

BTEC Firsts for level 2 learners (NQF): First teaching Sept 2012 and 2013

(November 2012)

Questions and Answers regarding Quality Assurance

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Question 1: Will the use of the OSCA system remain the same for Lead Internal Verifiers (Lead IVs)?

A: Accredited Lead IVs for BTEC Level 2 (QCF) will be recognised as Lead IVs for the next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF) in the same sector; they should register as such using the OSCA system. The Lead IV will be required to complete the annual re-registration and undertake the training for the new BTEC Firsts that will be provided by Edexcel. Unlike QCF OSCA, standardisation for the new suite of BTECs will take place in a centre-led round-table discussion format. There is no formal accreditation, and assessment decisions will be sampled every year. Confirming that standardisation has taken place will form part of the annual Quality Review and Development visit.

Question 2: What will the Lead IV role involve going forward?

A: The Lead IV role continues to undertake a key role for any BTEC programme. Lead IVs will carry out their usual internal quality assurance duties, which should include: standardising all BTEC assessors in the centre, liaising with Standards Verifiers, signing off all internal assessments, sampling the assessment decisions of all assessors and ensuring there is an overall valid plan of assessment and quality assurance for the programme.

Question 3: Once a Lead IV is standardised for a next generation BTEC Firsts programme, how long does that last for?

A: The new standardisation process for Lead IVs involves an annual process of registration and training. There is no OSCA 'test' as such, and no 'end' to being recognised provided that accredited Lead IVs reapply for each BTEC programme each year. Please bookmark our website www.btec.co.uk/QA to keep up to date with the latest developments.

Question 4: As a Lead IV, I understand that I am required to train and standardise all the BTEC assessors in my centre. Is there any guidance as to how I should do this?

A: Yes. You will find a centre induction 'podcast' on OSCA at www.edexcel.com/centreinduction. All standardisation packs include an introduction and guidance for the Lead IV. You will also have ongoing access to your local Regional Quality Manager who will be able to answer any questions or concerns you may have about the process. The annual Quality Review and Development visit will seek to establish that this is in place and happening effectively.

Question 5: Should we be using the same Lead IV for both the existing QCF and new NQF BTECs?

A: We would strongly advise you to use the expertise of the Lead IV who has already been standardised in dealing with QCF BTEC qualifications to undertake the new standardisation and training exercise and cover both. This will provide a smooth transition into new processes.

Question 6: How will we know what the new standard is, and that we are assessing to it correctly?

A: We have put in place a number of things to ensure clear understanding of the new standards. This includes guidance within the units themselves and through OSCA standardisation materials, the provision of Authorised Assignment Briefs and the Assignment Checking Service. We will also be providing assessed and graded learner work, for the internally assessed core unit, at Level 1 Pass, Level 2 Pass, Level 2 Merit and Level 2 Distinction. A representative sample of graded learner work will be provided across all the remaining optional units. These will be made available for each sector at www.btec.co.uk/2012.

A reminder that your Regional Quality Manager is also well placed to advise on the required standards and Standards Verifiers will be available over phone and email to answer specific queries or concerns.

Question 7: What training are you putting on to help us understand the new Quality Assurance process?

A: A full events and training programme is available to support you and your colleagues in familiarising yourselves with the content and assessment processes of the next generation BTECs. This includes:

- Getting ready to teach events
- Lead IV specific training
- Training materials available through the OSCA system

Question 8: I understand that under the new assessment guidelines for the next generation BTEC Firsts 100% of assessors will be sampled. What can you tell me about this sampling process?

A: Your Standards Verifier will discuss your assessment plan (i.e. when you are completing units and which assessors/learners are involved) with your Lead IV and set the sample required from this. The first sampling window will be between January and April 2013, and we are in the process of determining the detail of how this will work. We will keep you informed and our website updated with the latest information as this finalised over the coming months.

Question 9: How is the sample selected?

A: The sampling of assessed learner work for the new BTEC Firsts is likely to be based on a larger sample size than for existing programmes, possibly in the order of up to 10 pieces of graded work per assessor, over the lifecycle of the programme. Standards Verifiers will select the learner's work to be sampled and will use information on both the assessors and learners to select this. Further details of how the sampling will be structured across units and assessors is still being finalised. Please bookmark our website www.btec.co.uk/QA to keep up to date with the latest developments.

Question 10: Does sampling take place every year?

A: Sampling for new BTEC Firsts will be ongoing with annual sampling once the programme is fully established. Most programmes will run over a two-year period and this will be taken into account when defining the sampling periods.

Question 11: How does Standards Verification take place?

A: Standards Verifiers will review a centre's assessment plan making sure that there are appropriate arrangements for standardisation and internal verification. Standards Verifiers will also review the internal assessments for selected units to make sure these are fully fit for purpose. Standards Verifiers will select the learner's work to be sampled and will use information on both the assessors and learners to select this.

Question 12: What is the Assignment Checking Service?

A: The Assignment Checking Service is a free service to help you with creation of fit-for-purpose BTEC assignment briefs. Assignment Briefs submitted will be reviewed by a trained subject expert and feedback given within 10 days. This service will be available to you during the periods of time that you are not in contact with your Standards Verifier.

Question 13: Has the role of the assessor changed?

A: No. However, to ensure that BTEC assessors are assessing to the correct standard we will be providing training materials which must be used by Lead IVs when standardising all programme assessors in the centre. The sampling of assessed and internally verified learner work by the Standards Verifier has always taken into account individual assessors, however, for the new BTEC Firsts this will be formalised within the sampling we carry out each year.