

CDET B External Authentication (EA) Guidelines for External Authentication

1. Introduction

QQI defines External Authentication as the process that aims “to provide independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards”. (Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, revised 2013, page 25).

These CDET B EA Guidelines reflect QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for External Authenticators – Revised February 2015¹.

2. Role of the EA

It is recognised that the EA carries out the following key tasks.

1. Examining and evaluating all assessment instruments and marking schemes to ensure all learning outcomes have been assessed via the instruments, and that the instruments meet the national standards of the award to which the module leads.
2. Ensuring Internal Verification has occurred and reporting on same.
3. Selecting a sample of learner evidence in accordance with the provider sampling strategy and moderating this evidence against the relevant standards. This may result in the EA proposing a change in grades awarded.
4. Liaising with Quality Teams and members of teaching/training/tutoring staff with requests for further information, and to discuss findings and provide feedback
5. Completing an EA Report per course within a timely fashion, which is furnished to the centre and CDET B. If an EA authenticated in modules in two courses, there should be a report per course for the centre Course Team/Quality Team and the Results Approval Committee as learners are put forward for certification in accordance with their programme.

3. CDET B EA Report and Sampling Strategy.

To ensure consistency across all CDET B centres, CDET B Quality Assurance Steering Committee approved one common EA Report () and one common sampling strategy in 2019, which have now been subject to review and update by the CDET B Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning Council in February 2021. The CDET B Sampling Strategy is in Appendix 1 and the CDET B EA Report to be used is in Appendix 2.

4. Documentation Made Available in the Centre for the EA Process

- Relevant award specification and the validated programme descriptor and programme modules descriptors
- All relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation, for example, briefs, examination papers, marking schemes and outline solutions
- The assessment plan/s
- All learner assessment evidence

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<https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Pages/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20Guidelines%20for%20External%20Authenticators%20-%20Revised%20February%202015.aspx>

- All learner assessment results recorded on provisional results sheet/s
- List of assessors per programme module and/or class group
- Internal Verification Report/s
- CDET B sampling strategy
- Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in a multi-media format must also be provided, as appropriate.
- Additional documentation/resources may be provided where EA's are undertaking external authentication online.

5. **Conflicts of Interest**

The EA should be independent of the CDET B centre to which they are appointed to conduct external authentication. Any conflict of interest perceived or otherwise which could impact on the independence or perceived independence should be brought to the attention of the centre.

6. **Conducting External Authentication**

The External Authenticator will work through the following stages of the process:

- i. Confirm arrangements with CDET B Centre
- ii. Conduct the authentication process
- iii. Moderate the assessment results by reviewing the learner evidence yielded by CDET B sampling strategy
- iv. Report back to the Centre by completing the CDET B External Authentication Report – template attached and will also email the report to EA@CDET B.ie
- v. In order to moderate the assessment results, the External Authenticator will:
 - Review the award standards
 - Review the QQI/FETAC grading criteria
 - Confirm assessment techniques and instruments are appropriate
 - Ensure consistency with the award requirements
 - Confirm the assessment criteria and marking sheets are appropriate
 - Judge a sample of learner evidence and results to ensure consistency with the award standard and grading criteria
- vi.. All information and data which an EA accesses as part of their role must be treated as private and confidential and cannot be shared with third parties. After all appeals have been finalised by the provider, any learner information/data downloaded should be deleted.
- vii. Where an EA while carrying out their role inadvertently accesses learner data or information not relevant to their role the EA must treat such data and information as private and confidential. It cannot be shared with third parties, and if downloaded it should be deleted immediately.

| Conducting External Authentication | |
|--|--|
| Arrive at agreed location and meet with appropriate personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Review the Internal Verification Report | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Apply CDET B sampling strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ensure that the selected sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is sufficient in size ○ reflects the spread of grades including results that are borderline between the grades ○ includes evidence from each Assessor and programme + new assessors ○ reflects ALL centres | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Read the assessment briefs, examination papers and associated documentation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ensure any special requirements related to the award are documented | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Determine the cut-off points by moderating results at the borderline marks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pass/Unsuccessful (Referred) ○ Distinction/Merit ○ Merit/Pass | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Transfer moderated marks to appropriate column on Provisional Results Sheet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sign the marking sheet(s) in the moderated portfolio | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Complete the moderation process for the remainder of the sample | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sign the Provisional Results Sheet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Authenticate the findings/outcomes of the Internal Verification Report(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Identify any issues arising, concerns, examples of good practice and areas for improvement for inclusion in the CDET B External Authentication Report | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Document ALL changes made during moderation to be recorded in the CDET B External Authentication Report) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Give constructive feedback to appropriate staff which is sufficiently detailed and uses an appropriate feedback model such as 'commend, recommend, commend'. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Concluding External Authentication | |
| Complete CDET B External Authentication Report by agreed date There should be a report per course Please see Appendix 1 for approved EA Report – revised February 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attend Results Approval Panel meeting (if agreed) or Apprenticeship Exam Board meeting (if agreed) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Principal/Head of Centre/Designated Person: _____ Date: _____

CDET B External Authentication Common Sampling Strategy

To ensure consistency across all CDET B centres & to comply with QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines for External Authenticators (revised 2015), the CDET B QA Steering Committee has approved one common sampling strategy for all CDET B centres in 2019. This has been further updated as follows by the CDET B Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning Council in February 2021:

1. The CDET B IV/EA common sampling strategy is as follows:
 - 1.1 All programmes and their respective programme modules shall be internally verified prior to every certification period where learners are being put forward for certification for their completed programme/programme modules for that period. This takes account of multiple assessment periods which occur annually.
 - 1.2 All programmes and their respective programme modules shall be externally authenticated on an annual basis. This takes account of multiple certification periods which occur annually.
 - 1.3 The sampling per module includes moderation at the relevant cut-off points to include Distinction, Merit, Pass and Unsuccessful grades in each learner group selected. A minimum of four learners should be sampled or where a learner group has a smaller number than 4, 100% of that learner group shall be sampled.
 - 1.4 Where appropriate, if the module with the same assessment instruments is delivered by the same teacher/trainer/tutor to more than one learner group then the minimum sample may be selected from across both learner groups. Where there are more than two learner groups but less than 5 to which the above applies, the sample should be increased to a minimum of 8 in line with requirements in relation to moderation at relevant cut off points.
2. The EA must ensure that the selected sample meets the following criteria:
 - 2.1 The sample must be sufficient to enable the Authenticator to make an informed judgement on the consistency of the assessment decisions in the context of the award standards.
 - 2.2 Sample includes the borderline grades of Distinction, Pass, Merit and Unsuccessful, with a spread of grades reflected to ensure grading criteria are being applied consistently, as appropriate.
 - 2.3 If the Authenticator is moderating results from a number of assessors and programmes, then the sample of evidence should reflect each assessor and each programme sufficiently.
 - 2.4 New assessor judgements/decisions should be sampled at least once during the assessment cycle, as identified by centre management.
 - 2.5 If significant issues are identified with a sample, the evidence for the whole cohort of learners from which the sample was taken should be reviewed by the Authenticator.
 - 2.6 Where learner evidence from a number of centres is presented, the sample must include evidence from each centre.
3. Any proposed deviation from the above sampling strategy cannot be approved at centre level. As a minimum the sampling strategy requirements prescribed by QQI in Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013 (V2 revised 2018) will be adhered to. This document is available at [Sample Certificates \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie/SampleCertificates).

Appendix 2 – EA Report - The External Authenticator completes and emails this Report to the Centre Quality Team/Training Standards Officer/CDETb QA Unit at EA@CDETb.ie

| External Authentication Report | |
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| THIS REPORT SHOULD BE COMPLETED PER ASSIGNED COURSE, AND SECTIONS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE REPLICATED FOR MULTIPLE MODULES FOR THE ASSIGNED COURSE E.G. SECTIONS 1 ON ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS | |
| CDETb Centre Name | |
| Centre Registered Number | |
| Name of Centre, Course and CDETb Programme/QC Award Code | |
| Certification Period | |
| Date/s of External Authentication | |
| 1. Assessment Instrument and Marking Scheme [name module with award code] | |
| <p>Based on the assessment instruments and marking schemes reviewed, ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all learning outcomes have been assessed via the instruments, • the instruments and marking schemes meet the national standards of the award to which the module leads including consistency with the NFQ Award indicators (e.g. level of autonomy and independence expected) and the grading criteria for the level of the award. • Alternative Assessment instruments are consistent with the CDETb guidance and relevant standards for alternative assessment instruments. <p>Please complete the following section, drawing attention to areas of good practice and outline areas for improvement observed.</p> | |
| The Assessment instruments | |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p>The marking schemes associated with the assessment instruments</p> | | | |
| <p>Alternative Assessments used</p> <p>- Attach all relevant CDETb AA verification forms to the report.</p> | | | |
| <p>Recommendations</p> | | | |
| <p>Comments on revised assessments instruments where relevant</p> | | | |
| <p>Recommendations</p> | | | |
| <p>Comments on revised assessments instruments where relevant</p> | | | |
| <p>2. Summary of the Internal Verification Process¹</p> | | | |
| <p>Based on the evidence reviewed, please indicate which one of the following best summarises the Internal Verification Process at this Centre</p> | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Effective | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective | <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory |
| <p>Comments on the Internal Verification Process</p> | | | |
| <p>3. Sample</p> | | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Indicate conformance with the CDET B sampling strategy² and detail the agreed sampling taken from each module and relevant learner group(s): | |
| Module and Award Code for sample selected for External Authentication | |

² The sampling per module includes moderation at the relevant cut-off points to include Distinction, Merit, Pass and Unsuccessful grades in each learner group selected. A minimum of four learners should be sampled or where a learner group has a smaller number than 4, 100% of that learner group shall be sampled. Where appropriate, if the module with the same assessment instruments is delivered by the same teacher/trainer/tutor to more than one learner group then the minimum sample may be selected from across both learner groups. Where there are more than two learner groups but less than 5 to which the above applies, the sample should be increased to a minimum of 8 in line with requirements in relation to moderation at relevant cut off points.

| Report on External Authentication of Assessment Results | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Please complete for each named Minor Award + Code | Have you used any Alternative Assessments took place, assessed? | | Have results been internally verified by centres? | | Was evidenced assessed in accordance with techniques outlined in the award specifications/modules? | | Are the presented results consistent with national standards for the award? | | Are you recommending the results of this award for certification? | | Comments/Actions Points |
| | YES | NO | YES | NO | YES | NO | YES | NO | YES | NO | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

SAMPLE

- Identify examples of good practice
- If "No" ticked ✓.
 - Identify issues
 - The standard of marking and feedback of assessment instruments e.g. annotated feedback present, clear feedback provided to learners.
 - Identify recommended grade changes in Learner Group
 - Provide constructive feedback

Detailed Feedback

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

SAMPLE

| | |
|--|---|
| Minor Award/s (insert more rows as required) | Total Number of Grades Recommended for Changes |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| 4. Liaising with Members of Quality Team/Teaching Staff Comments/Observations | |
| | |

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|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 5. Overview of EA Visit and Issuing of Reportⁱⁱ | | | |
| Please indicate which one of the following best describes the sample of work including instruments/reports examined | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Effective | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective | <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory |
| Additional Comments | | | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| *External Authenticator Signature: | *The receipt of External Authentication Report by email constitutes an electronic signature | Date: Click or tap to enter a date. |
| External Authenticator Contact Details | Name/Email/Telephone: | |

ⁱ **Internal Verification Process**

- Very Effective:** The Centre is very effective at implementing the Internal Verification process and procedures as required
- Effective:** The Centre is effective at implementing the Internal Verification process and procedures with some minor areas for improvement
- Acceptable:** The Centre is acceptable at implementing the Internal Verification process and procedures, with a number of minor areas requiring improvement
- Unsatisfactory:** The Centre’s Internal Verification process is unsatisfactory with a number of areas which need to be addressed

ⁱⁱ **External Authentication Visit**

- Very Effective:** The Centre is very effective at implementing the assessment process and procedures as required
- Effective:** The Centre is effective at implementing the assessment process and procedures with some minor areas for improvement
- Acceptable:** The Centre is acceptable at implementing the assessment process and procedures, with a number of minor areas requiring improvement
- Unsatisfactory:** The Centre’s assessment process is unsatisfactory with a number of areas which need to be addressed