

# Preparing for the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) for BTEC Qualifications in September 2010

This is the third in a series of leaflets preparing you for new quality assurance arrangements for BTEC First and National programmes and for Foundation Learning from September 2010.

In the last leaflet we shared with you the detail about Quality Review and Development, which comprises an annual visit to every centre by a Centre Quality Reviewer, to explore with you how standards are maintained across all your BTEC programmes.

In this communication we will introduce the new arrangements for how Edexcel will ensure standards in assessment of every programme. We propose to achieve this through:

- Accreditation of Lead Internal Verifiers – *Confidence in assessing to the standards*
- Standards verification – *Checking practice, supporting standards*

In order to make our interactions with you clear and simple we group similar programmes together. We will be dividing all our BTEC provision into Principal Sectors and within each of these will be a number of Principal Subject Areas (PSA). All the programmes that a centre offers in a PSA will be treated as a single group for accreditation and standards verification. We are issuing a listing of all the new sectors separately.



## Key message for Examinations Officers:

If you are the Administrator for Edexcel Online, you will get requests from programme managers to become Lead Internal Verifiers for the OSCA1 and OSCA2 systems. Make sure you know how to check and deal with these internal requests. If you need support please contact Edexcel.

## Accreditation – Confidence in Assessing to the Standards

Accreditation is a new opportunity for Lead Internal Verifiers (Lead IVs) to demonstrate competence in ensuring assessment meets national standards through internal verification. This gives both the centre and Edexcel confidence in the centre's ability to maintain standards for the programmes in a Principal Subject Area. We have piloted this approach very successfully with a range of BTEC programmes and we are now able to extend the benefits of this approach to all BTEC programmes.

## What is a Lead IV?

A Lead IV is a person designated in a centre who takes overall responsibility for the assessment and quality assurance of a Principal Subject Area (for example BTEC Firsts and Nationals in Business, or BTEC First and Level 1 in Hospitality). This person will be:

- someone with the authority to oversee assessment outcomes, ideally this would be the Programme Manager as this would normally be a key part of their role
- directly involved in the assessment/delivery of a programme, so that they understand the units
- able to co-ordinate across assessors and other internal verifiers for a Principal Subject Area.

There can only be one Lead IV for each Principal Subject Area. The Lead IV has the overall check for the co-ordination of internal verification and the standard of assessment. We are giving this clearer status in order to have the expertise and importance in ensuring internal quality assurance related to this role recognised.



## How does accreditation work for a Lead IV?

Edexcel will provide, free of charge, specific induction training for every Lead IV that is related to the role and to the accreditation process. Individuals will be invited to book onto an event, which will be delivered online at a time to suite individual needs without the need for travel or cover. This will only need to be undertaken the once.

Following induction the Lead IV will undertake a standardisation activity through an online process; this will be available at varying times throughout the year to suit the individual and the centre. Success in this activity demonstrates understanding of the role and competence in maintaining assessment standards. A competent Lead IV will be given accredited status for a period of up to 3 years; after that time a renewal of accreditation would take place.

Where a Lead IV is unsuccessful in the accreditation activity a Standards Verifier will be allocated to undertake monitoring of assessment outcomes via postal sampling. Centres should not worry if this happens; it doesn't mean that there is anything wrong and the Standards Verifier will be able to guide you.

Our online accreditation system is called "OSCA2"; many of you will already be familiar with "OSCA1" (BOSCA). If you are not already using our online materials please register through Edexcel Online. The administrator for your centre for Edexcel online can give access, this is often the Exams Officer.

## What are the benefits of accreditation?

An accredited Lead IV is recognised by Edexcel as being a trusted partner, that is, someone who is able to drive and maintain standards. So long as the Lead IV retains accreditation and continues in the role, the centre will have part of the clearance to certificate, without the need to have assessment monitored by a Standards Verifier. The other part, being a successful outcome to the annual Quality Review and Development visit.

## Is it difficult to gain accreditation?

We have been using accreditation with BTEC WorkSkills and it has been very popular. The process of registering and completing the exercises has been very straightforward and centres have told us how useful it has been.

Of course not every centre will gain accreditation immediately and we expect a high level of understanding from those that do. Through Standards Verifiers we are able to focus our support on those that need it. A Lead IV will be accredited after standards verification if the processes confirms that standards are being rigorously maintained.

What we do know is that the people who are most likely to be successful in gaining accreditation are those who complete the induction and give themselves enough time to do both the practice materials and the assessed materials well before the deadline date.

## Standards verification – Checking practice, supporting standards

Standards verification is the way in which we check that centres are operating quality assurance and assessing to the right standards. It is similar to external verification and national standards sampling (NSS). We are introducing some improvements to make it better for centres. Standards Verifiers will work with centres to support them in demonstrating that they are working to the standards.

## Why are we using Standards Verifiers?

We want to use a similar term across all the types and levels of programmes that we operate and a consistent approach to programmes of the same type. There are some important changes of style and detail – and so we are highlighting that things have changed. Of course sampling assessments, assessment decisions and assessment records will be broadly the same.

## How does standards verification take place?

Standards verification takes place in two ways:

- when a Lead IV has not gained accreditation
- through the monitoring of programmes, based on risk, where there is an accredited Lead IV.

We will monitor some Principal Subject Areas in some centres each year based on risk. The purpose of this is to ensure that the accredited Lead IV is continuing to ensure appropriate assessment and standards. The normal outcome would be that the Lead IV would maintain accreditation. If, as a result of standards verification it was clear that standards were not being maintained then the Lead IV would lose the accredited status and would have to re-take the online standardisation via "OSCA2" the following year.

At the end of each standardisation period, centres that have not been successful in gaining accreditation will be allocated to a standards verifier and will agree a timescale for the provision of an appropriate sample.



## Why does standards verification not apply to every programme every year?

We have listened to what centres have told us about the need for them to have access to guidance at the outset of the programme and we are investing in providing, in addition to excellent support materials, assurance that every centre has been checked using standardised materials. This is a powerful and effective way of helping centres to get it right at the outset.

We will continue to monitor and support standards in a variety of ways including Quality Review and Development, Standards Verification and interventions through Regional Quality Managers. Our new senior AA teams will be focussing strongly on standards in centres, which will mean we are able to provide clearer direction on standards directly to centres.

We know that when we show centres how to "get it right" they are able to deliver with confidence.

## Key message for Quality Nominees

You will need to know who the Lead Internal Verifiers are for Principal Sector Areas that you are running. You will need to check that they are completing induction and accreditation. When we appoint a Standards Verifier you will be told first. The Centre Quality Reviewer will want to discuss the management and communication for all the BTEC programmes during the annual Quality Review and Development visit.

## Diagram of how Quality Review and Development works



# Top Tips for Lead Internal Verifiers

1. **Make sure you are familiar with OSCA1 – use the materials to help you to think about the verification process.**
2. **You will already be using internal assessment and verification records, but check whether the use may need to be adjusted to ensure that the Lead IV input is recorded.**
3. **You don't have to do everything. We use the term Lead IV to emphasise the importance of proper co-ordination of internal verification, but it is not a new function. This is a role that senior staff members within delivery teams have always undertaken.**
4. **You need to allow time for induction – one session – and then 4-6 hours to fully complete standardisation without rushing. This is all that is new. If completed successfully it is only completed every three years.**
5. **Read all the instructions for standardisation carefully and do the practice standardisation first; you can then use these materials with the whole team to help you instil a standardised approach to assessment.**
6. **You will need to be able to demonstrate standards through whole units and using work which has all been internally verified. Plan to set aside examples of work verified to different levels and grades.**

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