

# External Quality Assurance Sampling Strategy

April 2024

Version 5

Information Classification: Internal  
If printed this document becomes uncontrolled



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## 1. Introduction

This document serves as a comprehensive guide explaining the sampling strategy for VTCT qualifications where external quality monitoring is conducted by the team of external quality assurers and should be read in conjunction with VTCT Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) which refers to the arrangements Awarding Organisations (AOs) must have in place to scrutinise assessment judgements made by centres offering their qualifications. These arrangements are in place to mitigate the risks of delegating assessment judgements to centres.

VTCT external quality assurance monitoring activities are based on risk and unique to each centres risk factors. The risk is founded upon a thorough assessment of a range of risk variables ensuring the mitigation of any potential adverse effects to VTCT and include, but is not exclusive to:

- The centre type (e.g., publicly funded, limited company, sole trader, international).
- The duration of the centre's approval to offer VTCT qualifications.
- The types of qualifications approved for the centre.
- The number of sites and geographical area covered.
- The external quality assurance risk allocated from recent VTCT monitoring activities.
- The number of registered learners.
- Significant changes in the profile of the centre's registrations.
- Withdrawal of centres recognition by another awarding organisation.
- The type and timing of external monitoring activities conducted by VTCT.
- VTCT sanctions.
- Instances of malpractice or maladministration.
- Complaints reported to VTCT.
- Whether the centre has been approved for direct claims status at a qualification level.
- Franchise/partnership arrangements with other centres
- Information received from other awarding organisations or regulators and A8.7 notifications.

By strategically evaluating risk factors, VTCT can proactively identify areas of risk and implement targeted measures through additional external monitoring of centres. This risk-based approach enables VTCT to foster a robust quality assurance framework that upholds the reputation and reliability of VTCT qualifications.

### 1.1. Scope of the strategy

The sampling strategy applies to internal and external assessment that is assessed or marked by the centre. External assessment completed via VTCT's e-testing system (Linx2Achieve) fall outside of this strategy, as exams are automatically marked through the system, however VTCT will sample all associated examination documentation. External assessment that is externally moderated by VTCT falls outside of this strategy; VTCT will inform the centre of the sampling requirement for any such assessment within a qualification, for example, AM20530 VTCT Level 2 Certificate in Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy and Level 1/2 Technical Award in the Study of Hair and Beauty.

## 2. Internal and External Sampling Guidance

External Quality Assurance (EQA) plays a crucial role in VTCT qualifications. At the onset of each academic year, the VTCT QA assurance team evaluates the risk associated with each centre and assigns EQA monitoring activities accordingly using our CASS platform. However, VTCT continuously reassesses centre risks through monthly risk meetings. In instances where increased monitoring is warranted, VTCT may enhance sampling activities beyond minimum requirements. This proactive approach is essential for maintaining regulatory compliance and upholding quality standards, as mandated by our obligations.

### 2.1. Centre Sampling Guidance

As an essential component of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process, approved centres must ensure they have a robust and rigorous sampling strategy to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions, as well as the correct interpretation and application of qualification criteria by assessors.

IQA responsibility of sampling assessment decisions, aims to gather a sufficient sample size to ensure the quality assurance of assessment outcomes. While VTCT does not mandate a specific number or percentage of learners to be sampled, the following guidance is provided to assist centres in formulating their sampling strategies.

**Purpose and Objectives** - Clearly define the purpose of the sampling strategy for example ensuring the quality and consistency of assessment decision, identifying areas for improvement, or meeting VTCT and or the qualification requirements.

**Risk** - Risk identification and mitigation is essential, and centre should identify potential risks, challenges, and tailor the sampling strategy to address and mitigate potential issues. For example, increasing the level of sampling for a qualification in which the centre is delivering for the first time or amplify the level of sampling for unqualified assessors and new assessors.

**Sampling Methodology**- Consider the appropriate sample size and deliberate whether to sample all learners or a specific proportion, however the sample size needed to achieve the desired level of confidence in the assessment outcomes and support the consistent application of assessor's decision. Careful weighing the reasons behind choosing too lightly or heavily sample. Factors influencing this decision may include actions from previous External Quality Assurance (EQA) feedback, pinpointing areas for improvement within specific units.

**Frequency of Sampling**- Determine how often sampling activities will be conducted based on factors such as the frequency of assessments, the qualification duration. Sampling should be proportional and balanced and not restrictive.

**Evidence** - Thought should be given to types of evidence generated by the learners to demonstrate the qualification learning outcomes and assessment criteria and whether the sampling includes interim and summative sampling.

**Documentation and Record-keeping** - The centre is required to meticulously document and maintain records detailing all sampling activities and their outcomes, consideration should be given to this area. The centre must record and maintain the details and outcomes of all sampling activity and make these records available to the EQA.

In cases where the centre requires guidance or clarification regarding their sampling plan, they are encouraged to liaise with their EQA for assistance. For further information, please refer to IQA Guidance for VTCT Qualifications.

## 2.2. EQA Sampling Strategy

On behalf of VTCT the EQA will drive the sampling activity and will require access to assessments and records to satisfy themselves that all learners are being appropriately assessed and internally quality assured. To ensure a statistically representative sample VTCT would typically expect a sample of 10% of the learner registrations, with no fewer than three learners to be sampled at each EQA monitoring activity. Sampling size may increase on the day should the EQA identify risk. Typically, the EQA activity will be undertaken remotely or face-to-face.

The EQA will inform the centre, when arranging a visit, of the learners selected for sampling. This will allow the centre sufficient time to inform learners of the requirement to attend for the purpose of sampling. The EQA may also randomly sample learners being assessed on the day; this could include observing practical assessment and reviewing portfolio evidence.

Sampling will allow the EQA to check that the centre's assessment and internal quality assurance processes and decisions are consistent, sufficient, reliable, and effective and satisfy the EQA that they agree with the centre's recommendation for the certification of learners.

The EQA sample selection will be derived using the following criteria.

### 2.2.1. Sample selection

The EQA will select a random sample covering:

- assessment decisions of assessors
- assessment methods
- assessment locations
- learners at different stages of their qualification
- internal quality assurance decision of IQAs
- assessment records
- internal quality assurance records.

### 2.2.2. Sample size

The level of sampling will be influenced by several factors including but not exclusive to;

- risk rating of the centre
- risk from the last EQA monitoring activity
- size of the centre
- learner registrations
- learner characteristics
- qualification offering and risk
- number of assessors
- experience of assessors
- experience of the centres
- number and range of sites for assessment
- number and characteristics of Learners (e.g. access arrangements)
- range of assessment methods used by assessors

- direct claim status (DCS)
- staff turnover
- centre sanctions
- complaints received

### **2.2.3. Sampling internal assessment**

EQA sampling may include observing assessment, reviewing project and assignments and supplementary evidence, oral questioning or reviewing other supplementary evidence included in a learner's portfolio of evidence. The EQA will need to hold discussions with trainee and qualified Assessors, IQAs and Learners.

### **2.2.4. Sampling external assessment**

Where the centre is administering paper-based multiple-choice question papers, the EQA will sample a number of assessment papers sufficient to ensure that marking is consistent and accurate. Where e-testing (Linx2Achieve) is used, marking is completed by the system; therefore, a sample is not required. However, the EQA will sample the wrap around examination records.

For example, for a centre with 100 learners registered on the same qualification that is defined as Very Low risk a minimum sample size would be 10% and therefore 10 learners. For a centre with 100 learners registered on the same qualification that is defined as a Very High-Risk centre the sample size would be widened based on the areas of risk identified at the discretion of VTCT

Document amendment history page

Version	Document Owner	Issue Date	Changes	Role
1	Quality manager	August 2014	New document	Quality Administrator
2	Head of Quality	13/04/2017	Updated Branding	Quality administrator
2	Head of Quality	09/06/2017	Added document history	Quality Supervisor
2	Head of Quality	19/02/2019	Updated Branding	Compliance Manager
3	Quality Lead	08/07/2021	Updated ownership	Partnership Planning Manager
4	Head of Standards	11/05/2022	Updated ownership	Quality Assurance Administrator
5	Head of Standards	22/04/2024	Strategy refined	Quality Assurance Supervisor

Document Review

Role	Review Status
Quality Assurance Supervisor	Agreed
Head of Standards	Agreed

Document Owner

Document Owner	Document shared with
Head of Standards	

Document Sign-off

Role	Sign-off Date
Head of Standards	22/04/2024