



**ECITB Awarding Organisation  
Centre Assessment Scrutiny  
and  
External Quality Assurance Strategy  
RV1-4**

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## 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 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 Approved Centres are as clear and streamlined as possible. Therefore this document should be read in conjunction with:

- *ECITB Awarding Organisation Approval Procedure for VQ Approved Centre Status*
- *ECITB Awarding Organisation Approved Centre Handbook*

The purpose of this document is to:

- Set out the ECITB Awarding Organisations' external quality assurance monitoring arrangements of its Approved Centres.
- Set out the ECITB Awarding Organisation 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 requests from the ECITB Awarding Organisation and/or its regulators, 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.

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

## Overall Approach

Unless otherwise stated in a qualification Assessment Strategy, Approved Centre Assessment Requirements and/or any other qualification documentation, the ECITB Awarding Organisation will apply the following Centre Assessment Scrutiny Strategy:

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

Where ECITB qualifications include the assessment of skills, behaviours, as well as knowledge, ECITB Awarding Organisation Approved Centre Assessors will be responsible for the assessment of candidates to ensure that they are able support candidates 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 the ECITB Awarding Organisation to offer more flexibility in how assessment is delivered.

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

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

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

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

### ***Qualifications with Knowledge Criteria Only***

Where ECITB qualifications require the demonstration of knowledge and understanding only (with no skills or behaviour assessment criteria), the qualification assessment strategy will usually include some externally marked assessment. Unless otherwise stated in the qualification assessment strategy, assessment of knowledge will normally be via 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 the ECITB Awarding Organisation.

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

### ***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*.

The ECITB Awarding Organisation 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 Awarding Organisation Approved Centre Handbook*.

Any centre-devised assessment and/or simulation must be approved by the ECITB Awarding Organisation in advance to ensure that the assessment meets all requirements and is capable of

generating the evidence necessary to meet the requirements of the qualification. Approved Centres must adhere to any changes stipulated by the ECITB Awarding Organisation as part of this process, including undertaking any additional reworking required. More information about the approval process is provided in the *ECITB Awarding Organisation Approved Centre Handbook*.

## **Approach to External Quality Assurance**

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

- induction;
- standardisation, Support and Guidance;
- external quality assurance visits and monitoring activities;
- Centre Assessment Scrutiny.

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

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

- Newly Approved Centres.
- 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 one previously assessed.
- Approved Assessment teams using a new mode of delivery for assessment, e.g. remote assessment.

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

The ECITB Awarding Organisation considers standardisation, support and guidance a key part of its external quality assurance of Approved Centres, and provides a range of support as follows:

- an allocated EQA for ongoing support and guidance in relation to assessment and compliance;
- annual Approved Centre support events;
- ad-hoc training events, including published standardisation and training webinars;
- regular Service Bulletins containing, but not limited to, updates on quality assurance practices, regulation and qualification information.

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

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

External quality assurance monitoring activities are usually communicated to the Approved Centre in advance and can be undertaken using any combination of methods including: face-to-face meetings, observation of assessment, remote meetings or observation of assessment using digital video or audio technology, E-portfolio review, interviews with staff or 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 conferencing technology.

Where an Approved Centre has no registered candidates, they remain subject to risk-based monitoring, 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 the ECITB Awarding Organisation requirements and standards at the point of claim for certification.

## Risk Based Approach

EQAs will undertake monitoring activities for all Approved 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.
- Timely completion of monitoring action plans within deadlines set.
- 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 Support Events.
- 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 Approved Centres is an internal measurement to assist EQAs in planning monitoring activity and will not normally be shared outside of the ECITB, other than with the qualification regulators.

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, or all, 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 activities;
- observation of standardisation or grading activities;
- candidate and/or assessment team interviews;
- formative and summative sampling of internal assessment decisions;
- external moderation of Approved Centre assessment decisions prior to certification;
- external verification of Approved Centre assessment decisions 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 qualification regulators;

The table below provides an **indication** of the type and frequency of EQA monitoring activity.

<b>Minimum Monitoring Activity: All Approved Centres will receive a minimum of one monitoring visit p.a. which can take place face-to-face or using digital conferencing technology, irrespective of risk rating and/or assessment activity.</b>		
<b>Typical Monitoring Activity</b>		
Note: actual monitoring activity is the decision of the EQA and is dependent on the level of assessment activity undertaken by the Approved Centre.		
<b>Risk Status</b>	<b>Non-Direct Claims Status</b>	<b>Direct Claims Status</b>
<b>Low Risk</b>	<p>One EQA monitoring visits p.a. (remote or face-to-face) to include:</p> <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>	<p>Two EQA monitoring visits p.a. (remote or face-to-face) to include:</p> <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 (if applicable).</li> <li>• Audit against Approved Centre Agreement every two years.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Risk</b>	<p>Two EQA monitoring visits p.a. (remote or face-to-face) to include:</p> <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 Approved Centre Agreement.</li> </ul>	<p>Three monitoring visits p.a. (remote or face-to-face) to include:</p> <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>	<p>Three monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include:</p> <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> <li>• Annual audit against Approved Centre Agreement.</li> </ul>	<p>Four monitoring visits p.a. (virtual or face-to-face) to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly formative sampling activities.</li> <li>• Two assessor observations (where applicable).</li> <li>• Monthly External Verification post certification.</li> <li>• Annual audit against Approved Centre Agreement.</li> </ul> <p>Note: High Risk with DCS Status would only be applicable where risk is related to areas other than assessment practices.</p>

## 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 ECITB Awarding Organisation EQAs are able to monitor centre performance over time and the centre has been able to demonstrate consistent and sustained compliance with the ECITB Awarding Organisation 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 Approved Centre internal quality assurance practices and assessment decisions;
- the EQA deems there is an appropriate history of successful external moderations 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 the ECITB Awarding Organisation will consider, for example: insufficient or ineffective internal quality assurance or 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.

## EQA Sampling Strategy

EQAs will scrutinise the marking/internal assessment decisions 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, but not limited to the:

- 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 EQA 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 risk, frequency and type of external quality assurance monitoring and sampling activities. This document 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 and/or assessment decisions and/or processes do not meet ECITB requirements.

### ***Sampling Methods***

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

#### **Summative Sampling**

- **External Moderation (No DCS):** EQAs will sample the Approved Centre's marking of candidate assessment prior to certification to ensure that the Approved 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 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 Approved Centre's 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. All components of candidate assessment are to be made available for external verification.

#### **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 enabling internal assessment decisions to be adjusted if necessary, and as a mechanism to manage any risk of an assessment decisions being adjusted by the ECITB Awarding Organisation at point of claim for certification.

EQAs will select candidates for sampling from a list of registered candidates drawn from the ECITB Membership Services Portal. 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.

### ***Sample Size***

All candidate work and related assessment documentation must be retained and made available to the Approved 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, but as a guide the size of the sample will depend on a number of factors that may include, but are not limited to, the:

- risk rating of the Approved Centre;
- number (and where applicable type) of registered candidates and/or claims for certification;
- type, range and number of qualifications and/or units being assessed;

- number of Assessors and IQAs and their familiarity with the ECITB Awarding Organisation requirements and their history of successful outcomes during EQA sampling;
- type and range of assessment methodologies and evidence types;
- 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.

### ***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 as outlined below:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Sampling Period (if possible)</b>
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.

## Resolving Issues with Centre Marking

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

### *External Moderation/No Direct Claims Status*

The ECITB Awarding Organisation 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 the ECITB Awarding Organisation requirements/standards. Amendments to the Approved Centre assessment decisions may include requiring the centre to gather additional evidence that the candidate has met the qualification standard and resubmit the work to the EQA for moderation prior to approval for certification.

### *External Verification/Direct Claims Status*

The ECITB Awarding Organisation reserves the right to withdraw certificates issued to candidates should the result of external verification determine that there is insufficient evidence that the candidate has met required standard.

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, but not limited to:

- 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, which will **normally be within a maximum of 15 working days from the date that external verification was completed**, unless there are exceptional circumstances. 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 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 the certificate. 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 will be reported to the appropriate qualification regulator/s.

### ***Right of Appeal***

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

## **External Quality Assurance Monitoring Procedure**

The ECITB Awarding Organisation will undertake the monitoring of all Approved Centres using a combination of: desktop review, face-to-face and/or remote meetings. The frequency and purpose of monitoring visits will be risk-based 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. However, the 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 candidate assessment by an Approved Assessor;
- 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 or regulator requests for access to premises, sites/locations affiliated to the main centre, systems, records, information, candidates, and assessment team staff.

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 activity. 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 Awarding Organisation Restrictions and Sanctions Policy and Procedure*.

### ***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. The ECITB Awarding Organisation 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 and Procedure*.

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 submitted prior to the visit, this list may include, but not limited to, 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 declarations and/or monitoring logs;
- insurance certificates.

Where monitoring activity is not taking place face-to-face, the EQA may request that candidate assessments are sent securely to our Head Office or alternative address, attention VQ Administrator. Copies of assessment 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 Approval Policy and Procedure*.

### ***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.

### ***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 monitoring activity.

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

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.

### ***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 sign and comment on any factual inaccuracies within the report (electronic signature is acceptable). The signed report should then be returned 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 the *VQ026 EQA Sampling Plan and Record*.

## Process for sending correspondence with personal or sensitive data

Before sending any information or data to ECITB that contains staff (including contractors) and/or candidate personal details that could be attributed to an individual and/or information that includes sensitive data about an individual, you are required to request a ShareFile link from [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk).

The ECITB Awarding Organisation will respond by sending an email from [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk) containing the wording '[Click here](#) to upload files'. This enables you to upload your files to the ECITB secure ShareFile system.

No personal or sensitive data should be sent via email as this method of transferring data is less secure than ShareFile

Should you be sending such data by post, please mark the correspondence 'Confidential – For the Attention of the Awarding Organisation'.

## Applying Approved Centre Controls

Where quality assurance monitoring provides evidence that an Approved Centre is failing to meet requirements 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 and Procedure*;
- issue notice of withdrawal as per *ECITB Restrictions and Sanctions Policy and Procedure*, 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 are required, including informing regulators;
- 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 Awarding Organisation Appeals Policy and Procedure*, if they disagree with the decision of the awarding organisation.

## Appointment, Allocation and Monitoring of External Quality Assurer (EQA) Performance

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

### *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 familiarisation;
- general introduction to other ECITB departments, products and resources;
- training on ECITB systems and reporting;
- achievement of CCNSG Safety Passport if not already held.

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.

### ***EQA Allocation of Approved Centres***

The 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 the ECITB Awarding Organisation's internal quality assurance processes of peer review and standardisation.

### ***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.
- The 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 support event or induction.



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.

## **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 Awarding Organisation Conflict of Interest Management Policy* for more information.

## **Review Arrangements**

This policy and its associated procedures will be reviewed and revised, as and when necessary, as part of continuous improvement arrangements and/or in response to customer, candidate or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any enquiries, processes established or revised by the regulators) and/or in response to any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of enquiries received.

## **Contact Details**

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

The Awarding Organisation  
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board  
Office Suite KD3, First Floor, KD Tower,  
Cotterells, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1FW  
Telephone: 01923 260 000  
Email: [Qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:Qualifications@ecitb.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ecitb.org.uk](http://www.ecitb.org.uk)

## Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

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.

## Document Amendment Tracker

Date	Amendment
RV1-0 Released September 2020	<p><b><i>This policy now replaces the following policies and procedures that are now withdrawn:</i></b></p> <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>
RV1-1	Minor amendments
RV1-2 Released July21	Accessibility friendly version
RV1-3 Released November 2021	Change of font to Conflict of Interest header
RV1-4	Amendment to Risk Table on page 9, providing further clarity including factor of assessment activity contributing to frequency of monitoring activity.