

BTEC

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

**Level 2 and 3 BTEC Qualifications including
Short Courses 1 - 3**

Centre and EV Handbook

Quality Assurance 2008-2009

A PEARSON COMPANY



BTEC Mission Statement

We aim to reduce the bureaucratic burden of assessment and assessment-related processes on centres whilst maintaining the quality of provision. We will achieve this through effecting a change of focus from an Edexcel-driven model of 'Quality Control' to one of centre-driven 'Quality Assurance'.

Preface

This handbook applies to the quality assurance processes for BTEC NQF Level 2-3 programmes and Short Courses at Levels 1-3. Through out this handbook there are cross references which are *hyperlinked* to more detail about the relevant section, which will either be found in the NQF BTEC NSS Briefing, the NQF BTEC CRA Briefing, or the NQF BTEC Guides.

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1 Introduction to this handbook

This handbook is effective from 1 September 2008 until 31 August 2009 and deals with the administrative arrangements and requirements for the quality assurance of assessment standards and of centre quality systems. The requirements cover the following NQF BTEC programmes:

BTEC First Certificates and Diplomas	Level 2
BTEC National Awards, Certificates and Diplomas	Level 3
BTEC Short Courses	Levels 1 - 3

This document is designed to provide the key information that is required for your centre to fulfil the quality assurance requirements for 2008/2009. Throughout the text you will find further information and advice buttons (if viewed online) that enable you to find out more about aspects of BTEC quality processes. Thus, this document is best used when you are online. However, the format of the information will readily enable you to have a hard copy of documents should you prefer this.

The handbook provides information on the external verification and risk assessment procedures for both the centre and the Edexcel assessment associate.

The term assessment associate is used in the handbook as a generic term covering both the external verifier and the risk assessor roles. It is used where information applies equally to both roles; but where information is specific to an aspect of the BTEC quality model, the appropriate role title is used.

Access to this Handbook and related information

This document is available on the Edexcel website at www.edexcel.org.uk/sfc/feschools/qa

All programme managers for every BTEC programme should be made aware of where this handbook is located. This document is best accessed online if you are to make the best use of the functionality.

Access to the Information Manual and policy documents

The quality nominee and examinations officer should have access to the *Edexcel Information Manual*, which contains information relating to administrative arrangements for BTEC programmes. Programme managers will also need to comply with these administrative requirements.

2 Key Issues 2008/2009

Reporting of Assessment Associate decisions using online technology

External verifiers and risk assessors report their decisions using online technology. Similarly, centres required to undertake CRA Self Assessment will report via Edexcel Online. Centres are requested to make facilities available to external verifiers, to ensure immediate updating of Edexcel records over the internet. In most instances, a risk assessor may elect to provide a report within 10 working days of the activity.

Centres must continue to take responsibility for ensuring that they are monitoring the progress and outcomes of NSS and CRA across programmes. Normally the quality nominee will undertake this function.

Contact details update

The use of up to date main centre contact details is important if Edexcel is to maintain accurate and timely contact with centres. As the names of these contacts change, the centre should inform Edexcel. This can be easily done through the contacts update screen on Edexcel Online (EOL).

National Standards Sampling (NSS) - 2008/2009

The sample will be taken from across all levels within a Programme Area Title (PAT) with a maximum of five units being seen in total. The BTEC National Awards, Certificate and Diplomas may have up to five units sampled from across the qualification range.

In some centres where only a First Certificate or Diploma is offered then there will only be one unit sampled from that particular qualification. However, if a centre offers the Firsts over two years then they may be seen in each year of operation. If the programme is offered over three years then only years two and three may be seen.

Where levels 1,2 and 3 and short courses straddle the levels across the PAT then these may also be sampled but will not exceed the maximum sample size of five units.

Manual intervention may happen if there are 'special' circumstances eg. Multi-site centres; consortia or short specialist programmes.

Centre Risk Assessment (CRA) - 2008/09

All BTEC centres with current live learners will undergo an annual risk assessment. CRA will either be carried out using a visit assessment by a risk assessor, or by a self assessment. Both formats use online reporting through Edexcel Online. All Centres will be informed which form of risk assessment will be applied in 2008/09 by July 2008.

From September 2008, similar certification blocking requirements will apply to CRA as currently apply to NSS. In 2008/09, Consortia and Collaborative CRA's have been discontinued. All CRA assessments will be for single centres.

Where a centre is part of an Edexcel consortia or a collaborative partnership, then these aspects of their operations will be dealt as part of the centre's CRA. Where a centre operates from more than one site, then the CRA will need include a consideration of the centre quality systems in place at all sites. This may require more time to be spent on the risk assessment, particularly in relation to visit assessments.

To assist centres focus their attention two new CRA guides has been produced for 2008/09:

- BTEC CRA Quick Reference Guide: designed as a first practical point of reference for those directly engaged in CRA.
- BTEC Self Assessment Guide: designed to take self assessment centres step by step through the process

The other handbooks and guides provide more detailed information on the process.

3 Key Dates and Actions 2008/2009

For 2008-2009 New National Awards, Certificates and Diplomas will not have IVAs

By July 2008	Centres operating NQF BTEC qualifications are informed of their selection for CRA by either a visit assessment or a self assessment in 2008/09, and are provided with an information pack to facilitate preparation.
End August 2008	Allocations of risk assessors made by AA Deployment Team. The risk assessor contract and allocations must be confirmed within 10 working days to prevent delays to the start of 2008-2009 risk assessment procedures.
End September 2008	Where appropriate Quality Nominees (QNs) are informed of the risk assessor for their centre. Risk assessors should contact QNs to confirm programmes for CRA and to finalise the documentation that is required for the assessment visit.
By 2 October 2008	Final date for approval of BTEC qualifications for learners studying in the current teaching year, and where Edexcel can guarantee that quality monitoring and certification can occur within the time scales laid down. Non standard year provision is not affected by this deadline.
1 November 2008	Registrations for BTEC programmes received by this date, failure to register by this date will incur a late registration fee.
1 November 2008 - 29th February 2009	CRA visit assessments or self assessments take place for all centres, including any action or recommendation follow up required.
Mid November 2008	Allocations of external verifiers made by AA Deployment team. The external verifier contract and allocations must be confirmed within 10 working days to prevent delays to the start of 2008/2009 assessment procedures.
December 2008 - January 2009 or as soon as allocations are received	<p>All external verifiers must contact their allocated centres.</p> <p>This should be done, in the first instance, through the named centre contact. The centre contact should put the external verifier in touch with the appropriate programme manager. Contact should be made immediately with the programme manager and arrangements made for the conduct of the National Standards Sampling (NSS) activity. See on external verifier 'Toolkit' CD ROM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External verifiers should discuss and agree with the programme manager the selected units for NSS and the date for a visit or postal sampling as appropriate. External verifiers should request the programme manager to send the assignment brief(s) for the selected unit(s), so that a preliminary check can be made on the fitness of purpose of the brief(s). Feedback should be given within 10 working days by telephone or by email.
End of December 2008	Centre QNs must check that the CRA visit assessment or self assessment arrangements, as appropriate, are in place for their centre to ensure that risk assessment has been or is to take place.

January 2009 onwards	<p>External verifiers should encourage their centres to produce the samples at the earliest opportunity in case remedial action is required. NSS visits to take place as soon as possible where appropriate.</p> <p>If required, re-sampling of Selected Units should be agreed and sent by post.</p>
February 2009 onwards	<p>Programmes with IVAs: IVA points reporting sheets for learners completing IVAs in the current academic year despatched to centres for return by 30 June 2009.</p>
By 28 February 2009	<p>QNs should check that risk assessment has taken place and that all Managing Assessment Risk actions are being promptly addressed. By 28 February 2009, the CRA visit should be completed.</p>
End of March 2009 - May 2009	<p>Centre quality nominees to check arrangements are in place for every programme area title to ensure NSS sampling has/is taking place and that if appropriate, second samples have been identified and remedial action put in place.</p> <p>External verifiers to complete resample.</p>
By 31 May 2009	<p>External verifiers to ensure all NSS has been COMPLETED and decisions reported to Edexcel.</p>
By 31 May 2009	<p>All "Managing Assessment Risk" actions listed in the CRA report to be completed within three months from the date of the report or by this date whichever is the shorter period.</p>
By 5 July 2009	<p>Final date for Online submission of results to ensure certification for August.</p>

Centres have been advised that adherence to the timetable, including supplying Edexcel with timely and accurate data, is vital if certificates are required for August 2009. Additional fees are charged for late registrations and additional work incurred by Edexcel. If the deadlines are not met, Edexcel cannot guarantee certification in August 2009.

4 Principles of BTEC Quality Assurance for 2008-2009

Edexcel's Responsibilities for Quality

Edexcel's Quality Management System

Edexcel operates a quality management system and the company is committed to quality. Everyone working for Edexcel is required to operate the Edexcel Quality Management System against the quality standard ISO 9001.

The BTEC Quality Model's quality assurance arrangements

Quality assurance arrangements ensure that a centre continues to meet its approval obligations. A centre that does not comply, or that is not meeting national standards for assessment, may be blocked from obtaining any certification. Edexcel reserves the right to investigate any aspect of programme management or delivery, and to suspend a centre's ability to claim certification. The current quality model operates for all BTEC Level 2 and 3 and BTEC Level 1 - 3 short course programmes. The model is in three phases:

Phase 1: Centre and Qualification Approval

Appropriate programme approval must be sought from Edexcel prior to a centre operating any BTEC programme.

Phase 2: Centre Risk Assessment (CRA)

Approval gives centre staff a degree of professional autonomy and discretion in the delivery and management of BTEC programmes. CRA monitors the centre's ability to manage and control the risks inherent with internal assessment. CRA is either undertaken by an Edexcel risk assessor or by the centre itself: the former uses a visit assessment format, the latter online self assessment. Further information on CRA can be found in the CRA Centre Briefing 2008-09.

Phase 3: National Standards Sampling (NSS)

This process assures the maintenance of national standards by the external verification of samples of assessed learner work. It is a process that has been used for a number of years, and for NQF BTEC qualifications the process has proved to be an effective method of ensuring that national standards are being maintained.

Quality Issues

A quality issue is defined as any situation where provision does not appear to meet Edexcel's requirements. This could include:

- serious variations from national standards
- quality issues referred to Edexcel through other sources
- assessment malpractice (see Section 8: Guidance on Policies).

Should instances of irregular claims for certificates arise, BTEC Quality Operations will be contacted immediately.

The process

Identified quality issues are dealt with by a number of different people:

- The external verifier.
- The entry level lead verifier.
- Entry level BTEC Sector Manager.
- Qualifications Manager.
- Quality Standards.

The majority of issues are likely to be resolved quickly by the external verifier working closely with the entry level lead verifier and/or the entry level BTEC Sector Manager within the BTEC Assessment department in Edexcel.

If national standards are not being met the external verifier must record on the report form:

- a block to certification
- provide the rationale for blocking certification
- outline the required corrective action
- agree and record a re-sampling date.

Appeals

If the centre disagrees with the findings of the external verifier, the centre quality nominee has the right to contact the Entry level BTEC Sector Manager. (Contact details can be found in Appendix 1).

The Edexcel *Appeal Policy* is on the website www.edexcel.org.uk.

Quality standards

Where serious quality issues are identified, the quality standards team within BTEC Assessment will:

- contact the centre to discuss and investigate issue(s) raised
- record any action and give feedback to the external verifier
- involve the entry level lead verifier if the problem is subject specific
- notify the entry level BTEC Sector Manager and record action taken
- arrange and approve the involvement of the entry level lead verifier if appropriate
- maintain a record of all quality issues and the action taken to resolve them
- review the problem and the recommendations made.

Where serious quality issues are identified, the manager responsible for quality standards within BTEC Assessment will:

- review the quality issues record
- consider informing the regulator and compliance and quality team within Edexcel as appropriate
- authorise closure of the quality issues record when the issue is resolved
- agree any corrective action necessary in the future
- if necessary, review the possible withdrawal of approval.

5 Approval, Registration, Certification and Centre Management

Edexcel Centre Information Manual September 2008-August 2009

In order to ensure that learner's achievement can be formally recognised, a centre needs to check the approval status of the BTEC programmes they are delivering and to ensure that Edexcel's registration and certification processes are adhered to. The Centre Information Manual provides the guidance information regarding these matters.

Approval

Centres can only operate BTEC programmes if both the Centre and Qualification Approval requirements have been met.

Information on this can be found in the Guidance on Gaining Centre & Qualification Approval for Entry to Level 3 NQF BTEC Programmes.

www.edexcel.org.uk/sfc/feschools/centre-recog/nqf/

Meeting Local Needs (MLN)

Centres are able to replace certain units in BTEC qualifications in line with the needs of local employers. There are rules on which units can be replaced and further guidance can be found online: [MLN1_Guidance](#).

Applying to include MLN units can be done online upon completion of the approval of a qualification. The potential to add MLN units is limited as follows:

- BTEC National Diploma - 4 units
- BTEC National Certificate - 2 units
- BTEC National Awards - 1 unit
- BTEC First Diploma - 1 unit.

Centre Types

A number of centre types arise out of the approval process. In turn, this will determine the arrangement a centre has to make to satisfy Edexcel's quality monitoring.

Single Site Centre

- This currently provides the operational base line in respect of approval for BTEC qualifications. All Edexcel approval types and processes have developed from this centre type.
- In definition, one organisation operating at one location.
- This process is supported by known approval processes that have developed over time.

Multi site

- Multi site centres are an extension of the classic single centre type, where a centre operates on more than one site. This may arise through the growth of a single organisation, or the merger of two or more organisations. Particularly in the latter case there may be issues relating to centre number usage and the re-organisation of programme delivery, assessment, and quality structure patterns.
- A multi site centre is one that has more than one site from which teaching and assessment of a BTEC programme takes place. Delivery and assessment should be consistent across the sites.
- Multi site centres should function as a single centre with one centre number and one approval for each programme. To vary from this the centre must consult with Edexcel's BTEC Assessment team who specifically agree for a variation of this practice. The Quality Nominee role is central to the multi site approach.

Collaborative Partnership (formally referred to as Franchise arrangements)

- Collaborative partnership arrangements are typically between two centres: a host centre (the collaborator) and the collaborating centre. This might be a college collaborating with a school, where the school will deliver the College's programme to a group of learners.
- The collaborator must have centre approval and have BTEC qualification approval for the BTEC programme to be collaboratively partnered.
- The collaborator takes full responsibility for all issues of quality and delivery for the collaborating centre and operates all administrative functions. It retains ownership of the programme and responsibility for the interface with BTEC Assessment.
- The two centres should draw up a clear agreement which defines all operational issues, with clear lines of responsibility within it.
- The collaborating centre can either provide its own staffing and resources, or use those of the collaborator.
- All learners registered on programmes are through the collaborator.
- The collaborator has sole responsibility for all registered learners at all times.

Consortia

- Consortia have common consortium programme numbers. Centres manage their own learners and learners are registered with the centre using each individual centre's name and number. The lead centre acts as the co-ordinator for quality assurance purposes in terms of operating the programme across the consortium.
- Centres involved in a consortium approval are equal partners. There is a federated approach to delivery and quality administration, but one centre will act as the lead centre and the key point of contact with Edexcel.
- The key features which differentiate this from a collaborative partnership approval are:

- there is a lead centre that acts as the administrative centre responsible for coordination and liaison with Edexcel but each centre has equal responsibility of quality, delivery and assessment
- the approved programmes operated by the consortium centres are common to the consortium; the programme title and number are common
- the learners are registered and certificates claimed by the centre “owning” the learners
- a quality issue that leads to a block of certification will be applied to all consortium members .
- The consortium approval process is in two parts: (a) a standard form outlining the centres participating and naming the lead centre; (b) a joint agreement setting out the quality and management responsibilities of the consortium.
- The lead centre is responsible for ensuring that the consortium operates the joint agreement and for external verification liaison and coordination.

Centre Type and BTEC Quality Assurance Arrangements

Where a centre operates from multiple sites, or is the member of an Edexcel collaborative partnership or consortium, there may need to be a variation of arrangements for CRA and NSS. In 2008/09, Consortia and Collaborative CRA’s have been discontinued. All CRA assessments will be for single centres. Where a centre is part of an Edexcel consortia or a collaborative partnership, then these aspects of their operation will be dealt as part of the centre’s CRA. Where a centre operates from more than one site, then the CRA will include a consideration of the centre quality systems in place at all sites. This may require more time to be spent on the risk assessment. The NSS sample may need to include all participating sites or centres; as such the sample may need to be larger. Any changes required will be negotiated between the AA and the centre QN when the quality monitoring is being arranged.

For centre arrangements for NSS, please see the Centre Briefing for NSS.

For centre arrangements for CRA, please see the Centre Briefing for CRA.

Registration

Edexcel requires that all new learners are registered at the beginning of their programme of study. Learners that follow a standard teaching year beginning in September must be registered by November 1st of that year; those starting at any other time, must be registered within one month of commencement. The registration process enables the allocation of AAs to centres, and undue delay will hinder AA allocation, which can affect certification.

Programmes that do not follow the academic year

This refers to all programmes that:

- enrol learners at any time other than September/October (including roll-on roll-off programmes)
- are of less than one academic year duration.

Learners must be registered within one month of enrolment at the centre. Enrolment at the centre is defined as the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit of learning commences.

Programmes that follow the academic year

For programmes that follow the academic year, ie enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the registration deadline is 1st November 2008. Those centres which do not register by 1st November will incur a late fee.

Registration: estimating completion dates

At the time of registration, centres are asked to give an estimated completion date. These dates are used in relation to the allocation of external verifiers and external examiners and when there has been a change of specification.

Registration: programme numbers

Centres should check that the programme numbers being used for all programmes are those which match the programmes being delivered, particularly if registrations are submitted electronically.

Student Report Forms

Due to the rapid uptake of electronic results reporting, from September 2008, Edexcel will not automatically issue SRFs for students following registration, although centres will be able to request SRF's if required. In place of SRFs, results may be reported either by the submission of an EDI file (only available for centres using EIDFACT format EDI) or through Edexcel Online.

There will be a batch results reporting facility available on Edexcel Online, whereby a spreadsheet may be downloaded showing all students registered on a specified course and listing the units that the learners have undertaken. You will be then able to enter all learners' unit achievements on the same spreadsheet and upload into Edexcel Online.

UCAS SRFs will **not be issued** in May 2009 for learners following BTEC programmes at Level 3 and who are applying for higher education places. Instead it is intended that we will supply each centre with a listing of those learners

Transfer of programmes

A learner registration may be transferred between programmes and centres, for no extra fee, provided that the fee due for the new programme at the time of transfer is the same as, or less than, what was invoiced for the original registration. Where the fee for the programme the learner is transferring to is higher than that invoiced for on the original registration, an invoice will be issued for the difference between the two fees.

A transfer may only take place within the period of validity for the programme to which the learner is transferring, you must first determine whether programmes within the same level are compatible.

Certification

Certificates are issued weekly. Results must be submitted immediately following programme completion so that certificates can be issued as soon as possible. Edexcel reserves the right to withhold certificates if fees are outstanding at the time of despatch. Certification can be deferred, pending an external verifier or external examiner report that national standards are being met and that certification can take place.

Certification: Achieving a Qualification

Learner certification claims are normally required to be submitted within the timescale laid out in the Information Manual. Failure to meet these timescales can result in the delays in certification, which can hinder learner achievement. Timely certification, in turn, depends upon the centre following the guidelines for NSS and CRA.

Eligibility

Learners' eligibility is checked against the programme on which they are registered. To achieve a qualification, learners must:

- achieve sufficient units
- achieve a valid combination of units.

The programme manager must ensure that every learner undertakes units that will enable them to obtain a qualification. In particular, the centre must not substitute units from other qualifications or pathways unless Edexcel has issued an amended programme specification, or MLN units have been added to the qualification.

Compensation

To be awarded an overall qualification grade a learner must attempt the assessment for all units. For $\frac{1}{6}$ of the BTEC National Award, Certificate and Diploma where a learner has attempted the assessment of a unit(s) but has not achieved all of the criteria for a pass grade, the unit(s) are recorded as 'Unclassified' on the learner's Notification of Performance.

For a BTEC National Award, Certificate and Diploma to meet the requirements for the achievement of an overall qualification grade, learners must achieve a minimum of pass grades in $\frac{5}{6}$ of the total qualification size.

Some BTEC National Awards, Certificates or Diplomas are exempted from the completed unit policy because they are recognised as licence to practice qualifications.

This policy on completed units does not apply to a BTEC National Supplementary.

All other qualifications are subject to simple compensation, i.e. a learner is eligible to attain the qualification as a whole without achieving the minimum number of units in the qualification. A learner who achieves only five units on a First Diploma, 10 units on a National Certificate or 15 units on a National Diploma can still be eligible for a qualification, provided that:

- the units that are not achieved are reported as grade U

- the specified number of points has been achieved as per the published overall grading table.

Learners gaining a qualification, obtain a certificate showing the qualification grade and a Notification of Performance (NOP) listing the grades for each unit. The NOP includes units that were not achieved but were used to confirm eligibility for the qualification. These are shown as grade "Unclassified".

Overall grading of qualifications

All NQF BTEC Firsts and National qualifications have overall grading based on an aggregation of all unit grades. BTEC Short Courses do not have qualification grading.

The calculation of overall grades is carried out by the Edexcel computer system, and is based on the best available combination of units if the learner has achieved more than the minimum, by addition and application of the thresholds in the published tables. (These can be found on the Edexcel website www.edexcel.org 'Recording your achievement document').

- One overall grade is awarded for each six unit qualification.
- Two overall grades for a twelve unit qualification.
- Three overall grades for an eighteen unit qualification.
- The overall grade is calculated using points for individual units.

For Integrated Vocational Assignment (IVA) units, the number of points awarded by the centre will be used to calculate both a grade for the unit(s) and an overall grade. Generally IVAs are double-weighted and carry up to 12 points for each unit of the IVA.

The overall grades awarded are as follows:

- for a 3 unit qualification: P or M or D
- for a 6 unit qualification: P or M or D
- for a 12 unit qualification: PP, PM, MM, MD, DD
- for an 18 unit qualification: PPP, PPM, PMM, MMM, MMD, MDD, DDD.

From 2006 newly accredited BTEC Firsts will have a new top grade of D*.

From 2007 newly accredited BTEC Nationals will maintain the current grading system.

Unit certification

A learner registered for individual units, or one who fails to satisfy the criteria for a qualification, may request a Certificate of Achievement. This only lists units that have been achieved and shows grades as pass, merit or distinction.

Where internally assessed units are reported for a learner and an award or Certificate of Achievement is not claimed, an interim Notification of Performance (NOP) is issued.

6 Responsibilities placed on Centres by Edexcel Quality Assurance Requirements

Introduction

The professional autonomy and discretion approval gives to BTEC teachers ensures that many learners receive a more personalised programme of learning. An important feature of this is the degree of local programme management. As part of this, centres must take responsibility for ensuring that they are monitoring the progress and outcomes of NSS and CRA across all NQF BTEC programmes. Normally the Quality Nominee will undertake this function.

Centres are required to:

- have both centre and qualification approval prior to enrolling learners on to the programme
- ensure all new learners are registered with Edexcel when they join the programme
- ensure all PATs meet the annual quality monitoring requirements for CRA
- ensure all PATs meet the sampling requirements for NSS
- ensure all certification claims are correct.

Role of Centre Staff

Quality nominee and their team

Each centre is asked to appoint a member of staff as the Quality Nominee for BTEC provision. This person is the main point of contact for Edexcel information related to BTEC programme quality assurance. The Quality Nominee will receive details about the appointment of external verifiers and will be requested to liaise with the appropriate programme managers and internal verifiers, and to ensure that external verifiers are able to carry out their role.

Quality nominee as a focus for reports

Edexcel now uses online reporting for all CRA and NSS activity. Assessment associates will submit reports directly online via EOL. Centres can access reports solely through their centre EOL account. This may have internal implications for the dissemination of electronic reports and for the way in which read only access to EOL is organised. If a visit has taken place there should be no variation between what is said at this feedback and the content of the report. The centre should ensure that they understand the content of the report and can make contact with the assessment associate to clarify this. Both CRA and NSS reports will be made available to the centre via EOL within ten working days of the activity. Some associates may wish to complete the report at the centre and Edexcel would welcome the cooperation of the centre in making this possible.

Internal verifier

The internal verifier checks the quality of assignment briefs and the validity and consistency of assessment decisions across all assessors.

Programme manager

The programme manager is responsible for:

- the management of the qualification
- ensuring that all tutors are familiar with the appropriate guidance documentation and assessment information
- meeting the external verifier and risk assessor if appropriate
- preparing all NSS materials and where a visit takes place for NSS arranging for a suitable room for the external verifier to use for the NSS
- arranging the feedback to the teaching team following NSS or CRA
- providing appropriate documentation and evidence that explains the quality monitoring system in place for risk assessment.

The quality nominee and programme manager must ensure that all tutors, assessors and those undertaking internal verification have access to:

- the full programme specification
- relevant information from this handbook and other policy documents issued by Edexcel.

Administrative Notes for Programme Managers

Examination officers normally deal with the administrative arrangements for registration and certification of learners using the guidance given in the *Information Manual*. This section is aimed at programme managers and identifies key pitfalls that can cause certification problems.

When registering learners, programme managers should check that a complete list of learners has been submitted and that the examinations officer has been provided with estimated completion dates.

Upon the confirmation of registration, the programme details and the completion dates should be checked. Note that similar titles may have different structural requirements. If this is the first year of operation for a particular NOF BTEC programme, the programme number should be checked against the approval letter and programme definition to ensure that it is the correct one.

Examinations officer

The examinations officer registers learners for each programme and is responsible for ensuring that all learners' grades are submitted through Edexcel Online for certification to take place. Edexcel communicates with the examinations officer for all aspects of learner administration.

Centre Communications with Edexcel

Effective communication between Edexcel and its centres is important, in order to ensure that the time schedules for quality monitoring are maintained. Edexcel communicates with its centres through both letter and email and this requires the centre maintains accurate details of its main contacts on the Edexcel Online system.

7 Information Available

Edexcel communicates through the centre BTEC Quality Nominee or, for administration and certification information, through the examinations officer. Edexcel does not issue any information directly to programme managers. However, a variety of qualification specifications, policy documents, and information books are produced to assist teaching teams.

Programme specifications and Edexcel publications

Relevant copies of the guidance and unit specification for each BTEC programme may be downloaded from the Edexcel website www.edexcel.org.uk, following the Qualifications quick link: www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications

BTEC Handbooks, Briefings, and Guides

Edexcel provides three types of explanatory books to assist centres manage BTEC programmes:

- Handbooks - provide basic operational information set out to enable the centre to management quality monitoring. The two key documents here are **Centre Handbook: NQF Quality Assurance 2008/2009; Signposts to Quality**.
- Briefings - there is a **CRA Briefing 2008/2009**, and **NSS Briefing 2008/2009**, which outlines the detailed processes and requirements that centres need to meet in order to conform with the that Edexcel quality monitoring.
- Guides - a range of documents, including **Centre Guide to Assessment Planning Design and Delivery**, and **BTEC Centre Risk Assessment: Risk Controls Guide 2008/2009**, giving further guidance on programme delivery and quality assurance requirements.

8 Guidance on Policies

The Edexcel website www.edexcel.org.uk includes detailed policies which address many of the issues and situations Assessment Associates and centres may meet when dealing with all types and levels of BTEC and NVQ qualifications. This section appears in all the BTEC & NVQ qualification handbooks.

Appeals

The Edexcel *Appeals Policy* (04-07) applies to BTEC and NVQ qualifications.

In summary, the policy states that Edexcel will only consider an appeal from a centre after the centre's own internal appeals procedure has been exhausted. Edexcel will only consider appeals submitted by the head of centre or principal and only where:

- a centre disagrees with the outcomes of the Edexcel external quality assurance process
- a centre questions an approval or qualification decision made by Edexcel
- a candidate considers that a decision continues to disadvantage them even after the outcome of the centre's internal appeals procedure.

Edexcel expects that most appeals from candidates will be resolved within the centre. Only after the centre's internal appeals process has been exhausted can appeals concerning individual learners be made through the learner's centre by the head of centre or principal.

Edexcel will consider appeals at three possible stages:

- Quality Review Panel
- Quality Standards Panel
- Independent Appeals Panel.

The outcome of the Independent Appeals Panel will be final, with no further right of appeal beyond this stage.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

The Edexcel *Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)* (06-14) applies to all Edexcel qualifications.

APL is an assessment process which enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. The policy document provides:

- definitions of key terms and a detailed overview of the APL process
- guidance on establishing an APL system within a centre, covering recruitment and marketing issues, mapping achievement, providing evidence and assessing an APL claim
- documents for mapping achievement and providing witness testimonies.

Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of APL is acceptable for accrediting part of a unit(s) or complete qualification. Evidence for APL must be:

- authentic (clearly generated by the candidate)

- current (usually within the last two years)
- relevant (relating to the standard to be proved)
- sufficient (enough to meet the required standards).

Centres are expected to establish their own APL guidance, in line with Edexcel policy, for their assessors and internal verifiers.

Assessment Malpractice

The Edexcel *Policy on Assessment Malpractice* (06-13) applies to all BTEC and NVO programmes.

The policy provides a definition of malpractice, examples of what constitutes malpractice by both candidates and centre staff and positive steps that can be taken to prevent or reduce candidate malpractice.

Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or damages the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification. Edexcel reserves the right to impose sanctions and/or penalties on candidates or centres where incidents or attempted incidents of malpractice have been proven.

Distance Assessment

The Edexcel *Policy on Distance Assessment* (03-02) covers all qualifications where there is summative internal assessment. Candidates on distance learning qualifications should have the right to expect equal opportunities to succeed when compared with those candidates attending a centre. There is an expectation upon centres that they must quality assure qualifications and assessment to ensure that common standards apply regardless of the mode of study.

The policy defines distance assessment and states that it may be employed for any Edexcel qualification, unless a contrary decision has been made by the regulator. It stresses that use of distance assessment should not reduce the validity of the assessment.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

The Edexcel *Policy on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for BTEC and Edexcel NVO Qualifications* (RA&SC 06-12) sets out how Edexcel complies with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* and its subsequent amendments.

Edexcel aims to facilitate access to BTEC and NVO qualifications for candidates who are eligible for reasonable adjustments in assessments without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being measured. **Reasonable adjustment** comprises (pre assessment) and **special consideration** (post assessment).

Reasonable adjustments include adjustments to assessment based on the candidate's history of need and provision. Access arrangements are intended to increase access to assessment but must not compromise the standard of assessment. Edexcel expects that centres will apply access arrangements internally on a systematic and considered basis; only in certain cases would application to Edexcel for approval be appropriate. Examples of access arrangements listed in the policy document include:

- readers
- scribes
- practical assistants
- prompters
- use of British Sign Language (BSL)
- modified papers/assignments.

The policy states that centres should always recruit with integrity and ensure that candidates have appropriate information and advice on their selected qualification and how it will meet their needs. The recruitment process should include assessment of the suitability of potential candidates and arrangements for advising candidates if they may not be able to demonstrate attainment in all parts of the assessment.

Special consideration is an adjustment to a candidate's grades and is normally given by applying an allowance with respect to an assessment undertaken when the candidate was adversely affected by personal difficulties. Examples of special considerations listed in the policy document include:

- terminal illness
- bereavement of a family member
- serious and disruptive domestic crisis
- incapacitating illness
- severe accident
- recent traumatic experience
- lost/damaged work.

Applications for reasonable adjustments or special consideration should be made by centres directly to Edexcel, using forms RA1/SC1 available from the Edexcel website.

Assessment Associates should note that this policy replaces the previous Edexcel policy *Access Arrangements and Special Considerations for BTEC and Edexcel NVQ Qualifications* (04-011).

Electronic Assessment

The Edexcel *Policy on Electronic Assessment* (03-03) sets out the criteria for using electronic assessment for Edexcel qualifications and for implementing appropriate quality assured operating procedures covering validity of assessment, authenticity of candidate evidence, security of materials and evidence and audit trails.

Electronic assessment is defined as any or all of the recording, transmission, presentation and subsequent processing of assessment materials and evidence using computers and associated hardware. Besides textual evidence, the medium extends to include evidence such as digital videos of performances, digital photographs and digital audio records of oral work.

Electronic assessment may be used for any Edexcel qualification unless a contrary decision has been made by the regulator.

The policy covers equality of opportunities, operational issues and practical considerations relating to electronic assessment.

APPENDIX 1: Glossary

BTEC Registration and Certification Services (BRACS)

BRACS register learners and issue learners' certificates on achievement of a qualification.

AA Deployment Team (formerly VAT)

This team is responsible for the appointment of both risk assessors and external verifiers following registration and will notify the centre quality nominee of the contact details for both external verifiers and risk assessors once appointed.

BTEC Risk Assessors

Each centre having a visit assessment will have a risk assessor allocated where a CRA visit is due. A risk assessor will risk assess both centre systems and nominated PATs. The risk assessor has responsibility to make contact with the centre BTEC quality nominee initially. Risk assessors will often communicate using email and telephone and centres should keep their centre contact details up to date to facilitate this process.

BTEC Lead Risk Assessors

Lead risk assessors provide advice and support to risk assessors in all aspects of risk assessment activities.

BTEC External Verifiers

Each programme will have an external verifier allocated once registrations have been made. An external verifier will cover a PAT. The external verifier has responsibility to make contact with the centre BTEC quality nominee initially. External verifiers will often communicate using email and telephone and centres should keep their centre contact details up to date to facilitate this process.

BTEC Lead Verifiers

Lead verifiers provide advice and support to external verifiers in their own particular programme area. For NSS purposes, each PAT area will have at least one LV in place and in some cases several, whilst CRA has a single Lead Risk Assessor.

BTEC Sector Managers (BSMs)

The BTEC Sector Manager's role is to oversee the selection, recruitment, training and management of external verifiers and lead verifiers; provide support and advice on the interpretation and application of specifications (in conjunction with lead verifiers) to external verifiers and centres.

BTEC Quality Managers (QMs)

BTEC Quality Managers monitor the progress of AAs activities at each centre. They ensure that programmes with NSS Blocks are attended to quickly and improvement plans put in place to rectify the position. In addition, Quality Managers ensure any centre quality issues are appropriately addressed. They manage the CRA process and ensure that all centres risk assessments are carried out. A BTEC Quality Manager is allocated to each BTEC centre. They provide advice and guidance of all aspects of quality operations of BTEC programmes.

Curriculum Development Managers (CDMs)

Each centre has a Curriculum Development Manager who can provide general qualification advice and guidance across all qualifications.

Contact Details

Most staff can be contacted via:

BTEC Assessment

Edexcel

190 High Holborn

London

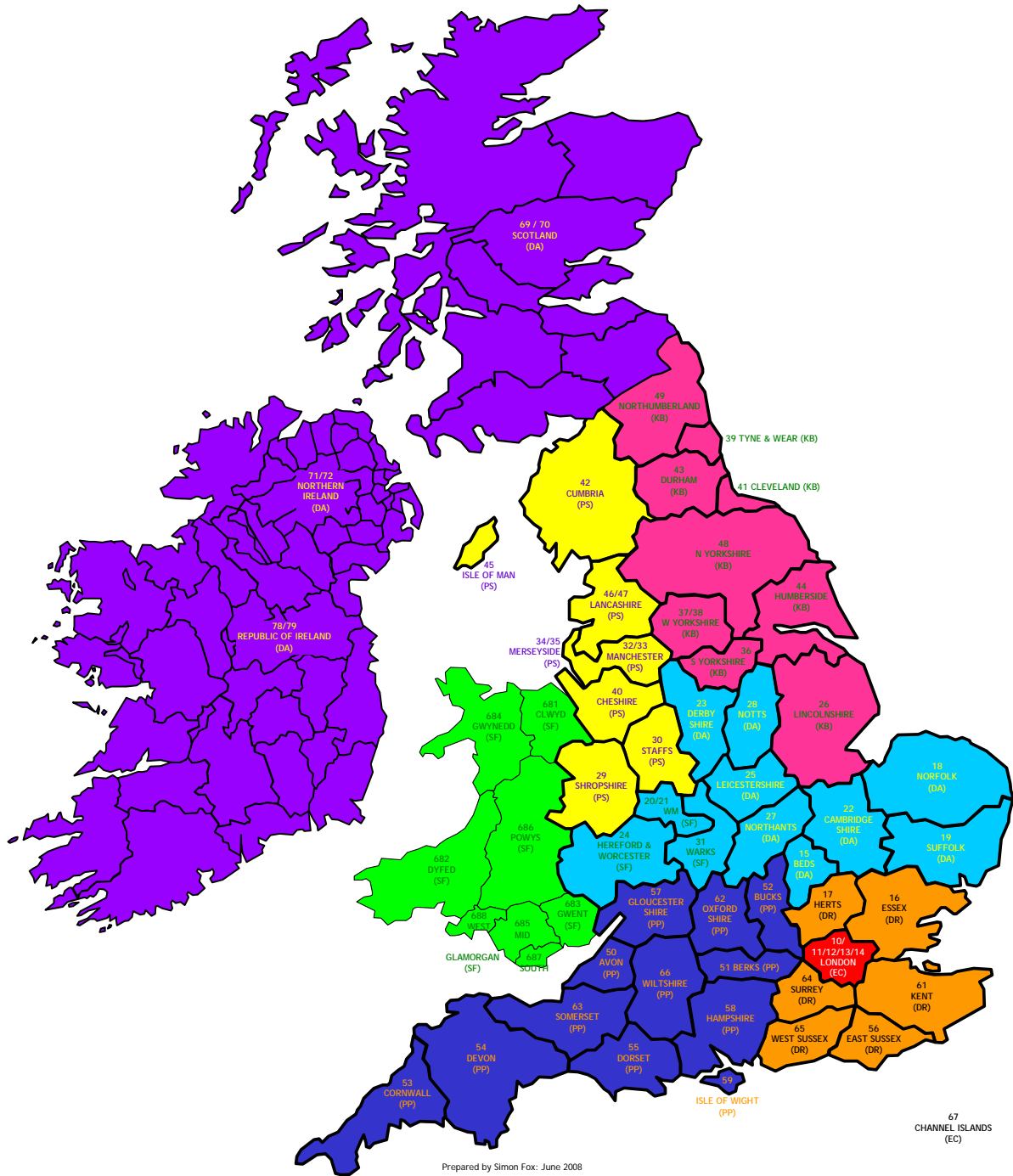
WC1V 7BH

Contact with Edexcel staff can also be made by telephone, 0844 576 0026 or by emailing enquiries@edexcel.org.uk, giving the subject title, centre name and number in the email subject box and indicating clearly the nature of the query.

Regional Offices

For details of regional offices, please refer to the website www.edexcel.org.uk or the *Information Manual* Contact Information section.

APPENDIX 2: BTEC Quality Manager Contacts by Region



Quality Manager		Region	Regional Centre Range	Additional Centre Range
DA	Denise.Augar@edexcel.org.uk	East England, Scotland, Ireland	15 18 19 22 23 25 27 28 69 70 71 72 78 79	000 - 021
KB	Keith.Brooker@edexcel.org.uk	North East	26 36 37 38 39 41 43 44 48 49	022 - 037
EC	Elizabeth.Crofts@edexcel.org.uk	Greater London, Channel Islands	10 11 12 13 14 67	038 - 043
SF	Simon.Fox@edexcel.org.uk	West Midlands, Wales	20 21 24 31 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688	044 - 060
PP	Pam.Phillippo@edexcel.org.uk	South West	50 51 52 53 54 55 57 58 59 62 63 66	061 - 071
DR	Dave.Roberts@edexcel.org.uk	South East	16 17 56 61 64 65	072 - 087
PS	Paul.Sneade@edexcel.org.uk	North West	29 30 32 33 34 35 40 42 45 46 47	088 - 099