

Moderation process

Introduction

The Institute of Sales Professionals (ISP) is an Awarding Body and End Point Assessment Organisation approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and regulated by Ofqual. The ISP recognises its particular responsibilities regarding the quality of our end point assessment service. This Moderation process concerns standardisation and moderation activities, including how we sample assessment decisions to ensure that end point assessments are valid and reliable.

This Moderation process forms part of the ISP Quality Management System which is based on a principle of best practice and continuous improvement across all ISP Education operations.

The Head of Education is responsible for its oversight. The Quality Manager is responsible for its management and administration.

This Moderation process should be read in conjunction with overarching ISP Quality Management System documentation, the Consistency Assurance Strategy and the Monitoring procedure.

The procedure can be found on the ISP internal MS Teams site.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this process is to set out the intentions and key tools that the ISP will use in respect to its Quality Management System and in this case specifically with regard to standardisation, moderation and sampling.

ISP intends to ensure that:

1. The system of quality management promotes best practice and continuous improvement. The system is also in place to validate assessment decisions and maintain integrity of assessment
2. In its function as an End Point Assessment Organisation, it recognises and states its commitment to deliver high quality apprentice-centred end point assessment that meets the needs of the apprentices' employer.
3. It will protect the brand, reputation and high standards of integrity, required of an End Point Assessment Organisation, maintaining public confidence in the Governments' apprenticeship programmes.

Scope

The policy applies to all ISP Directors, staff, Independent Assessors and Quality personnel.

Definition

The process constitutes high quality standardisation, moderation and sampling to ensure best end point assessment practice, and practice that significantly promotes consistent and comparable assessment across all cohorts and assessment locations and which has a positive impact on outcomes for the apprentice.

Policy and Process

The key reference document for EPA Moderation processes is the requisite assessment plan attached to the apprenticeship standard. The ISP scrutinises the assessment plan to ensure its Moderation processes fully comply with its requirements.

The Quality Manager procedure involves regular monitoring and verification of end point assessments and their Independent Assessors. Using a quality assured risk-based sampling procedure (with an assessment sample of at least 5% for each IA); each EPA component, once assessed by the IA will be reviewed using an appropriate method (such as observation for Professional Discussion) and then verified.

The ISP EPA QA requirements are informed by:

- a. The Apprenticeship standard and its accompanying Assessment Plan
- b. The “route” in which the Standard sits
- c. ESFA Conditions for being on the register of end-point assessment organisations
- d. ESFA Funding Rules
- e. Any guidance provided by the assigned EQA organisation
- f. Ofqual EPA recognition
- g. and any other QA requirements.

Sampling

1. Use the IA sampling plan to regularly monitor all end-point assessors and to regularly sample their assessments. Each IA will be appropriately monitored and verified and a 5-10% sample of their assessments will also be verified.
2. The IQA of IAs is split into sections dependent on the type of assessment component. For example:
 - a. the sampling of a Project sampling uses the IQA IA Written Assessment form to quality assure that the IA’s assessment of the project is in keeping with ISP and Apprenticeship QA requirements.
 - b. The sampling of a Professional Discussion uses the IQA IA Observation of Performance form to quality assure that the IA’s assessment of the PDs is in keeping with ISP and Apprenticeship QA requirements
3. If any Action Points are to be taken, the IQA will explain to the IA the reasons for the required actions and agree a timeline for completion, with the IA.
4. Once the IQA report forms have been completed and agreed, the IQA will e-mail the forms to ISP Quality Manager (QM). The QM monitors the IQA process to ensure appropriate verifying of IAs and their assessments, and the IQA process is in line with ISP EPA standards.
5. The QM will monitor the achievement of any action points agreed with the individual IA and update the IQA reports accordingly, when action points are satisfied. (If an IA takes too long i.e. longer than the agreed timescale or doesn’t achieve; ISP operations will alert the QM)

6. When satisfied that the IAs have met the QA and assessment evidence sampling requirements and are in line with ISP EPA QA requirements, the QM will sign off and date the IQA sampling plan.
7. A key part of the monitoring procedure is the setting of sampling ratios based on risk. Risks around the reliability of an IA assessment decisions are described on the IA Monitoring procedure. Other risks can include:
 - a. An employer (or their selected training provider) is newly sending their apprentices to us for EPA
 - b. The Assessment Plan is re-issued or the Standard has been through triennial review.
 - c. There are amendments to the assessment regime (e.g. Covid dispensations)

Moderation

8. Moderation focuses on grading criteria. Measures include:
 - a. Distribution of grades across cohorts and apprentice profile
 - b. Distribution of grades by independent assessor
 - c. Distribution of grades across employer and/or training provider
 - d. Interrogation of grade boundaries based on a 5% rule whereby additional monitoring takes place when a grade is either 5% above or below the grade boundary
 - e. Checking that assessment documentation is fully, consistently and accurately completed, that marks have been correctly assigned and weighted in compliance with the scoring matrix in the requisite assessment plan and the calculations are correct
 - f. Checking that the documentation has been submitted in a timely fashion by each IA.

Standardisation

1. The Quality Manager will plan and implement standardisation meetings with all IAs for each Assessment Plan approval, where each IA is required to attend a minimum of one session annually (or more frequently where specified in the Assessment Plan).
2. Standardisation meetings will also focus on any revisions to the end point assessment materials and the analytical findings from our consistency assurance strategy, IQA, moderation and internal verification processes or where monitoring including EPA observations by the Quality Manager indicate that IAs are not fully compliant with our agreed ways of working.
3. Standardisation meetings are designed to develop the assessment skills of the IA team so are conducted in a supportive and non-threatening way. The aim is that IAs are willing to share issues, concerns and good practice, in order to improve reliable, valid, robust and consistent assessment decisions across the team.
4. Findings resulting from standardisation meetings are recorded and actions to improve inputted to either the quality or continuous improvement plans. Minutes are placed on a secure part of the ISP website with a log-in provided for IAs.

Outcomes of the moderation process include:

- Evidence for the EQA of the effectiveness of our internal quality assurance process
- Assurance in the veracity of assessment decisions

- The provision of a clear and accurate audit trail of the assessment decisions relating to each IA
- Provision of guidance for IAs in support of their CPD and the continuous improvement of assessment practice.

Monitoring

A tiered approach to monitoring is taken. The EPAO Quality Manager will collect any relevant data and report to the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer collates information on quality from all relevant sources and reports into the ISP Executive Board.

Review

The process shall be reviewed annually or more frequently where outcomes of quality assurance interventions indicate a need to change, amend or update the procedure.

Date of next review: December 2022