



ILM External Quality Assurance Policy

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Scope

ILM is the UK's leading provider of leadership, management and coaching qualifications, and a City & Guilds Group Business. ILM offers a specialist suite of qualifications ranging from Level 2 to Level 7, which are awarded by The City and Guilds of London Institute. ILM also specialise in assessment, learning content, and accreditation of training.

This policy applies to prospective and existing ILM Centres and ILM Providers.

This ILM policy provides:

- guidance on the process for External Quality Assurance

This policy supersedes and replaces the ILM Guide to the External Quality Assurance Policy for Centre and Providers Version 3 April 2013.

The aim of this guide is to provide general guidance to best practice when working with your External Verifier.

External Verifiers are appointed to monitor the work of centres/providers. External Verifiers are the key link between ILM and the centre/provider.

The role of the External Verifier (EV) is to:

- sample assessment decisions to ensure that they are appropriate, consistent, and monitored across and within centres/providers
- ensure that their centres/providers have in place systems and processes that are robust, consistently applied and lead to good practice in record-keeping, support, advice, assessment and verification of learner and staff activities
- provide a robust audit trail of external verification related activities to both ILM and the customer (centre/provider)
- confirm the centre support status (CSS) and qualification quality rating (QQR) as per the quality assurance arrangements

Definitions

What EV activity can a centre/provider expect from ILM?

For each customer (centre/provider):

It is anticipated that each EV will, with each centre, prior to direct claims status (DCS) being granted, undertake 1 Customer Review visit per year plus 2 additional monitoring activities. These may be an on-site or remote activities however the default is remote.

Sampling can also be undertaken at the Customer Review visit.

Once DCS is granted this may become 1 Customer Review visit per year plus 1 additional remote activity.

If additional monitoring is required this should be agreed with your local Quality and Compliance Manager. The rationale for the extra monitoring will be discussed and it will be agreed if there will be a charge to the centre. The fee will be published in the Guide to Fees

Primary and Specialist EVs

All centres will be allocated a primary EV. That EV is responsible for undertaking the annual customer review and for routine sampling of qualifications.

Where a centre offers specialist qualifications an additional EV may be allocated for the specific purpose of undertaking the remote monitoring / sampling of specific units or qualifications.

Cancelled Visits

If a centre cancels an agreed activity at the last moment without a valid reason then ILM reserve the right to charge the centre for that, as published in the [Guide to Fees](#).

Activity planning with your External Verifier

The EV will ask to sample work from across all of your learners and this must be made available as requested. They may also wish to speak to learners and contact details must be provided. This may be by phone so they do not have to visit your site on the day of the activity.

All activities that are undertaken by your EV must be planned in advance and the date agreed. The EV will ask to sample work in its original language from across all of your learners and this must be made available as requested

All planning will take place via Walled Garden and there are a series of webinars available on the ILM website to help you do this. <https://www.i-l-m.com/trainers-and-centres/WalledGarden-New/WalledGarden-New-Resources>

If a centre fails to provide the requested information following a reminder from the EV, a sanction will be applied. The activity should take place on the pre agreed date.

An overview of the EV activity planning and reporting process can be found at Appendix 1

What will the EV want to sample?

An EV must sample the following within a one year period

- all active qualifications with active with learners
- work from all active members of the assessment and verification team
- all assessment methodologies employed including observation

Each sample is reported upon in their centre activity report (CAR). The size of the sample will vary, according to the context of the centre, and will be based upon such things as:

- learner numbers
- the number of qualifications being delivered
- the assessors and IVs at the centre
- the assessment methods being used
- centre support status and QQR for the qualifications being sampled

The sampling activity will as a minimum include:

- speaking to the IV
- sampling across the assessor base and speaking with a percentage of learners relevant to the period
- any special assessment requirements
- some assessed work that has been subject to internal quality assurance (IQA) and some that has NOT been subject to IQA
- a check that the authenticity statement is being used for all assessments
- centre records

Will this be the same if I only deliver qualifications through the ILM Assessment service?

If you offer qualifications through this service you will only have 1 EV visit a year and this will be your annual customer review. Your EV will not sample any assessments submitted to ILM Assessment Services however, sampling will take place if you offer other qualifications that are not delivered through the ILM Assessment Service.

What different types of EV activity are there?

On Site Monitoring

This is a planned EV visit which will be recorded on the Centre Activity Report (CAR) Form. It will include activity checks and sampling of learners' assessed work in line with the sampling guidance above.

Remote Monitoring

Remote monitoring is desk based verification /sampling of learners' assessed work and should also be planned. It will also be recorded on a CAR form in line with the sampling guidance above.

Additional On-Site monitoring

This is undertaken where remote monitoring has highlighted areas of concern and the centre needs additional support or sampling. This will be agreed by the Quality and Compliance Manager. It might also be initiated if concern has been raised through other means e.g. media, regulators, City & Guilds Awards or any other agencies. The visit is recorded using the normal CAR report.

Additional onsite monitoring can also be requested by the centre and will be chargeable at the current rate published in the Guide to Fees. https://www.i-l-m.com/~media/ILM%20Website/Sharepoint%20Documents/Published%20Documents/Guide%20to%20Fees_v1_2_March%202017.pdf.ashx

Annual Customer Review

This takes place once a year on the anniversary of the centre's approval (approximately 4 weeks either side of the approval date). This is a visit to review the centres systems and policies and note any changes and to ensure any required updates have been made. It will also be an opportunity to review the centre's programmes and discuss any queries you have or plans for the following year. The EV can also include a sample activity at the same time as the Annual Customer Review. If this is the case a separate report will be completed to record the sample undertaken.

Where can I see my EV CAR report?

This will be available to view under the Quality tab in Walled Garden. It will be available to view not later than 10 working days following the date of the activity.

Guidance on how to view this can be found on the ILM website - <https://www.i-l-m.com/trainers-and-centres/WalledGarden-New/WalledGarden-New-Resources>

What do the Qualification Quality Ratings (QQRs) mean?

Direct claims status allows you as a centre to send your results to ILM for processing without waiting for the EV to release / sign them off. DCS allows you to claim certificates after they have been assessed and IQA'd, without waiting for the EV to review - the EV reviews retrospectively at the next planned activity. It speeds up delivery of certificates to candidates and enhances your reputation as a centre.

This will depend on the centre's qualification quality rating. The tariffs are seven QQRs:

- 00 - No EV signature required: Direct Claims Status - no action plan
- 01 - No EV signature required: Direct Claims Status - with action plan
- 02 - EV signature required
- 3a - Suspend registrations
- 3b - Suspend certification
- 4 - withdraw programme approval
- 5 - withdraw centre approval

It should be noted that whilst the EV can recommend the tariff up to 3b, would be escalated by the Quality and Compliance Manager (QCM) for a final decision. The application of a Sanction at levels 4 & 5 would also be escalated to the QCM. This should be allocated for each qualification after each intervention / sampling with the centre. For new centres or new qualifications added to a centre's approval, the rating is usually 02. Once your EV is confident that the programme is operating successfully and the centre is carrying out their assessments to the required standard, this will need to be indicated on the CAR form and the rating will be changed to direct claims status (01 or 00). This can happen at any point and is dependent upon the EV's judgement.

Their judgement will be based upon risk within the centre and is not dependent upon length of time the centre has offered the qualification nor how many candidates have been processed.

Here are some possible risk factors that may be considered:

- how stable is the assessor / IQA resource within the centre?
- how variable is the unit offer within the qualification?
- what is the throughput at the centre? (If the throughput is small then this can reduce the risk)
- what experience of relevant assessments does the staff in the centre have?

When can QQR – Tariff of sanctions be changed?

It is ILM's aim that a centre's or a recognised provider's programme should move to having direct claim status (DCS) by implementing rigorous and robust internal quality processes.

The rating may change at any point. This can be as a result of further External Verifier (EV) activity; centre visits, remote monitoring or the annual customer review. The decision to amend any ratings in this case would be that of the External Verifier (EV) and be confirmed by the Quality and Compliance Manager (QCM).

The rating may also be changed by other senior members of the ILM Quality Team based upon outside intelligence.

QQR - Tariff Appeals Procedure

The centre has the opportunity to raise a query via phone or email, within 2 working days of receiving the report, with the Quality and Compliance Manager, should there be an issue relating to the Qualification Quality Rating. The Quality and Compliance Manager will review the evidence and rationale supporting the External Verifier recommended quality rating and discuss with the centre within a further 5 working days. If no agreement is achieved the query may be escalated to an appeal and an independent representative will be identified via the regulation team to review the QQR appeal. This process forms part of the overall ILM appeals process.

What additional support is available to me as centre?

In addition to the EV interventions referred to above, it is anticipated that EVs will provide email and telephone support to all active centres.

Additionally, centres will have access to a wide range of additional support mechanisms including:

- attendance at ILM events
- attendance at Institute of Leadership & Management Member events
- additional QCM/ BDM support
- additional monitoring by EV – chargeable if requested by the centre
- In house training event(s) – chargeable.

How do ILM decide on the level of support we need as a centre?

An outcome of the annual customer review will be to allocate you a centre support status.

There are three descriptors:

- Low centre support status
- Medium centre support status
- High centre support status

When is the Centre Support Status decided?

The Centre Support Status (CSS) is determined at the Annual Customer Review (ACR) and does not change throughout the year, unless something significant occurs within the centre. The Centre Support Status will be recommended by the EV and confirmed by the QCM. Each new centre will default to CSS: Medium, at approval and this will be reviewed following each ACR visit. The CSS can only be changed as a result of the ACR or by a QCM on an exceptional basis.

What do the CSS descriptors mean?

Low centre support status

Low centre support status: These centres will have an ACR, with appropriate EV monitoring to look at specific qualifications. There is no requirement for the EV to sample every cohort or group. Centres with a low centre support status are likely to be those with qualification ratings of 00/ 01 (i.e. direct claim status) with some 02 for newly added qualifications.

Medium centre support status

The cycle of support will be planned over a one year period. These centres will have an ACR and an annual programme of external verifier monitoring covering every qualification where there are registrations. Centres with a moderate centre support status would mainly have Qualification Quality Ratings of 02, with some 00 /01.

Normally, **new centres** would fall into this centre support status, with the first external verifier intervention happening within 6 months of approval, to provide support and guidance.

High centre support status

The cycle of support would be planned over a maximum one year period. In addition to the ACR, the EV monitoring would be planned more frequently and certainly within a 4 month period of the status being allocated. Centres are also likely to be required to attend ILM centre support events as part of the support package offered (free of charge). Centres with an enhanced centre support status would mainly have qualification quality ratings of 03a or 03b and some 02 ratings, dependent on the circumstances. They will almost certainly have action planning and where appropriate, emergency support and monitoring will be agreed with the QCM

Continuous Improvement

The ILM Quality and Regulatory Group monitor this policy and any associated feedback and ensure that the ILM Standard is maintained to ensure our qualifications and programmes are accessible to all whilst maintaining quality in implementation. This policy shall be the subject of a three year review cycle or as necessary.

ILM is a Business Unit within the City & Guilds Group.

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Appendix 1 – Overview of the EV Activity Process

