



# **ECITB Awarding Organisation Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny and External Quality Assurance Strategy**

RV1-1

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## 1. Regulatory Requirements

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) is committed to providing a duty of care to all registered candidates and it is a requirement of the regulators (Ofqual, SQA Accreditation and Qualifications Wales) to have in place arrangements for the approval of centres delivering ECITB qualifications and for the management of the delivery of regulated qualifications by its approved centres and to ensure that the administrative obligations for centres are as clear and streamlined as possible. Therefore this document should be read in conjunction with:

- [ECITB Approval Procedure for VQ Approved Centre Status](#)
- [ECITB Approved Centre Handbook](#)

The purpose of this document is to:

- Set out the ECITB Awarding Organisations' external quality assurance monitoring arrangements of approved centres.
- Set out the ECITB Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny Strategy that is applied to all qualifications to ensure:
  - Assessment remains fit for purpose.
  - The criteria against which candidates' performance is differentiated are being applied accurately and consistently by assessors across each ECITB Approved Centre, regardless of the identity of the assessor, candidate or Centre.
  - Assessment is undertaken by Assessors who have been approved by ECITB and have no personal interest in the outcome of that assessment.
- Inform Approved Centres about their commitments related to post approval monitoring.
- Inform approved centres about the support and service they can expect from the ECITB Awarding Organisation.

Approved Centres must comply with any ECITB Awarding Organisation requests for access to premises (including any site/location affiliated to the main centre), systems, records, information, candidates, assessment team and programme management staff for the purposes of external quality assurance monitoring of a centre.

Failure to provide such access is a breach of the Approved Centre Agreement and appropriate remedial action will be taken in line with [ECITB's Restrictions and Sanctions Policy](#).

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## 2. Overall Approach

Unless otherwise stated in a qualification assessment strategy and/or Approved Centre Assessment Requirements, ECITB will apply the following Centre Assessment Scrutiny Strategy:

### 2.1 Qualifications with skills, behaviour and/or knowledge criteria

Where ECITB qualifications include the assessment of skills, behaviours, as well as knowledge, ECITB Approved Centre Assessors will be responsible for the assessment of candidates to ensure that they are able support candidates in being able to identify and produce evidence that demonstrates that the candidate has met the requirements of the qualification as defined by the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria within the qualification specification and in line with any additional assessment guidance provided. In addition internal assessment enables ECITB to offer more flexibility in how assessment is delivered.

ECITB Approved Assessors will observe candidates performing tasks either in the work-place or in a simulated environment approved by ECITB and support candidates in gathering the necessary evidence to demonstrate they have met the required standards.

Underpinning knowledge will usually, where appropriate and possible, contain an element of ECITB externally marked assessment, usually in the form of multiple choice and/or short-written answer questions.

Some qualifications may require the candidate to provide written answers and this element of the knowledge assessment will normally be assessed by an ECITB Approved Centre Assessor with the subject specialist knowledge, using an ECITB produced or validated mark-scheme.

Approved Centre marking will be subject to external quality assurance.as outlined in this document.

### 2.2 Qualifications with Knowledge Criteria Only

Where ECITB qualifications require the demonstration of knowledge and understanding only (with no skills or behaviour assessment criteria), the ECITB assessment strategy will usually include some externally marked assessment. Unless otherwise stated in the qualification assessment strategy assessment of knowledge will be via ECITB externally marked multiple choice questions and/or some short answer questions. Short answer questions will be marked either by the Approved Centre Assessor with the relevant expertise and experience or externally by ECITB.

Approved Centre marking will be subject to external quality assurance.as outlined in this document.

### 2.3 ECITB Required Approvals

The procedure and criteria for the approval of centres to assess ECITB qualifications is provided in the [ECITB Approval Procedure for VQ Approved Centre Status](#)

ECITB approves all Approved Centre Assessors in advance of any assessment to ensure they have the relevant expertise and experience. The criteria for approval of Assessors is provided in the [ECITB Approved Centre Handbook](#).

ECITB require that any centre-devised assessment and/or simulation is approved by ECITB in advance to ensure that the assessment meets all ECITB requirements and is capable of generating the evidence necessary to meet the requirements of the qualification. A Centre must adhere to any changes stipulated by ECITB as part of this process, including undertaking any additional reworking required. More information about the approval process is provided in the *ECITB Approved Centre Handbook*.

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### **3. ECITB Approach to External Quality Assurance**

The following activities are an integral part of ECITB's approach to external quality assurance following centre approval:

- Induction, Standardisation and Support.
- External quality assurance visits and monitoring activities.
- Centre Assessment Scrutiny.

#### **3.1 Approved Centre Induction**

Induction with an ECITB External Quality Assurer (EQA) prior to registration of candidates is mandatory under the following circumstances:

- Newly Approved Centres
- Newly Approved Assessment Teams, where there has been significant changes, e.g. new IQA.
- Approved Assessment teams delivering a qualification that is a different type and/or scope to once previously assessed.
- Approved Assessment teams using a new mode of delivery for assessment, e.g. remote assessment.

#### **3.2 Standardisation, Support and Guidance**

The ECITB Awarding Organisation considers standardisation, support and guidance a key factor in external quality assurance and provides a range of activities as follows:.

- An allocated EQA for ongoing support and guidance in relation to assessment and compliance.
- Annual standardisation and/or ad-hoc training events.
- Regular Service bulletins containing updates on quality assurance practices and qualifications.

It is the responsibility of the Approved Centre Coordinator to ensure that the above services are communicated and attended by the appropriate staff.

#### **3.3 External Quality Assurance Monitoring activity**

External quality assurance monitoring activities are usually communicated to the centre in advance and can be undertaken using any combination of methods including: face-to-face meetings, remote meetings using video or audio conference call technology, E-portfolio review, interviews with staff, interviews with candidates and/or desk-top auditing.

The ECITB Awarding Organisation reserves the right to undertake quality assurance monitoring activities at any time, including short notice visits, unannounced visits, unannounced E-portfolio sampling and/or direct contact with candidates.

All approved centres will receive a minimum of one monitoring visit per annum which may be undertaken face-to-face or remotely using digital conference call technology.

Where a centre has no registered candidates, they remain subject to risk-based monitoring (see Section 4), however normally only an annual desk-top audit will be carried out.

If a Centre has had no new candidate registrations within **18 months**, steps may be taken to withdraw centre approval.

During monitoring, EQAs will undertake formative and summative sampling of approved centre assessment and will provide timely feedback to the Approved Centre assessment team in order to reduce the risk of assessment not meeting ECITB requirements and standards at the point of claim and/or certification.

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## 4. Risk Based Approach

EQAs will undertake monitoring activities for all centres and all qualifications based on a risk assessment using quantitative and qualitative data gathered over time. Risk will be broadly determined by an approved centre's performance against the following risk indicators:

- Sanctions or Restrictions within the last 12 months, including any malpractice or maladministration.
- Internal assessment decisions have not been applied with required standards.
- Weak Assessment Practices, including weaknesses in internal quality assurance
- Inaccurate or incorrect claims for achievement and/or certification
- Number of registered candidates
- Completion of monitoring action plans within time allocated
- Evidence of robust internal quality assurance and risk management of the ECITB programmes
- New or changes to Approved Centre, IQA and/or assessment team within the last 12 months
- Changes in assessment delivery or practices
- New qualifications or qualification type not previously assessed by the centre.
- Changes to centre ownership or structure
- Significant changes in candidate profile
- Attendance at ECITB Approved Centre Standardisation Meetings
- Aged Debt
- EQA findings, including but not limited to quality issues in relation to delivery and/or assessment.

The ECITB Awarding Organisation reserves the right to assess risk based on other criteria not mentioned above where appropriate.

Newly Approved Centres and/or Approved Centres assessing new qualification types or using new methods of assessment will be deemed high risk and be subject to external moderation prior to certification. EQAs will monitor the Approved Centre's performance and may amend the risk rating once the centre has been able to demonstrate compliance with the ECITB requirements and the EQA has trust and confidence in the robustness of the internal quality assurance practices and assessment decisions.

An Approved Centres risk rating may be adjusted at any time according to EQA findings and any other information or intelligence. The risk rating of centres is an internal measurement to assist EQAs in planning monitoring activity and will not be shared outside of ECITB.

EQAs will determine the actual monitoring activities, however, the frequency, type and duration of EQA monitoring activities will reflect the approved centre's risk rating and may include any of the following activities:

- Monitoring of Approved Centre's compliance with ECITB requirements
- Monitoring of candidate progression and achievement
- Observations of Assessors undertaking assessment and/or related IQA activity.
- Observation of standardisation or grading activity
- Candidate and/or Assessment Team interviews
- Formative and Summative sampling
- External Moderation of Approved Centre marking prior to certification
- External Verification of Approved Centre marking following certification, where Direct Claims Status has been awarded.
- Thematic reviews to address any issues or trends identified by post monitoring activities and/or the regulators

The table below demonstrates the **minimum** monitoring activity and provides an indication of the type of monitoring activity a centre may experience dependent on its risk profile:

<b>Minimum Monitoring Activity:</b> <i>All Approved Centres will receive a minimum of one monitoring visit p.a. which can take place face-to-face or using audio/video conference call technology.</i>		
<b>Risk Status</b>	<b>Non-Direct Claims Status</b>	<b>Direct Claims Status</b>
<b>Low Risk</b>	Minimum one EQA monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External moderation of assessment marking prior to certification.</li> <li>• One Assessor observation (where applicable)</li> <li>• Audit against Approved Centre Agreement two every years.</li> </ul>	Minimum two EQA monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One formative sampling activity</li> <li>• One assessor observations (where applicable)</li> <li>• Two post-claim external verifications.</li> <li>• Audit against Approved Centre Agreement every two years</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Risk</b>	Minimum two EQA monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One formative sampling activity</li> <li>• One assessor observations (where applicable)</li> <li>• External moderation prior to certification, to be agreed with centre</li> <li>• Annual audit against ECITB requirements</li> </ul>	Minimum three monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two formative sampling activities</li> <li>• Two assessor observations (where applicable)</li> <li>• Two External verifications activities post certification</li> <li>• Annual audit against Approved Centre Agreement</li> </ul>
<b>High Risk</b>	Minimum three monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two formative sampling activities</li> <li>• Two assessor observations (where applicable)</li> <li>• External moderation prior to certification</li> </ul>	Minimum of four monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly formative sampling activities</li> <li>• Two assessor observations (where applicable)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two audit against ECITB requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly External Verification post certification</li> <li>Two audits against ECITB requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Note: High Risk with DCS Status would only be applicable where risk is related to areas other than assessment practices.</p>
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## 5. Direct Claims Status (DCS)

For qualifications where Direct Claims Status is permitted by the qualifications strategy, newly Approved Centres and/or existing Approved Centres who have been newly approved for these qualifications will have a Level 1 Probationary Restriction: 'No Direct Claims Status' applied and be subject to external moderation of assessment marking prior to certification.

Direct Claims Status will not be granted to Approved Centres until EQAs are able monitor centre performance over time and the centre has been able to demonstrate consistent compliance ECITB requirements and standards.

EQAs will monitor the Approved Centre's internal quality assurance processes and assessment decisions and may award Direct Claims Status only once the following criteria have been met:

- Centre is deemed by the EQA to be low risk.
- The EQA has trust and confidence in the robustness of the internal quality assurance practices and assessment decisions.
- The EQA deems there is an appropriate record of past successful external moderation leading to certification without the requirement for further action.
- The centre has no outstanding actions.

Direct Claims Status will continually be reviewed during monitoring and there may be additional factors that ECITB will consider such as for example: insufficient or ineffective internal quality assurance, a change in standard and/or assessment method, which may result in DCS not being awarded or being withdrawn. Withdrawal of Direct Claims Status will mean that all claims for certification must be subject to external moderation prior to certification.

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## 6. Sampling Strategy

EQAs will scrutinise the marking/internal assessment and internal quality assurance practices of an Approved Centre once assessment has been internally marked/assessed and internally quality assured by the centre, either prior to or following claim for certification where DCS has been awarded.

EQAs will determine the sampling strategy for each Approved Centre based on previous findings, risk factors and centre activity. In addition there may be other factors that inform the EQA sampling strategy including:

- Typical duration assessment for the qualification
- Number of components/units assessed by the Approved Centre
- Typical evidence generated
- Assessment decisions e.g. grading of components

An Approved Centre Sampling Plan (VQ026) is retained for each Approved Centre. This is a working document used, and regularly updated, by the EQA to plan and record the frequency and type of external quality assurance monitoring and sampling activities and will not be shared with Approved Centres.

Findings and outcomes of all sampling activities are recorded in Appendix A of the VQ021 Approved Centre Monitoring Report which is sent to the Approved Centre after each monitoring activity. EQA's reserve the right to reject claims for certification if there is insufficient evidence of robust internal quality assurance.

### 6.1 Sampling Methods

This section sets out ECITB's sampling strategy used to monitor the standards of assessments marked by Approved Centres.

#### 6.1.1. Summative Sampling

- **External Moderation (No DCS):** EQAs will sample the Approved Centre's marking of candidate assessment prior to certification to ensure that the centre's internal assessment decisions meet the required standards and may adjust centre assessment decisions to ensure that results are based on the required standards. The Approved Centre must ensure that all components of candidate assessment are to be made available for external moderation following claim for certification on the MSP.
- **External Verification (DCS):** EQAs will sample Approved Centre marking of candidate assessment following certification – also known as Direct Claims Status (DCS) to ensure that the centres internal assessment decisions meet the required standards. ECITB reserve the right to withdraw certification if ECITB standards have not been met and a resolution has not been possible (see section 7). All components of candidate assessment are to be made available for external verification.

### **6.1.2 Formative Sampling**

EQAs will undertake formative sampling during monitoring activities in order to be able to provide timely advice and guidance to the Approved Centre assessment team to enable internal assessment decisions to be adjusted if necessary, and as a mechanism to manage any risk of disagreed assessment decisions at point of claim for certification.

EQAs will select candidates for sampling from a list of registered candidates drawn from the ECITB MSP. EQAs will request that candidate assessment/portfolios are made available in advance of the monitoring activity and may adjust the sample request if candidate progress is insufficient for an appropriate sample.

## **6.2 Sample Size**

All candidate work and related assessment documentation must be retained and made available to the centre's EQA, candidate assessment/portfolios must not be released prior to receipt of written confirmation from the EQA.

The EQA will determine the size of the sample for both formative and summative sampling dependent on risk as defined in section 3, but as a guide the size of the sample will depend on a number of factors that may include (but are not limited to):

- Risk Rating of the Approved Centre (see section 4)
- The number (and where applicable type) of registered candidates and/or claims for certification
- The type, range and number of qualifications and/or units being assessed
- The number of Assessors and IQAs and their familiarity with ECITB requirements and their history of successful outcomes during EQA sampling
- The type and range of assessment methodologies and evidence types
- The number of assessment sites/locations (where applicable)
- Range of achievement (where applicable)
- Changes in delivery of assessment
- Changes in qualification requirements

The EQA will undertake a minimum of 15% sample of any claim for certification or within any monitoring period and reserves the right to request a 100% sample or additional sample at any time.

### 6.3 Sampling Criteria

The external quality assurance sampling strategy will ensure, where possible, that there is a periodic review of the following criteria, where possible over the time periods outlined below:

Criteria	Sampling Period (if possible)
Qualification	Annually
Units	Annually
Assessment evidence types	Annually
Assessment methods	Annually
IQA	Annually
Assessors	2-3 years
Assessment locations (if applicable)	2-3 years

EQAs will apply a risk based strategy, to each Approved Centre and each qualification, which may result in the criteria selected for sampling being adjusted to take into consideration any identified risk. Should it therefore not be possible to sample within the time periods as above then the EQA should state this within Appendix A of the VQ021 Approved Centre Monitoring Report - 'Sampling Comment/Rationale'.

EQAs will also sample other aspects of Approved Centre requirements annually including (but not limited to):

Requirement	Typical Evidence Sampled by EQA may include (but not limited to):
Partnership Details	Service level agreements Quality assurance monitoring records Communication mechanisms Insurance Policies
Policies and Procedures	Malpractice, Complaints, Appeals and Conflict of Interest, Reasonable Adjustment, GDPR and IQA Policies. Evidence of communication of policies Evidence of risk management systems and documentation
Resources	Staff CVs, certificates and CPD records, Size of assessment team Buildings and equipment
Qualifications Delivery	Candidate registration, progress and assessment records Candidate feedback Candidate tracking systems Staff induction and standardisation IQA sampling strategy, sampling plans, records and feedback to assessors.

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## 7. Resolving Issues with Centre Marking

EQAs will, through their sampling, monitor all Approved Centre marking using both formative and summative sampling as outlined in Section 6. ECITB reserves the right to amend centre marking following summative sampling as follows:

### 7.1 External Moderation/No Direct Claims Status

ECITB reserves the right to amend Approved Centre assessment decisions prior to certification should the result of EQA moderation determine that the assessment or assessment processes have not met ECITB requirements/standards. Amendments to the Approved Centre assessment decisions may include requiring the centre to gather additional evidence that the candidate has met the ECITB standards and resubmit the work to the EQA for moderation prior to approval for the claim for certification.

### 7.2 External Verification/Direct Claims Status

ECITB reserves the right to withdraw certificates issued to candidates should the result of EQA external verification determine that there is insufficient evidence that the candidate has met ECITB standards.

However, prior to the decision to withdraw a certificate the EQA will work with the Approved Centre assessment team to establish if any reasonable corrective action can be taken, such as:

- Review of any additional candidate evidence not initially presented to the EQA
- Re-mapping of existing evidence provided within the portfolio to any assessment criteria that have not been met.
- Reassessment of the evidence by the Approved Centre Assessor and IQA to determine if there is any evidence within other units/the portfolio of any assessment criteria that has not been met.
- Review of any other Approved Centre internal assessment documentation or evidence including IQA reports to determine if there is evidence of any assessment criteria that has not been met
- Timely re-assessment of the candidate against any assessment criteria that has not been met.

Any review or reassessment of candidate evidence must be completed within **the deadline set by the EQA but normally, unless there are exceptional circumstances, within a maximum of 15 working days from the date that external verification was completed.** Any additional evidence will be subject to further external verification.

Failure to provide further evidence that the candidate has met the required standards may result in withdrawal of the certification and the candidate's record will be amended accordingly. The decision to withdraw certification will be approved by the Head of ECITB Awarding Organisation taking into consideration factors that include:

- Maintenance of standards
- Impact on candidates
- Passage of time

- Risk to health and safety or other licence to practice
- Any adverse effect that might be caused by a decision to correct or not correct a result, including adversely affecting public confidence in regulated qualifications.
- Any finding of malpractice and/or maladministration

Any withdrawal of a certificate will be immediately recorded on the ECITB candidate record indicating that the certificate issued is not valid, this information may be shared with third parties on request.

The Approved Centre is responsible for contacting the candidate and retrieving the certificate within **20 working days** from the date of confirmation of the decision to withdraw. Failure to do so may result in ECITB contacting the candidate directly.

The withdrawal of certification would be deemed to cause an adverse effect and therefore is required to be reported to the appropriate qualification regulator/s.

### **7.3 Right of Appeal**

Approved Centres may appeal against a decision made by the ECITB Awarding Organisation, appeals from Approved Centres must be submitted by the Centre Co-ordinator and Approved Centres should refer to the ECITB's Appeals Policy and Procedure which can be downloaded from ECITB's website.

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## 8. External Quality Assurance Monitoring Procedure

ECITB will undertake the monitoring of all Approved Centres using a combination of: desktop review, face-to-face and/or audio/conference call meetings. The frequency and purpose of monitoring visits will be risk-based (see Section 3) and Approved Centres may be required to submit documentation and/or evidence in advance of a monitoring activity. Centres will be provided by email, where possible, a minimum of **20 working days'** notice of any external quality assurance visit or monitoring activity and will be advised of the scope of the activity taking place.

ECITB Awarding Organisation and regulators reserve the right to perform external quality assurance visits and/or undertake monitoring activity at short notice or without prior notification.

The scope of external quality assurance activity will include all or some of the following:

- Evidence that centres continue to meet the requirements of the ECITB Approved Centre Recognition
- Confirmation that assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified and competent staff
- Sampling of Approved Centre assessment decisions to confirm that they are valid, authentic, reliable, and sufficient, and that the national standards are being consistently maintained.
- Observation of Assessment taking place.
- Interviews and/or surveys with candidates and members of the assessment team.
- Evidence that assessment decisions are regularly sampled through formative and summative internal quality assurance practice to ensure the accuracy of assessment decisions in line with ECITB standards and requirements.
- Evidence of robust internal quality assurance that ensures: assessment is planned with candidate, consistency of assessment practices in line with ECITB requirements, accuracy and reliability of results and good learner progression and completion.
- External verification of claims for certification to ensure that they are valid and authentic and supported by auditable records.
- External moderation of Approved Centre assessment prior to certification.
- Interviews or seeking feedback from candidates, assessors and/or IQA's prior or during any monitoring activity
- Review of previous actions and evidence that centres have implemented any actions set by the ECITB Awarding Organisation
- Provide advice and guidance on ECITB standards, ECITB Awarding Organisation requirements and procedures, including access to fair assessment and appeals against ECITB Awarding Organisation decision

Approved Centres must comply with any ECITB Awarding Organisation requests for access to premises, sites/locations affiliated to the main centre, systems, records, information, candidates, and assessment team staff for the purposes of monitoring the external quality assurance of a centre.

Approved Centres must have a legitimate reason to cancel external quality assurance monitoring visits. Failure to participate and agree to monitoring activities is a breach of the Approved Centre Agreement and may be subject to sanction. Notification of cancellation must be received in writing at least **10 working days** in advance of any planned visit. If such notice is not provided, the ECITB Awarding Organisation reserves the right to charge the centre for any costs incurred.

Failure to provide such access is a breach of the Approved Centre Agreement and the ECITB will take the appropriate remedial action in line with the *ECITB Restrictions and Sanctions Policy*.

## 8.1 Prior to the ECITB Monitoring Activity

The EQA will communicate with the Approved Centre Coordinator to organise the monitoring activity. The purpose of the activity will be clarified and requests for arrangements to see specific candidate assessments for formative sampling will be made at this time. ECITB reserve the right to undertake unannounced monitoring activities/visits.

Approved centres **must not** release any candidate assessment which has been certificated under Direct Claims Status or any candidate assessment that is subject to external moderation prior to certification until the EQA has had the opportunity to sample and has provided written confirmation that the candidate work may be released. Candidate assessments, portfolios and related assessment documentation must be retained securely in the Approved Centre in line with *ECITB Record Keeping Policy*.

The following reports may be generated prior to each visit and sent to the Approved Centre Coordinator with the visit confirmation.

- **Current Registered Candidates.** This report will contain a list of all registered candidate which will be highlighted with the portfolios requested for formative sampling by the EQA.
- **Claimed Certificates,** This report is a list of all candidates who have been certificated since the date of the last external verification. All portfolios must be made available unless previously released.
- **External Verification.** This report is a list of claims that have been made by an Approved Centre which require external moderation prior to certification.
- **Staff List.** This report is a list of Approved Centre Staff by qualification.

In advance of the visit the Approved Centre Coordinator must ensure that these reports are accurate and update if necessary by de-registering any staff and/or candidates no longer involved in assessment.

The Approved Centre will also be provided with a list of additional evidence that should be sent prior to the visit, this list may include evidence of:

- Programme evaluation/self-assessment review
- Risk Assessment and contingency planning
- Assessment team standardisation meetings
- Candidate and/or employer evaluation and feedback
- Candidate progress tracking
- Assessor CPD
- Conflict of Interest forms and/or monitoring logs
- Insurance Certificates

In addition an EQA may request that candidate assessments where monitoring activity is not taking place face-to-face be sent to our Head Office address, attention VQ Administrator via secure post.



Copies of Assessor and IQA documentation should be retained at the centre and where possible portfolio contents should be copied or scanned and stored securely.

Approved Centres must ensure any evidence requested is submitted at least **ten working days** prior to any monitoring activity. If evidence is retained within an E-portfolio then the Approved Centre must ensure that ECITB has given permission for use of the E-portfolio system for monitoring purposes and that the EQA has relevant access as per *ECITB's Use of Electronic Portfolio Procedure*.

## 8.2 EQA Monitoring Activity Report

On completion of a monitoring activity the Approved Centre Coordinator or representative may be provided with a verbal summary of findings, however the EQA will take time to reflect on findings and may call request additional evidence following the monitoring activity before evaluating all evidence and finalising actions and recommendations.

An *Approved Centre Monitoring Report (VQ021)* will be produced by the EQA once the monitoring activity is complete and this will include:

- Key Findings
- Areas of Good Practice
- Recommendations, please note recommendations are based on good practice and continuous improvement and are not mandatory requirements.
- Advice of any Sanctions or Restrictions.

## 8.3 Approved Centre Action Plan

EQAs will set actions to ensure Approved Centres comply with ECITB standards and requirements. Actions will be recorded in the *VQ022 Approved Centre Action Plan* which will be sent to the Approved Centre Coordinator along with the Monitoring Report following the Visit.

The EQA will monitor the completion of any actions set and may arrange a follow up activity for additional support and/or monitoring.

Approved Centre Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that findings from the monitoring report and Action Plan are communicated to relevant staff and actions are completed within the timescale set.

## 8.4 After the ECITB Monitoring Activity

The following documentation will be sent to the Centre Coordinator by [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk) within **20 working dates** from the date of the monitoring activity:

- VQ021 Approved Centre Monitoring Report, including Appendix A with details of any external moderation or verification.
- VQ022 Approved Centre Action Plan.
- Claimed Certificate Report, indicating whether portfolios can be released.



- Registered Candidate List, indicating the outcome of any formative sampling.
- External Verification List indicating the outcome of external moderation prior to certification and whether candidates have been certificated and/or portfolios can be released.
- VQ023 Site Observation Record (if applicable)
- VQ024 IQA Interview (if applicable)
- VQ027 Assessor Interview (if applicable)
- VQ028 Candidate Interview (if applicable)

There is a section within the VQ021 Approved Centre Monitoring Report for the Centre Coordinator to comment on any factual inaccuracies within the report and sign the report (electronic signature is acceptable). The signed report should then be return to [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk) within **10 working days**.

Any monitoring activity that results in the application of a Sanction will be reviewed by a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team in advance of the report being sent to the Approved Centre.

Copies of all documents will be retained on the Approved Centre records for reference & audit purposes along with a *VQ026 EQA Sampling Plan and Record*.

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## 9. Applying Approved Centre Controls

Where quality assurance monitoring provides evidence that an Approved Centre is failing to meet ECITB standards the ECITB Awarding Organisation may apply one or more of the following controls:

- Set remedial actions to be completed within set timescales in an Approved Centre Action Plan (VQ022).
- Apply a restriction or sanctions as per [ECITB Restrictions and Sanctions Policy](#).
- Issue notice of withdrawal as per [ECITB Restrictions and Sanctions Policy](#). In the event that the ECITB Awarding Organisation issues notice of withdrawal Approved Centres should refer to the [ECITB Withdrawal Policy](#) which outlines the steps that the AO and Approved Centre are required to take, including informing regulators.

ECITB Awarding Organisation reserves the right to refuse or rescind any approved centre status with immediate effect as per [ECITB Restrictions and Sanctions Policy](#).

The EQA will plan further monitoring activities to evidence the completion actions and to review restrictions or sanctions in a timely manner. The EQA will continue to work with the Approved Centre Coordinator to provide support and guidance where appropriate.

The Approved Centre will have the right to invoke the [ECITB Appeals Procedure](#), if they disagree with the decision of the awarding organisation.

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## 10. Appointment, Allocation and Monitoring of External Quality Assurer Performance

EQAs play a vital role in upholding standards of assessment and compliance with regulatory requirements.

### 10.1 Appointment of EQAs

Unless otherwise stated in the qualification assessment strategy EQAs will ideally meet the following criteria:

- A-degree level or HND level of education in a recognised qualification relevant to the engineering industry.
  - At least 3 years' experience of assessment and/or IQA working with regulated qualifications relevant to an engineering industry environment.
  - Hold an external quality assurance qualification
- or
- An assessor or IQA qualification and be working towards a current external quality assurance qualification.
- At least 3 years' experience in an engineering related industry, gained in a supervisory or lead role enabling demonstration of knowledge of the ECI and trades within it.

All EQAs must successfully complete an induction programme which will include as a minimum:

- Qualifications and related assessment strategy familiarisation.
- Regulatory requirements and compliance familiarisation.
- Standardisation of assessment standards working under supervision of an experienced EQA.
- Standardisation of EQA quality assurance monitoring activities, including shadowing an experienced EQAs and/or ECITB Awarding Organisation management.
- ECITB Awarding Organisation Policies and Procedures.
- General introduction to other ECITB departments, products and resources.
- Training on ECITB systems and reporting.
- Achievement of CCNSG Safety Passport.

The length of the induction programme is not defined as this will be dependent on the training needs of the individual EQA. Any monitoring activity undertaken by an EQA during the induction

period will be supervised and counter-signed by an experienced EQA and/or a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team.

The EQAs full duties are outlined in the EQA Role Profile, a summary of core duties are as follows:

- To plan, audit and monitor ECITB Approved Centres using ECITB's risk based approach ensuring compliance with ECITB and regulatory requirements.
- To plan, manage and implement a risk based sampling approach of Approved Centre assessment decisions, certification and assessment practices, including internal verification, to ensure standardisation of assessment across centres and compliance with ECITB and regulatory requirements.
- To monitor the completion of ECITB Approved Centre Action Plans.
- To provide support and guidance to ECITB Approved Centre Coordinators and other members of staff where appropriate.
- To apply and remove, in conjunction with the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team, restrictions and sanctions to Approved Centres in order to manage any identified risk.
- Produce accurate records and documentation relating to EQA activities, including VQ021 Monitoring Report, VQ022 Approved Centre Action Plan, VQ026 EQA Sample Plan and VQ forms relating to site observations and stakeholder interviews.

## **10.2 Allocation of Approved Centres**

ECITB Awarding Organisation will provide each Approved Centre with a named EQA at point of approval, however ECITB reserves the right to re-allocate EQAs at any time in order to meet risk, quality assurance and/or resource requirements, the Approved Centre will be provided written confirmation as soon as possible of any change of EQA.

Quality Assurance monitoring activities will normally be undertaken by the allocated EQA, however there may be times when another EQA will undertake a monitoring activity for quality assurance, specialist expertise and/or resource reasons.

All EQAs will at times be accompanied by other EQAs and/or Awarding Organisation personnel during monitoring activities for the purposes of additional support, expertise and/or for the purpose of ECITB Awarding Organisation internal quality assurance processes of peer review and standardisation.

## **10.3 ECITB Awarding Organisation Monitoring of EQA Performance**

- EQAs are subject to an annual performance review during which any developmental needs are identified and agreed.
- EQAs are expected to demonstrate a personal commitment to CPD in line with their development needs and submit an EQA CPD Record Form annually to the ECITB Awarding Organisation.
- ECITB Awarding Organisation also operates a peer review process as part of monitoring performance which includes each EQA being accompanied on at minimum of one

monitoring activity by a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team and a minimum of one by another EQA. A VQ025 EQA Peer Review Form is completed after each activity and shared with the EQA.

- EQAs attend a minimum of two ECITB Awarding Organisation Standardisation events annually.
- EQAs participate in team meetings that take place approximately six times per year which include standardisation and training.
- Where possible EQAs also attend at least one of the annual Approved Centre Standardisation Events.
- External quality assurance plans are agreed with a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team on an annual basis and reviewed throughout the year, during which time plans are adjusted to address changes in risk and priorities.
- All EQA monitoring reports and associated monitoring documentation are sent to a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team prior to release to the Approved Centre. This will enable Awarding Organisation to review activity and trends and manage consistency of approach across the EQA team, whilst providing data for future support and standardisation activities.
- Any monitoring activity that results in a Sanction will be authorised by a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team prior to return to centre. EQAs can apply Restrictions without authorisation as a key mechanism to managing risk.
- The ECITB Awarding Organisation management team will monitor the EQAs to ensure the approved centre action plans are regularly reviewed, actions closed or followed-up where necessary.
- Approved Centres may contact a member of the ECITB Awarding Organisation management team if they experience any issues or problems with their EQA or the monitoring processes.

## **10.4 Conflicts of Interest**

The ECITB Awarding Organisation takes all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a candidate (including by way of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment. Approved Centres should refer to ECITB's Conflict of Interest Management Policy for more information.

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## 11. Review Arrangements

We will review this policy and its associated procedures as part of our continuous improvement arrangements and revise it, as and when necessary, in response to customer, candidate or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any enquiries and appeals process established or revised by the regulators) and to identify any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of enquiries received.

## 12. ECITB Contact Information

If you have any queries about any aspect of this document, please contact:

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<div> <div>Appendix A</div> <div>Glossary of Terms</div> </div>	
ECITB Term	ECITB Definition
Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny	The process through which ECITB scrutinises the marking of assessment by Approved Centre staff to ensure it has not deviated from the required standards and considers whether any adjustment is necessary
Moderation	The sampling of the marking of assessment by Approved Centre staff prior to the issue of results and certificates
Verification	The sampling of the marking of assessment by Approved Centre staff following the issue of results and certification, used for centres/qualifications who have been awarded Direct Claims Status
Formative Sampling	The process of reviewing the Approved Centre assessments prior to completion for the purpose of providing support and guidance,
Summative Sampling	The process of reviewing the marking of assessment by Approved Centres once assessment has been marked and internally quality assured by the centre either prior to following claim for certification.
External Quality Assurer/EQA	Appointed by the ECITB Awarding Organisation to monitor the assessment of ECITB regulated qualifications within Approved Centres.
Marking	The word marking can also be used for making assessment decisions and/or grading candidate work.

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Document Amendment Tracker	
Date	Amendment
RV1-0 Released September 2020	<b><i>This policy now replaces the following policies and procedures that are now withdrawn:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderation Policy</li> <li>• Code of Practice</li> <li>• Post Approval Monitoring of Approved Centres Procedure</li> </ul>

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