

# **BTEC Grading Review Sampling 2011-12**

## **Centre Briefing**



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## Introduction

In order to comply with ongoing regulatory requirements and to ensure that the assessment of learner achievement is to national standards, we are undertaking an enhanced form of BTEC Confirmation Sampling for a clearly defined group of Principal Subject Areas.

Grading Review Sampling is based on centres where 30% or more of the last two years' NQF BTEC Level 3 National Diploma cohorts achieved the highest grade of DDD.

If your programmes are included in Grading Review Sampling, please be assured that we are not suggesting that there is any issue with assessment of your BTEC programmes, but we need to ensure that our quality assurance processes are supporting accurate and standardised assessment, particularly at the higher grades. This process is also designed to recognise good practice and help use this information to further support the integrity and value of BTECs.

## Which qualifications does Grading Review Sampling cover?

- Sampling will cover learners from current BTEC Level 3 Nationals
- Grading Review will cover assessment records from your previous BTEC National cohort
- If you are selected for Grading Review Sampling, you will not be required to undertake Confirmation Sampling by a Standards Verifier in 2011-12.

## The visit

### Before the visit

- You will be contacted before the end of the Autumn term 2011 by a subject-specialist Grade Reviewer to arrange a one day visit to the specified programme area
- Before the visit, the Grade Reviewer will request:
  - a list of assessors for the largest BTEC National programme you run in the specified Principal Subject Area
  - the units they have assessed
  - a list of learners for each unit, showing achievement

### During the visit

- At the visit, your Grade Reviewer will:
  - undertake sampling of current BTEC National learners
  - review assessment records from last year's BTEC National cohort
  - provide verbal feedback at the end of the visit
- Visits should be completed before **31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**.

## After the visit

- The Grading Review Sampling Report will be completed within 10 working days of the visit and emailed to your Quality Nominee and our Quality Standards team
- If any follow up sampling is required, your Grade Reviewer will contact you to arrange this
- Any resample will be postal, unless you are informed otherwise

## The report

As this is a new process, specific to this academic year, the Grading Review Sampling report will not be available via Edexcel Online. The report will be completed electronically in Microsoft Word format and emailed to your Quality Nominee, with a copy sent to our Quality Standards team.

## The sample

- The sample will be from current learners – we recognise that you are not required to retain learner work once certificates have been claimed
- Samples should be from the largest BTEC National currently being delivered:
  - **Extended Diploma**
  - Or, if above is not delivered, **Diploma**
  - Or, if above are not delivered, **Subsidiary Diploma**
- Completed units should be looked at. Therefore, work can be from last year
- Every assessor should have work sampled
- The Grade Reviewer should be provided with a list of assessors and the units they have assessed, with learner lists showing achievement
- On the day of the visit, all portfolios should be made available for the units completed
- The Grade Reviewer will choose the sample from the portfolios presented, based on the information provided
- Sampling should be a minimum of one unit per assessor, with two learner samples from each
- Work selected should show Merit and Distinction achievement where possible
- Ideally, the overall sample should be between eight and twelve learner samples
  - If there are fewer than four assessors on the programme, more than two samples per assessor will be required
  - If there are more than six assessors on the programme, only one learner sample will be required for some of the assessors. The decision about which assessors then have a second learner sampled is at the discretion of the Grade Reviewer, based on the evidence of the first learner sample
- If any concerns are found, further learner samples may be requested
- While Assignment Briefs should be provided to give a context to the learner work, they will not be formally reported on. The emphasis here is on assessment, internal verification and certification procedures

## The grading review

At the visit, your Grade Reviewer will also look at the following information:

| Information  | Evidence source  |
|--|--|
| Assessment and internal verification records for the last BTEC National cohort – to be compared to the final certificate claims data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme team's assessment and internal verification records</li> <li>• Certification data provided by Edexcel</li> </ul>  |
| Procedure for recording and monitoring assessment and internal verification decisions on programme                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal evidence from programme team</li> <li>• Assessment / internal verification policies from centre</li> <li>• Evidence of internal verification schedule</li> </ul> |
| Procedure for completing and checking certificate claims   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written certification procedures, evidence from exams office / Quality Nominee, etc.</li> </ul>   |
| Most recent Quality Review & Development report and most recent Standards Verification or National Standards Sampling report         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Edexcel Online account</li> <li>• Please make these reports available to the Grade Reviewer</li> </ul>   |

The Grade Reviewer will use the following Quality Review & Development criteria to make judgements about the evidence:

- A.1.7** Maintain accurate and up to date records of learner progression and achievement in order to support the accurate sign off of learner achievement and certification claims.
- A.3.1** Store assessment records securely and safely.
- A.3.2** Maintain records of learner achievements that are up to date, regularly reviewed and tracked accurately against national standards
- A.3.3** Retain assessment records for centre and awarding body scrutiny for a minimum of three years following certification.
- A.3.4** Have current learner evidence available for centre and awarding body verification processes.
- A.5.3** Follow a procedure which ensures timely and accurate certification claims that are checked and verified against assessment records.
- A.5.4** Have a procedure for checking certificates received against assessment records, prior to issue.
- A.5.5** Investigate and report all inaccurate, early/late and fraudulent registrations or certification claims, via internal senior management, to us.

Grade Reviewer visits do not directly affect Quality Review & Development, though we recognise that there is some overlap. However, it's important to note that this is very focused on practice in one specified BTEC National programme: it is a much more specific drill down than the centre overview provided by Quality Review & Development.

## Outcomes of Grading Review Sampling

Outcomes of Grading Review Sampling are similar to Standards Verification. The report will recommend a certification **Release** or **Block**.

### Release

The Grade Reviewer agrees that:

- All assessment and internal verification decisions are correct
- internal verification procedures are effective
- Certificate claim procedures are robust
- Assessment and internal verification records for previous cohort tally with certificate claims

The Grade Reviewer may agree that standards are being maintained but offer recommendations on how to improve on good practice.

### Block

- The Grade Reviewer will agree a date for resampling and confirm the evidence required
- Depending on the reason for a certification block, there may be a variety of actions:

| Reason for blocking certification  | Action required   |
|--|---|
| Any assessment decision is incorrect   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resample, showing that assessment decisions have been amended</li> <li>• Extra sample of two more learners</li> </ul>  |
| Internal verification procedures are ineffective   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan to revise internal verification procedures (agreed and signed by Quality Nominee)</li> </ul>   |
| Certificate claim procedures are not robust  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan to revise certification procedures (agreed and signed by Quality Nominee)</li> </ul>   |
| Any evidence that assessment or internal verification records do not tally with certificate claims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan to revise monitoring of assessment and internal verification procedures (agreed and signed by Quality Nominee)</li> <li>• Action plan to provide support to assessors/programme team</li> </ul>                    |
| Centre is unable to provide sufficient evidence for the above                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan to revise procedures for storage and retention of assessment and internal verification records</li> <li>• Action plan to revise internal verification, monitoring, certification procedures as required</li> </ul> |
| Evidence of intentional assessment malpractice   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalate to Quality Standards as a Quality Issue</li> <li>• Remove Lead internal verification accreditation</li> </ul>   |

## Block at resample

If issues are not addressed at resample, either by agreed and signed action plan, or assessment/internal verification decisions still incorrect:

- your Regional Quality Manager will work with you to resolve the issues identified
- Lead Internal Verifier accreditation may be removed for the Principal Subject Area

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **When will we know if we are included?**

A communication has been sent, letting all centres running level 3 BTEC Nationals know that the process is happening. Centres involved will be told in December, once the Grade Reviewers have been recruited and trained. However, if you know that any of your programmes claimed 30% or more of BTEC National learners at DDD last year, you can expect them to be included.

### **We have robust assessment procedures and we know that our learners last year achieved DDD grades. Why are we being included?**

The decision to include Principal Subject Areas is based purely on the proportion of claims at DDD grade. We are not suggesting that you have done anything wrong. We are happy to report good practice where we find it. In fact, this helps us to confirm the integrity of BTEC qualifications.

### **We've already been approached by Edexcel to look at this. Why are you visiting us again?**

A small number of centres have been contacted by our Regulation & Standards team undertaking initial research in response to [Alps](#) data. Grading Review Sampling is part of our response to the results of that research. Inevitably, there will be some overlap and we're sorry if this causes you any inconvenience.

### **Will we also have to do Confirmation Sampling?**

No. This process is an enhanced form of confirmation sampling, so you won't be asked to do both in 2011-12.

### **Will the Grade Reviewer also look at our Level 1 and 2 BTECs?**

No. This process is specifically to look at higher achievement at Level 3. Therefore, the grade Reviewer won't ask to see Level 2 BTEC Firsts or Foundation Learning programmes.

### **How does this affect our Lead Internal Verifier?**

As with Confirmation Sampling, if everything is fine, your Lead Internal Verifier's accredited status is not affected. If we find minor issues with assessment, this also may not affect Lead Internal Verifier accreditation. However, if we find serious issues, removing Lead Internal Verifier accreditation may be one of the outcomes.

### **What if we don't have an accredited Lead Internal Verifier?**

All Principal Subject Areas should have an accredited Lead Internal Verifier, so if you don't have one yet, someone in the programme team should undertake online standardisation in 2011-12. Grading Review Sampling does not affect this.

## **How does this affect Quality Review & Development?**

You will still receive an annual visit from your Centre Quality Reviewer. However, this is a wide-ranging visit, which looks at the vocational provision across the whole of your centre and does not go into a great deal of detail for an individual programme. The Grade Reviewer will be looking in detail at the assessment and certification claims procedure for a specific BTEC National Diploma in 2010-11, so though there is a little overlap, we don't expect any particular problems. Centre Quality Reviewers will also be briefed that Grading Review Sampling is taking place.

## **What if we can't provide assessment and internal verification records for last year's cohort?**

It is already a requirement at approval that assessment records are kept for at least three years following certification. It is also a requirement to be able to make records and evidence available for awarding body scrutiny on request. Therefore, your programme team should be able to accommodate this.

## **We run Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) at Level 3. Therefore, we're being visited by a Standards Verifier anyway. How is this affected by Grading Review Sampling?**

In order to maintain occupational standards and comply with regulations for this sector, you will still have a visit from a Standards Verifier, who will look at all levels of provision. The Grade Reviewers will come from the same workforce and we are looking at how best to ensure that the two processes work together. We will make sure that you are kept informed when the allocations go out.