



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Quality and Standards

The key role of East Midlands Vocational Academy Ltd (EMVA) is to deliver qualifications for students who are not in mainstream education. As part of our commitment to quality assuring standards and therefore protecting learners, EMVA provides guidance and support to help their learners achieve their learning and development goals.

Scope of policy

This policy covers the design and development of all external and internal assessment instruments in all assessment modes including, for example, performance, paper-based, on-screen, practicals and projects. The policy outlines the stages of the qualification lifecycle at which the assessment requirements stated above must be addressed. The detailed procedures by which the design of assessments are managed at each stage are contained in the relevant operational procedures.

For a qualification to be credible and valued it must contain valid forms of assessment that provide consistency of outcomes. There are five requirements of assessment:

Validity, Reliability, Comparability, Manageability, Minimising of bias.

Reliability – includes that the assessments can be used with the same results over time and that the same assessment can be used consistently for the whole of the intended candidature in the locations of assessment.

Validity – the assessment attests to the content, skills, applications and qualities defined through the qualification by the use of selected methodologies.

Comparability – assessments can be understood by users in terms of benchmarks and historic standards as applied to the qualification, other similar qualifications and the overall context of national frameworks.

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Manageability - the assessments must be manageable for teachers and providers to deliver cost effectively and awarding bodies to manage efficiently and effectively. There must be an effective balance between learning and assessment.

Minimising of bias – on principle assessments should not in themselves introduce barriers to the demonstration of attainment. The design of assessments must consider the needs of a wide variety of learners and must consider how assessments are accessed with reference to the Equalities Act.

These requirements are the cornerstones of good assessment practice in order to set and maintain standards in qualifications.

This policy identifies the ways in which these assessment requirements must be met at each stage of the life cycle of a qualification in order to achieve fitness for purpose. It recognises that the design of assessments is a multi-faceted process in which tensions between the requirements can arise and must be resolved and managed in order to achieve the optimum balance between validity, reliability, comparability, manageability and minimisation of bias.

Principles we observe in providing assessment.

In addition to the general principles for all qualifications BTE Ltd observes the following in designing assessment:

We seek to follow best practice and informed research into assessment efficacy in selection of assessment methods and design of assessment instruments.

We seek to be transparent in our requirements and to provide such information and support as will enable all learners to be fairly prepared for assessment.

We work in partnership with Awarding Bodies to promote clarity, consistency and integrity whilst minimising bureaucracy.

We make use of technology to improve efficiency, reduce bureaucracy and enhance assessment-related services to our centres.

We work to enhance the assessment experience through innovative uses of technology where this is consistent with fitness for purpose.

We provide fair access to assessment whilst ensuring that advancements of assessment of benefit to the majority are made available.

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We seek to consult with and involve staff and Awarding Bodies in the design of our qualifications and assessments.

We aim for accuracy and speed in all our assessment processes so that the fitness for purpose of assessments is maintained and that any errors that do arise for individuals are corrected with minimal impact.

We see effective management of assessment experts as the key to delivering assessments that are fit for purpose and therefore we seek to recruit and retain high calibre associates and to direct them through training and standardisation.

The Assessment Policy Stage 1: Initial model development

At the earliest stage of potential development of a qualification the possible approaches to assessment are considered in relation to:

Content and function of the qualification number, type and location of centres expectations of the company, teachers and learners.

At this stage historic practice, best practice and possible risks to fitness for purpose are addressed using expert input from all relevant teams within the organisation. In particular the Programmes Manager has a function to review proposal for new qualifications and work with the qualification developers to ensure that assessments meet the five requirements of assessment.

The Programmes Manager and teaching staff has responsibility for the development of qualifications and their associated assessments and has a responsibility to identify any potential implementation risks.

Initial model sign off takes place through standardisation meetings. This meeting is designed to endorse and monitor all qualification development proposals. As part of the development and scrutiny of proposals, the fitness for purpose of the assessment each qualification contains must be reviewed as follows:

Where models or modes of assessment are under consideration, consultation with The Managing Director/Director and Awarding Body is required

Stage 2: Model testing and sign off

The workability of the model is tested through the development of the qualification specification and associated trial assessments or assessment guidance. This process is intended to ensure that:

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The assessment gives credit for the knowledge, understanding and skills that are expected and valued for the sector and qualification type at that level.

The assessment allows assessors, for example internal and external assessors and markers, to differentiate accurately and consistently between the performance of learners.

The number and types of assessments the learners have to undertake to achieve a qualification will lead to a reliable assessment of their ability to meet the standard of the qualification. Repeated distinct assessments that are equally valid and reliable can be used.

We observe all relevant regulatory criteria including, for example, the assessment requirements of the relevant framework, codes of practice, qualification or subject criteria.

Reference is made to standards in previous and existing qualifications in the sector to support comparability of qualifications over time and between qualifications at the same level.

We determine whether the assessment method may advantage or disadvantage any learners other than through the demonstration of the required achievements and seek to minimise any bias.

Assessments must comply with the requirements of the Equalities Act and at this stage the application of reasonable adjustments is anticipated.

This is the qualification development stage of the life cycle is critical in determining the fitness for purpose of the assessment. The design and development of the specification, assessment model and sample assessment materials or guidance on assessment create the templates for the assessment and determine the standard of the qualification. Writers of assessment materials are briefed on the use of such guidance.

The development process is an iterative process involving consultation with users and with experts across the organisation. All qualifications are fully scrutinised along with associated assessment guidance and examples. During this review process any conflicts between the requirements are addressed and resolved.

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Consultation with all staff is carried out to ensure that the assessment will be manageable for centres. An operational impact analysis should ascertain how the assessment can be delivered both effectively and efficiently.

Qualification development sign off takes place at scrutiny 3 resulting in a defined specification which: defines the assessment requirements exemplifies the assessment requirements to users.

Stage 3: Model Confirmation

The agreed assessment requirements and assessment models are then developed and the standards confirmed through the first phase of assessment implementation. This stage overlaps with the full implementation phase but provides benchmarks for assessment standards.

This process is intended to ensure that:

Assessments are developed in line with the specification and exemplification in a way that can ensure consistent assessment to deliver standards over time.

Expert teams are recruited and trained to deliver and support the delivery of assessment all individuals undertaking assessment are standardised using best practice methods so that they apply standards accurately, fairly and consistently.

Performance of individual candidates across components of qualifications can be determined consistently.

Qualification outcomes can be determined consistently on the basis of the application of the assessment model within and across qualification components.

A wide range of methodologies may be used depending on the format of the assessments and the defined requirements for determining assessment fitness for purpose.

At the end of the first assessment period there will be a period of awarding of the qualification during which the final standard is determined. This may be done in a variety of different ways for different types of qualifications.

The fitness for purpose of the assessment is monitored during the life cycle of the qualification in a variety of ways:

Review of awards conducted at the end of qualification.

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The outcomes of these reviews and audits are reported to the Managing Director/Director. In the event that a report identifies an issue related to the fitness for purpose of an assessment the Board /Committee will determine whether further action is required.

Stage 4: Model Implementation

This stage overlaps with Stage 3, as once the model is confirmed and tested it will then be implemented over time during the period which the qualification operates. This stage relates to the effectiveness of implementation which deals with the effective management of the papers.

The key issues for full implementation are:

Delivering the best workforce to provide assessment systems and processes to develop repeated assessments matched to the tested model.

Systems to support access.

Systems to deliver assessments with minimum faults.

Systems for redress should there be a considered fault in implementation or need for assessment to vary to meet needs of individuals.

The successful implementation stage is the end goal and proof of the assessment method. In order to sustain implementation there has to be effective management of the assessment process from end to end to deliver quality outcomes. Without effective implementation the fitness for purpose of the assessments will be undermined.

The success of the implementation stage will be monitored with reference to administrative and management issues such as:

Outcomes of Enquiries and Appeals Internal audits Senior Examiner / Verifier reports.

Feedback on the administrative and effective delivery in centres can inform discussions on fitness for purpose. Continuity of quality systems and resource provide a platform for determining best fit methods and for innovation.