QH

Quality Assurance Handbook

International L3 High School Diploma

Issued under the QH Qualifications Framework (QQF)

Document version 1.0

1. Purpose and Scope

This Handbook sets out how QH assures the quality of assessment and certification decisions made by Centres approved to deliver the QH International L3 High School Diploma. It applies to all approved Centres, across all five pathways, and to everyone involved in delivery, assessment, Internal Verification and External Verification.

This Handbook should be read alongside the QH Centre Approval Guidelines, the relevant Qualification Specification(s), the QH Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, and the QH Equality, Diversity and Access Arrangements Policy.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Assessor	Delivers teaching/training, sets and marks assessments, and makes assessment decisions against unit outcomes and assessment criteria.
Lead Internal Verifier (Lead IV)	Owns the Centre's IV sampling plan per pathway, verifies assessment decisions before certification claims, chairs standardisation meetings, and is the Centre's main quality-assurance contact with QH.
Internal Verifier (IV)	Supports the Lead IV by sampling assessment decisions and evidence across assessors, units and grade boundaries.
External Verifier (EV)	QH-appointed and independent of the Centre; verifies the Centre's assessment and IV decisions through monitoring visits, approves certification claims, and reports risk ratings to QH.
Centre Quality Nominee	Senior Centre officer accountable to QH for the Centre's overall compliance with the Centre Agreement and this Handbook.
QH Quality Assurance Team	Manages the EV programme, reviews EV reports, coordinates standardisation across Centres, and escalates risk to the Approvals Panel.
QH Approvals Panel	Makes centre approval, conditional approval, suspension and withdrawal decisions; hears escalated appeals.

3. The Evidence Standard

QH requires all assessment evidence, at every pathway and unit, to be valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient. There is no single acronym for this standard — each element is applied and evidenced independently, as set out below.

Element	What it means in practice
Valid	Evidence directly demonstrates the specific assessment criteria and learning outcomes of the unit being assessed.
Authentic	Evidence is the learner's own work; where group work is used, individual

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	contribution is separately identifiable.
Reliable	Assessment decisions are consistent across assessors, groups, sites and time, evidenced through standardisation records.
Current	Evidence reflects the learner's most recent, up-to-date knowledge, skill or competence, and reflects the current version of the specification.
Sufficient	Evidence covers all assessment criteria to the depth required by the unit, without being excessive or repetitive.

4. Internal Verification (IV)

Internal Verification is the Centre's own quality-assurance process for confirming that assessment decisions meet the evidence standard before certification is claimed. Each approved pathway must have a named Lead Internal Verifier.

Stage	Activity
Planning	Lead IV produces an annual IV sampling plan per pathway covering every assessor, every unit, and a spread of grade outcomes (pass/merit/distinction boundary work, and borderline/failing work).
Pre-assessment	IV reviews assessment briefs and mark schemes before issue to learners, checking alignment to the unit specification.
In-progress	IV samples work in progress where practicable, particularly for practical/simulated units (e.g. Healthcare clinical skills, Engineering workshop tasks).
Post-assessment	IV samples completed, marked work against the sampling plan before results are released to learners or claimed for certification.
Standardisation	IV convenes standardisation meetings before each assessment cycle so assessors apply mark schemes consistently; records are kept and available to the EV.
Certification claim	Lead IV confirms all required IV sampling is complete and evidence meets the valid/authentic/reliable/current/sufficient standard before the Centre submits a certification claim to QH.

IV records (sampling plans, feedback to assessors, standardisation minutes, and evidence of action taken on IV feedback) must be retained and made available to the EV on request.

5. External Verification (EV)

5.1 Monitoring Visits

Each approved pathway is subject to at least one EV monitoring visit per academic year, conducted remotely or on-site at QH's discretion, and more frequently where a Centre carries an Enhanced or High Scrutiny risk rating.

5.2 What the EV Reviews

- IV sampling plans, records and standardisation minutes since the last visit.
- A risk-based sample of learner assessment evidence across assessors, units and grade boundaries.
- Resources, facilities and staffing against the conditions of approval.
- Compliance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and the Equality, Diversity and Access Arrangements Policy.

5.3 EV Outcomes

- Satisfactory — certification claims may proceed as normal.
- Satisfactory with Actions — claims may proceed; the Centre must close named actions by a set deadline.
- Certification Hold — no further certificates issued until named concerns are resolved and confirmed by a follow-up visit.
- Referral to Approvals Panel — used where findings indicate a risk to the validity of the qualification, malpractice, or a breach of the Centre Agreement.

6. Standardisation

Centres must hold at least one standardisation activity per pathway per assessment cycle, before assessment decisions are finalised, bringing assessors together to review sample work against the mark scheme and agree consistent judgements at grade boundaries. Minutes must record attendees, samples reviewed, and any resulting changes to marking.

7. Certification

A Centre may only submit a certification claim once the Lead IV confirms that IV sampling for the relevant learners and units is complete, evidence meets the evidence standard in Section 3, and no unresolved malpractice or maladministration concern applies to the claim. QH issues certificates directly; Centres may not issue certificates or replicate the QH certificate design.

Where a certification claim is found after issue to have been made in error, QH may withdraw the certificate and require the Centre to notify the learner, in line with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

8. Record Retention

Centres must retain learner registration records, assessment evidence, IV records and standardisation minutes for a minimum of three years after certification, or longer where required by the Centre's national regulations, and must make records available to QH on request within 10 working days.

9. Assessment Appeals

Learners who disagree with an assessment decision may request a review through the Centre's internal assessment appeals procedure in the first instance. Where a learner remains dissatisfied following the Centre's internal review, they may appeal to QH within 20 working days of the Centre's decision, in line with the QH Centre Approval Guidelines, Section 4.3.

10. Related Documents

- QH Centre Approval Guidelines
- QH International L3 High School Diploma — Qualification Specification (per pathway)
- QH Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- QH Equality, Diversity and Access Arrangements Policy
- QH Fees Schedule

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