier (SV) will have contact with important members of staff including:

Internal Verifiers

Internal Verifiers have very responsible positions in the organisation. The Internal Verifiers should be critical friends to their Assessor colleagues. It is their role to ensure that there is quality assessment taking place. The Standards Verifier will confirm that the Internal Verifier is operating effectively. The Internal Verifier is responsible for ensuring that:

- internal verification is planned and operates effectively
- the assignment briefs or assessment tools are fit for purpose
- assessment decisions made by Assessors are accurate and meet the requirements of the specification
- any resubmissions or retakes/repeat units are appropriately authorised.

The programme team

It is good practice to identify clearly who the Assessors and Internal Verifiers are for each unit of the qualification. These people will then be known as the programme team.

It is also good practice to identify one of these people as the Programme Leader. They will then be responsible for ensuring effective planning of programme delivery, assessment and internal verification.

A programme team that is working effectively will have regular meetings, led by the Programme Leader. These meetings will discuss:

- schedules for assessment to ensure that learners are not overburdened with assignments or assessment at a particular point in time
- opportunities for resubmissions and retakes/repeat units are planned at appropriate times in the year
- progress of learners
- any assessment or internal verification issues.

The Programme Leader will work with the Standards Verifier when standards verification takes place.

Assessors

Assessors must be appropriately qualified, trained and experienced members of staff, capable of making judgments about learner work against the assessment criteria. There are no specific qualification requirements for Assessors of SRF customised qualifications.

Operation of standards verification

The Standards Verifier (SV) is required to check all assessment records and to sample assessment decisions. They will want to review learner work and take a sample of assessment decisions made.

Your Standards Verifier will also be concerned with underpinning issues such as centre management, resources and learner support that will ultimately affect the validity and quality of assessment.

You will receive guidance from your Standards Verifier for future programme delivery and assessment improvement.

It may be that your approved qualification has been mapped to a framework and it is most important that staff are aware that the assessment of levels will be checked during standards verification.

The findings of the Standards Verifier will be placed in a Quality Report Form (QRF), which will be sent to the Head of your centre within 10 working days of their visit or 10 working days of receiving a remote sample. For SRF HN programmes, the QRF will be available on Edexcel Online (EOL).

Timing of standards verification

The Standards Verifier (SV) will agree with your Quality Nominee an appropriate time for standards verification to take place.

- If you are receiving two visits, the first visit should take place when assessment tools have been developed but before assessment has been completed. This will allow your programme team to receive advice and guidance at the earliest opportunity
- If you are receiving one visit or if you have been asked to provide a postal (electronic) sample, this should be done 1-3 months before the anticipated completion date of the programme. This will allow the Standards Verifier to review assessment across units and provide time for any required action, before certificates are claimed
- If your customised programme is of a short duration, i.e. of less than 4 months, you should arrange for the initial verification to take place 3-4 months after the start of the programme. You should advise learners that certification is dependent on successful standards verification
- For SRF Higher Nationals, all sampling activities should be completed by 30th June if certificates are required for mid-August.

Once standards verification has been completed and everything has been found to be operating according to the required standards, you will be able to claim certificates for your learners. You can claim certificates on programme completion throughout the year, i.e. until the next standards verification. It is not necessary for each cohort of learners to be sampled, although Standards Verifiers will require access to all records.

Please make every effort to keep to the agreed date for standards verification. If you need to change the date please notify the Standards Verifier at the earliest possible opportunity. If your centre declines verification without good reason, this will be subject to investigation. Pearson may impose a certificate block and consider withdrawal of approval if there are concerns that the centre is obstructing the process of verification.

What is needed for standards verification?

When the Standards Verifier (SV) contacts you, they will:

- request information about the programme including a copy of the specification document
- discuss with you the types of units currently being delivered, e.g. standard or centre-devised, graded or pass/fail, assignment-based or competence-based
- discuss the format of assessments being used
- identify start and finish dates for groups of learners and the size of learner groups
- identify where and how learners are studying, e.g. on training programmes, in the workplace, full-time, online, distance learning, at additional sites
- identify when assessed work will be available
- check understanding of key processes, such as learner administration and internal verification
- identify how the programme is marketed to potential and current learners, in terms of regulation and progression.

What is required will be confirmed in writing, either by an email or in a visit plan. The Standards Verifier will choose the sample of learner work that they wish to review and you are asked to make this work available. Please note that the Standards Verifier will only sample work from those learners who are registered on Edexcel Online (EOL).

The Standards Verifier will sample across units and vary the units over time, and will need to take an appropriate sample to assure that assessment is accurate for all learners.

Where there are concerns about standards, a larger sample may be requested. Pearson reserves the right to conduct further investigation if there is concern that the Standards Verifier is not being permitted proper access to assessment records and assessment evidence.

When your Standards Verifier selects their sample, their sampling strategy will be aligned with the strategy that is used for non-customised qualifications (such as those on the RQF, QCF, NQF, or EQF) at the same level. For example, Standards Verifiers will use the BTEC Higher National and Professional (Levels 4 to 7) sampling strategy when sampling customised qualifications at Levels 4 to 7. Information on the sampling strategies used by Standards Verifiers can be found in the [BTEC Centre Guide to Standards Verification](#) for Level 1-3 SRF qualifications and the [BTEC Centre Guide to External Examination](#) for Level 4-7 SRF qualifications (including all SRF Higher Nationals).

Conduct of a visit

Please make a quiet, private room available for the Standards Verifier (SV) to review learner work and associated materials.

The Standards Verifier will expect to meet a member of senior management and the Programme Leader at the beginning and end of the day.

If there is a need to observe assessment in action, meet other Assessors, review resources or meet learners, this should be agreed in advance. You are not expected to have people 'on standby'. If it is necessary to arrange a further visit or sample because the agreed plan has not been followed, then the centre may be charged for the costs of additional verification.

At the end of the visit, the Standards Verifier will provide verbal feedback to senior management, the Programme Leader and any other key personnel. A full report will not be provided on the day, but the Standards Verifier will summarise the main findings and any action points. The Standards Verifier will aim to provide an electronic report within 10 working days of the visit.

Postal (electronic sample)

Please ensure that if original copies of learners' work are being sent by post, you copy the work before posting. Please send by secure and recorded post.

If sending electronically, please compress and use zipped files whenever possible. To ensure that learner information and assessment materials remain secure, you should send your files using Pearson Secure File Transfer (SFT). For more information, to log in and to register, [click here](#).

You should agree the date that the sample will be sent. The Standards Verifier (SV) will review the materials and provide the report within 10 working days of receipt of the sample. The Standards Verifier will contact the Quality Nominee to arrange verbal feedback to senior management and the Programme Leader on the report and any required actions.

The Quality Report Form (QRF)

The report will provide information about the quality of the programme delivery, assessment, resources and materials. It will review the actions made in the previous report and include an action plan if improvements can be made. The Standards Verifier (SV) will comment on good practice at your centre as well as making other general comments.

They will report on the management and effectiveness of assessment and whether standards are being maintained. There will be specific reference to whether there is:

- an appeals policy
- an assessment policy
- an assessment malpractice policy
- an access to assessment policy
- an equality of opportunity policy
- an internal verification plan
- any programme run on a collaborative basis in other institutions
- suitably qualified and sufficient number of staff for accurate assessment and maintenance of standards.

The Standards Verifier will look at the effectiveness of the assessment instruments that you use. They will state whether their design:

- enables the learner to produce appropriate evidence to meet the criteria to which the assessment relates
- leads to valid assessment outcomes
- is vocational
- facilitates reliable assessment decisions across Assessors
- reflects the qualification level
- uses appropriate language.

The Standards Verifier will also comment on the process of assessment and the assessment records that you keep. They will look at:

- the accuracy and consistency of assessment and grading
- the appropriateness of feedback to learners
- evidence of internal verification of assessment instruments
- evidence of internal verification of assessment decisions
- the availability of assessment records.

- the steps taken to ensure work is not plagiarised

Programme delivery and learner support is also reviewed. Comments will be made on the following key areas:

- quality of programme information for learners
- expertise and experience of staff
- availability of physical resources for the programme
- tutorial and pastoral support
- opportunities for learners to give feedback on their programme.

The Standards Verifier will summarise the process for ensuring that learner registration and certification is accurate and monitored effectively. The Standards Verifier will also check that your marketing materials clearly state that your customised programmes are not regulated by a regulatory body.

Finally, the report will provide feedback on the quality of assessment decisions. Individual learners will be chosen by the Standards Verifier and the assessment decisions made on their work checked for accuracy. The Standards Verifier will state whether sampling shows that the learner has achieved the aims and learning objectives of the targeted criteria at the appropriate level.

At the end of each section of the report, the Standards Verifier will recommend any improvements that could be made as well as clearly indicating any required action.

The Standards Verifier will make a decision to either:

- **Release certificates** if no quality issues are found. You will be able to claim certificates for learners who complete before the next standards verification
- **Decide not yet fully sampled (NYFS)** if it has not yet been possible to review a sufficient sample. This will prevent certificates from being released
- **Block certificates** if quality issues requiring action are found. These actions will be described in the report and you should construct a time-constrained action plan to address the issues. If the issue relates to:
 - **Assessment**, assistance can be found in the relevant quality assurance guide:

Level 1-3 SRF programmes

[BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Assessment](#)

Level 4-7 SRF programmes and SRF Higher Nationals approved **before** September 2016

[BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment Levels 4-7](#)

- **Internal verification**, assistance can be found in the [BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification](#)
- **General quality issues**, assistance can be found in the [BTEC Centre Guide to Managing Quality](#)

During subsequent standards verification, the Standards Verifier will want to review the action taken. You will not be able to claim certificates for your learners until the required actions have been taken.

On receipt of the report you should ensure that the report is logged and communicated to the programme team.

Very occasionally you may be dissatisfied following standards verification.

If you have a complaint about the conduct of a Standards Verifier, you should contact the Assessment team at btecdelivery@pearson.com.

If you believe that a Standards Verifier has given an incorrect judgment on a programme, you should contact vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com. More information about appealing a Standards Verifier's decision can be found in the [enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications policy](#).

Serious quality issues

A serious quality issue is defined as any situation where delivery and assessment do not meet Pearson's requirements, and could include:

- serious variations from what was agreed at the approval stage
- quality issues referred to Pearson from other sources
- assessment malpractice.

Where serious quality issues are identified, the Quality Standards team will:

- contact you to discuss and investigate issue(s) raised
- record any investigation and required action

- agree any corrective action required
- give feedback to your Head of Centre and where necessary, the allocated Standards Verifier (SV)
- if necessary, review the possible withdrawal of the qualification and/or centre approval
- authorise closure of the quality issues record when the issue is resolved.

SRF Higher Nationals (HNs)

For UK and International SRF Higher National (HN) programmes approved from September 2016, there are additional requirements that must be followed in line with the quality assurance requirements of the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF). Please note that all SRF programmes are unregulated, including all SRF Higher National programmes. Key additional requirements include:

Programme re-approval

- The process for existing Higher National providers seeking re-approval is called the Programme Review and Approval (PRA) and further detailed information about guidelines and processes can be found [here](#). This document sets out the different processes for approval depending on whether a provider is:
 - actively delivering Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals
 - approved, but not actively delivering Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals
 - in the process of seeking approval to deliver Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals
 - not yet started an application seeking to deliver Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals.

The document also sets out the pricing structure for the different types of approval.

Annual Programme Monitoring Review

Annual Programme Monitoring Review (APMR) is a written annual review form that provides an opportunity for you to analyse and reflect on the previous teaching year. Annual submission of your APMR to Pearson for analysis is compulsory for **all** SRF Higher National programmes.

Assessment Boards

You will be required to hold assessment Boards for **all** SRF Higher National programmes.

Annual Student Survey

An annual survey sent to **all** Higher National and SRF Higher National providers, which will allow students to feedback on their experience of studying Higher National programmes.

Resubmission rules

New resubmission rules provide students who have not achieved a Pass in their first assessment opportunity with one opportunity for reassessment of the unit. A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit, and students will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a Pass grade or higher has already been awarded.

Annual student fee

- For **all** SRF Higher National students registered from September 2016, we have introduced an annual student fee of £20 that will apply to all SRF Higher National students from the second year of study onwards. The purpose of this fee, which is a common feature of UK Higher Education programmes like the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals (HNs), is to ensure we can support students effectively whilst they are on programme and maintain accurate data on the numbers of students on programmes.
- The annual student fee will not apply to students in the first year of their study, as this is already built into the qualification registration fee charged to centres.
- Please note that this fee will be charged for each subsequent year students take to complete an SRF HNC/D programme, after their first year of study. This means that if students complete the SRF HND in two years, you will only have the £20 fee to pay once in your second year, whilst for any students who complete the SRF HND in three years, you will have the £20 annual fee to pay twice (in students' second and third years).

English language requirements

All providers delivering SRF Higher National programmes approved after September 2016 must ensure that all students who are non-native English speakers and who have not undertaken their final two years of schooling in English, can demonstrate capability in English at a standard equivalent to the levels identified below, before being recruited to the programme where the programme is both taught and assessed in English.

All providers delivering SRF Higher National programmes approved after September 2016 in a language other than English, but who are assessed in English, must ensure that all students can demonstrate capability in English at a standard equivalent to the levels identified below, on completion of the programme.

In all instances, it is for the centre to determine what proof will be necessary to evidence individual student proficiency.

- Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B2
- PTE 51
- IETLS 5.5; Reading and Writing must be at 5.5
- Or equivalent.

Your Standards Verifier for any SRF HN programmes will now be referred to as an External Examiner (EE).

Further information detailing the rules and requirements of SRF HNs is available in the **BTEC** Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment. Please note that although SRF HNs are subject to the same quality assurance processes as regulated HNs, they are **not** regulated by a regulatory body.

Registering learners and claiming certificates

Registration

An examinations officer is an appropriate person to take responsibility for learner administration and will need to have the necessary access to Edexcel Online (EOL) which is used for learner registration. Further information about Edexcel Online can be found on our [website](#).

It is your centre's responsibility to make learner registrations on Edexcel Online. You will be asked to use a secure password to make registrations, record learners' achievement and claim learners' certificates. You must not give this password or responsibility to a third party or an outside agency.

You will need to check that the information given at registration is accurate e.g. that the learner's name and date of birth appear as in official documents. Updates or amendments will need to be made as necessary.

All learners must be registered promptly after they start their programmes. If your qualification is a roll-on-roll-off programme, or a short programme, you can provide registration data to us throughout the year, although this must be **within six weeks** of learners' enrolment. Registration is for individual learners and may not be deleted except under exceptional circumstances and with agreement from Pearson.

At the time of registration, you are asked to give an estimated completion date for your learners. This is used for the purposes of standards verification and certification and must be accurate. If a learner is unable to complete by three months after the expected date, the completion date should be amended.

If a learner withdraws from the programme, you must withdraw the learner on Edexcel Online.

Registration on individual units

If appropriate, you can register learners for certification of individual units. However, you can only do this where the units are from full programmes that have registrations at the same time.

Where learners do not complete a full programme, you may claim a Certificate of Unit Achievement for those units that have been successfully completed.

When an award is made up of just one unit please take particular care to register learners correctly for the full award, as a full certificate will only be issued against registrations on a full award.

Duration of registration

Your learners will be registered for five years.

If learners are no longer able to attend your centre or if the programme ceases to run, it is unlikely that a learner could complete an approved SRF programme at another centre.

Learners who have not been certificated may be able to transfer their registration to another standard BTEC programme, if a similar and relevant programme of the same size and level exists. This process will require the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Certification

You are only able to make certificate claims after a Standards Verifier (SV) has released certification. Once standards verification is complete and the learners have completed their programme of study, certification may be claimed at any time in the year.

Learners may only be certificated against the qualification that they are registered on. If necessary, a learner may be transferred to another appropriate qualification before certification using Edexcel Online (EOL). Transfers should normally take place prior to standards verification so that the Standards Verifier can check records and release certification.

Should there be any certificate errors or certificates claimed in error then these must be returned to Pearson with a full explanation.

Your responsibility in relation to learners

Marketing

Before approval, you must not make use of the Pearson logos or the proposed qualification title in any marketing materials.

After the Customised Qualification Development Concept Approval Form (SRQ1) has been approved, you may market to potential learners using the proposed title, although it must be clear that the availability of the qualification is 'subject to Pearson approval.'

Pearson does not have a duty of care to learners recruited prior to approval and will not certificate affected individuals should the programme not be approved or approved with revisions.

Please take care when marketing approved SRF qualifications to ensure that they are described accurately. Please take particular care with the terms 'Award', 'Certificate' and 'Diploma' if used with a capital letter, as these denote the size of qualification.

Marketing, and all other, materials must make it clear that customised qualifications that sit on Pearson's SRF are **not** regulated by any regulatory body, such as Ofqual.



Recruitment with integrity

All learners must have fair access to assessment.

We ask you to recruit learners with integrity. You must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice about the qualification and that the qualification will meet their needs. The recruitment process should assess the potential of each learner and make justifiable and professional judgments about the learner's potential to achieve the qualification. More information regarding recruiting learners with integrity can be found [here](#).

Recruitment with integrity also means:

- recruiting the types of learners identified within the application for approval
- selecting learners on the basis of previous relevant experience and achievement

- ensuring that learners are able to cope with the programme and that, if a learner requires additional support or adjustments, your centre is able to provide these
- checking that the learner will have reasonable opportunity to undertake assessments and complete the programme.

Support and advice to learners

Learners must be given advice and support to enable them to progress effectively on the programme and achieve the qualification. You are recommended to have an induction period for them. A special event or a pack of information will help them to understand what is expected. This should include information on:

- the programme content
- how long the programme will last
- the learning and assessment strategy
- the learner's responsibility within assessment, including their responsibility to submit their own work for assessment, completing work to deadlines and attending required activities
- the process of assessment and internal verification including how they will receive feedback on their progress
- communication channels for learners to raise concerns or appeals about assessment.

Learners should be provided with teaching, coaching or tuition and access to any relevant study resources. These may include libraries, electronic learning materials, study books, and internet access. It is your centre's responsibility to ensure that learners are adequately supported and that those who want to achieve the qualification, and who meet the required standards, are able to do so.

Assessment of learners

All learners should be subject to the same centre policies for late submission of work and opportunities to retake assessment.

Please note that the rules of assessment may be different for different levels of a qualification. Information about assessment will be found in the qualification specification and in the relevant assessment handbook:

Qualification	Handbook
Level 1-3 SRF programmes	<u>BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Assessment</u>
Level 4-7 SRF programmes and SRF Higher Nationals	<u>BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment Levels 4-7</u>

Staff and learners need to be fully informed about the rules of assessment. It is useful to publish these in staff and learner handbooks.

Your learners will have the right of appeal with respect to both access to assessment and the judgment of Assessors. Your appeals policy must include this right.

The learner has an ultimate right of appeal to Pearson, but all internal appeal processes must have been exhausted first.

Students registered on an **SRF Higher National** also have the right to appeal to the **[Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#)**, an independent body established by the Higher Education Act 2004 to oversee student complaints in England and Wales. Examples of complaints that the OIA deals with are those relating to teaching provision and facilities, accommodation, bullying and harassment, disciplinary matters, unfair practice, discrimination, procedural irregularities and academic appeals. The OIA does not deal with academic or professional judgments. Following the OIA process does not prevent students from pursuing a complaint or appeal with Pearson, and they may choose whichever route(s) they feel is the most appropriate. SRF HN students must be made aware of their right to appeal to the OIA.

Guidance on policies

Pearson has published regulatory policies and guidance for centres, learners and employees that can be found on the website [here](#).

Our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate, in a consistent way, how we meet our internal and external regulatory requirements. They are reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Your centre must have its own policies. These are listed in the centre approval application form. Pearson's policies will help you write and amend your policies.

<p>Pearson's Self Regulated Framework Policy</p>	<p>This policy applies to all qualifications on Pearson's Self Regulated Framework, designed to meet the needs of a wide range of learners and stakeholders. The policy provides the criteria for developing customised qualifications for this Framework.</p>
<p>Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments</p>	<p>This document addresses the duty upon awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments and avoid unfavourable treatment towards disabled candidates. Your centre will be required to have your own policy for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.</p>
<p>Centre Guidance for Dealing with Malpractice</p>	<p>This guidance applies to all Pearson vocational qualifications. For further information on malpractice in GCSE, GCE, Project, Principal Learning and vocational qualifications, please refer to the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments – Policies and Procedures. Although the JCQ document covers vocational qualifications, this guidance document has been written to help Pearson centres who deliver vocational qualifications develop their own Malpractice Policy and Procedures which is a requirement for approval.</p>
<p>Collaborative Arrangements for the Delivery of Vocational Qualifications</p>	<p>This policy provides definitions of collaborative arrangements with centres in the UK and internationally. It describes the models of collaborative arrangement and the associated principles, and includes a section defining terms. Exceptional collaborative arrangements must always be agreed beforehand with Pearson's Responsible Officer on a case-by-case basis.</p>

Conflict of Interest Policy	Ofqual's General Condition A4 requires all awarding organisations to have a Conflict of Interest Policy. This policy provides guidance to relevant individuals, including our centres, on how we deal with possible conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of Pearson Education Limited's role as an awarding organisation.
Distance Learning Policy	This policy outlines the minimum requirements that Pearson expects must be met by centres when using Distance Learning and/or Distance Assessment wholly or mainly for the delivery of Pearson qualifications. It applies where centres are delivering programmes of education, learning or training that lead to partial or full completion of Pearson qualifications, through means of Distance Learning and/or Assessment as the entirety or majority of the programme for learners who do not physically attend classes or sessions at given locations and times.
Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson Vocational Qualifications Policy	This policy provides guidance on Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson Vocational Qualifications and replaces the previous version dated May 2014. It applies to all Pearson vocational qualifications including BTEC qualifications, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and Self Regulated Framework qualifications.
Equality and Diversity Policy	This policy provides information on how Pearson approaches qualification development, assessment and our related services in an inclusive way to ensure all learners have equal opportunity, and that our qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every learner. The policy reflects how we ensure our developments, assessment and support materials reflect a diversity of learners.
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Process	This policy is about prior learning and recommends ways a learner can meet any requirements while avoiding repetition of learning and assessment.
Recruiting with Integrity	This guidance is about the fair and equal recruitment of learners onto all Pearson qualifications. Qualifications that are not in scope are those that are restricted for legal reasons, such as serving alcohol or using firearms. There may be other restrictions, such as funding.
Use of Languages in Qualifications Policy	This policy provides guidance on the use of language in specifications, assessment and support materials where a learner wishes to undertake a qualification in a language other than English.

Support for your centre

We are able to offer tailored staff development programmes through the Training from Pearson department, e.g. events can be provided about how to design assessments, internal verification, assessment planning or record keeping.

Whilst we do not offer standard training events for SRF programmes, you may find that some standard events may be of benefit, e.g. there are generic events for new centres and training for standard BTEC and NVQ programmes from which you may have drawn units for your qualification. Full details of training services are available on our [website](#).

The Standards Verifier (SV) will provide advice and guidance on programme delivery and assessment. However, your Standards Verifier is not able to deliver training to your centre. Please do not invite a Standards Verifier to undertake additional activities for you because this will be seen as a conflict of interest. You should approach your Pearson representative if you want to arrange a training or development event.

