



**Access to HE Provider Handbook 2024-25**  
External Moderation

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## 1. Key Principles and Purposes

- 1.1 The oversight of internal moderation by external moderators will ensure that processes have been conducted in accordance with the AVA's published requirements, which will include regular consideration of the operation of the grading process and the appropriateness of grades postponed.
- 1.2 Internal and external moderation is designed to support quality and consistency – information about assessment should be followed through in feedback as part of the quality cycle, so that the relationship between the specified demands of the task, the student's response and assessment by the tutor can be tracked through the internal and moderation systems.

## 2. Role of the Access to HE Diploma Moderator

- 2.1 Diploma Moderators (DMs) are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and consistency of assessment judgements and confirming the award of credit and grades within each diploma. Diploma moderation activity will typically consist of remote sampling providing the previous reports for the Diploma were low or medium risk, and if no other issues have been brought to the AVA's attention.
- 2.2 All Diploma moderators
  - are committed to the AVA's aim of promoting wider participation for disadvantaged students
  - have expertise in vocational or academic study areas relevant to Access to HE programmes
  - approach their task in a supportive and collaborative manner and treat students and tutors with courtesy
  - will maintain the confidentiality of any discussion or correspondence regarding the programme and/or student(s)
  - agree to send completed moderation/review reports to the AVA in line with its guidelines and submit them within 5 working days following moderation activity and before given deadlines
  - will report any change of circumstance or declare any conflict of interest that may impinge on their ability to perform their role.
- 2.3 Diploma moderators are appointed by the AVA and will be responsible for the quality assurance of each diploma they are allocated. Where diplomas contain units which require expertise beyond that of the Diploma Moderator, additional moderators will be used.
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- 2.5 Diploma moderators are appointed to the Diplomas offered by a particular provider (as appropriate) for a maximum of four years.

## 3. External Moderation for Access to HE Diplomas Delivered Traditionally or Blended

3.1 External Moderation consists of six stages

Stage	Activity	Month
1	Annual declaration; programme confirmation and registrations	Sept
2	Sampling of assessment briefs	Oct/Nov
3	Sampling of assessed work	Timing based on assessment dates
4	Additional sampling	May/June
5	Final awards board	June/July
6	Provider annual review	Early Aug / Sept

### Stage 1 - Late September:

3.2 Providers will complete an ‘Annual Declaration’. This will be implemented across all recognised AIM providers and confirm compliance with AIM policies to deliver Access to HE.

3.3 AVA quality leads will carry out policies and compliance spot checks (risk-based selection).

3.4 Providers to confirm programmes (Diplomas and units) and course start dates.

### Stage 2 - October/November: Sampling of Assessment Briefs

3.5 Diploma moderators will sample assessment briefs This sampling is carried out using a risk-based approach. The number of briefs sampled in based on following factors:

- if assessments have changed since last moderated
- if the provider is new to delivering with the AVA
- if the Diploma or unit is being delivered for the first time by a provider
- if there has been a change in staff delivering at the provider.

3.6 Changes can be made to assessment briefs after sampling but would need to be provided to the Diploma moderator again for further sampling.

### Stage 3 – Sampling of Assessed Work

3.7 GradeTraka will be used to support the selection of assessed work for sampling therefore providers must ensure that GradeTraka is kept up to date. The sample will be selected by the AVA.

3.8 A minimum of three completed units will be sampled per Diploma sector. Sample size may be increased based on the number of assessors. Diploma sectors will be determined by the AVA.

## Minimum sample size

Number of active learners	Number of learners in sample
1-100	3 learners
101-249	5 learners
250+	7 learners

3.9 The sample size will be representative of Diploma sectors, all assessors, internal moderators, groups, delivery sites, modes of delivery, range of grades, resubmissions, referrals, extenuating circumstances, and the internal moderation sample.

3.10 Other factors which may increase the sample size include:

- Outcomes of previous Access to HE moderation reports
- Internal intelligence on the provider eg any issues and incidents that have come to our attention
- External intelligence eg if a certain qualification is a focus for the regulator or has been subject to significant specification changes recently.

## Stage 4 – May/June: Additional Moderation

3.11 Additional moderation will be required where delivery of 9- credit units does not allow for sampling of the complete unit at stage 3, or when issues experienced warrant further monitoring. Sample selection is based on same criteria applied in stage 3.

## Stage 5 – June/July: Final Award Board

3.12 From mid-June to Mid-July AVA Access to HE leads will have pre-FAB discussions with providers regarding any students to be approved at the FAB for

- an aegrotat or posthumous awards
- consideration of extenuating circumstances
- an award through extenuation or
- referrals.

3.13 Providers must collate supporting evidence for the above requests ready for the discussion. They will also need to collate information to support AVA Access leads checking RACs for accuracy prior to the FAB. AVA Access leads will identify which students’ grades and units they will want to check. Feedback from final sampling will also be available to discuss with the AVA Access leads.

## Stage 6 – Early August

3.14 The Annual Review template will be sent to providers in May and is to be returned to the AVA by the start of August

3.15 An analysis of the reviews submitted will be provided at the autumn Access to HE forum.

### 4. External Moderation Access to HE Diplomas Delivered through Pearl:

4.1 For centres still using the Pearl Platform, stage 1 of the model outlined above will still apply. Moderation of assessment briefs will not be required as the AVA has already moderated and approved these. The AVA will arrange a meeting to discuss and plan moderation of assessed work.

### 5. GradeTraka and Assessment Records

- 5.1 The AVA will access GradeTraka to select samples of assessed work, and moderators will access GradeTraka to view assessment records and grade profiles. Therefore, GradeTraka must be kept up to date.
- 5.2 Providers will need to advise where learners have had resubmissions, referrals and or extenuating circumstances, and if they have been part of the IM sample.
- 5.3 Providers may also identify students who have made internal appeals, together with the outcome of that appeal. The AVA may wish to include these students in the sample. Moderators should not be asked to review work related to an ongoing appeal including where a student is dissatisfied with the internal appeals process and has asked for their work to be reviewed by the moderator. The student should be directed to the AVA's appeals policy and procedure.

### 6. Access to Sample

- 6.1 A folder on the AVA's SharePoint will be set up for each Diploma and provider for samples to be made available.
- 6.2 Providers will be expected to upload the following information for the units being sampled:
- All assessment evidence and feedback for the students identified as the sample
  - Internal moderation evidence
  - All submissions and associated feedback for any resubmissions and or referrals included in the sample
  - Assessment briefs if not part of the feedback form.
- 6.3 Samples are expected to be uploaded in a coherent and logical manner, so it is clear to the moderator which assessment belongs to which student and unit.

### 7. External Diploma Moderator/Access to HE Lead Reports

- 7.1 External moderation reports are important quality assurance documents and as such should be word processed on the correct template, submitted through Quartzweb and be evaluative. Guides to completing reports will be made available for each stage of moderation.
- 7.2 AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group will request a re-write of any report that is inaccurate, inappropriate, incomplete, or ambiguous.

- 7.3 Where moderation activity identifies deficiencies or areas for improvement required actions will be identified in the report. These will address non-compliance with provider approval requirements or aspects of the practice or process that have implications for the integrity of the award of credit of the Diploma. These must be addressed within an agreed timescale.
- 7.4 In addition, recommendations for further enhancement of provision can also be recorded as well as examples of good practice.
- 7.5 All reports will be available on Quartzweb on the documents tab following AVA approval. They are not circulated by email.

## 8. Second Sampling

- 8.1 This will be required if an access moderator identifies issues with assessment design or inaccurate assessment and grading decisions. All instances will be referred to the AIM Access Manager to review and if agreed that a second sample is required, a call will be arranged with the provider to discuss the report.
- 8.2 The sample will be selected by the AVA and will consist of work from learners in the original sample and those that were not included. Work may also be requested from an additional unit. Any learners impacted by the issues will not be able to be presented at a final awards board until issues have been resolved.

## 9. Provider Annual Review Report (PARR)

- 9.1 This is a qualitative analysis of the provision which addresses all issues that have been identified through internal review or external moderation. It is produced by the providers at the end of the academic year.
- 9.2 Only the proforma provided by the AVA can be used and once completed, the report must be received by the AVA by the deadline provided.

## 10. The Final Award Board (FAB)

### Purpose

- 10.1 This is held to confirm the award of credit and which students are eligible for the Access to HE Diploma. It is a key part of the moderation process. The meeting is convened by the provider in negotiation with the AVA and should only take place after module results have been confirmed by the moderators.
- 10.2 Prior to the FAB, the provider will need to provide a list of the Class Run IDs that will have RACs presented at the FAB.

### Composition of the FAB

10.3 The minimum composition of each awards board meeting is:

- The chair – this individual will also act as minute taker
- AVA representative acting as moderator
- The course Access coordinator or manager

10.4 All parties are required to treat discussion of individual students as confidential.

### FAB Agenda

10.5 An agenda is produced by the AVA and includes the following standard agenda items:

- Statement of confidentiality
- A review of key aspects of the provider's Access to HE provision on provided template, for example: recruitment, retention, achievement, progression
- Action taken in relation to any issues raised at moderation
- Confirmation of the award of credit, grades, and the Access to HE Diploma
- Consideration of any special cases (extenuating circumstances; Aegrotat and posthumous awards; and cases of academic misconduct).

10.6 As progression of learners is expected to be reported on during the review of the provision, providers need to ensure that they are recording where their learners are intending to progress to. Please record the institution or employer's name, course or job title and typical offer ie the grades the learner had to achieve.

### Post FAB Activity

10.7 Following the meeting, the minutes will be sent to the provider for confirmation of accuracy, and then uploaded to Quartzweb.

10.8 Further information about the conduct of FABs will be provided in the AVA's final award board guidance document.

## 11. Completing Results Documentation and Certification

### Key requirements

11.1 All results will need to be entered onto the RAC. Full guidance will be provided, as well as a training course and also customer support over the telephone if required.

11.2 By submitting a RAC, you are claiming for all credits that have been entered and as such these will be certificated. Please do not claim credits for two-year students at the end of their first year, or for those granted extensions or referrals until they have completed the Access to Higher Education Diploma as this will result in partial certification. Please do not delete any pages from the RAC.



- 11.3 All RACs and learner summary sheets associated with each RAC must be uploaded to QuartzWeb no later than four working days before the scheduled FAB.
- 11.4 If RACs have not been uploaded in time, then the FAB may be postponed. Any changes required to RAC after uploading will need to be recorded on the record of change form and submitted to the AVA by the FAB chair after the FAB.
- 11.5 Please input the achievement details and complete the learner summary for all students whose achievements are confirmed. Please do not enter details for individual students who you may wish to discuss with the Access lead prior to the FAB. This may be for extensions due to a student's extenuating circumstances or a request for a referral. Following discussions, the outcomes will be reported to the FAB and recorded in the minutes.
- 11.6 All achievements entered on the RAC and received by the AVA will be certificated.

### **Certification of Students**

- 11.7 Following verification certificates will be issued and sent direct to providers within 10 working days of receiving all correctly completed documentation.
- 11.8 Receipt of certificates must be confirmed.

## **12. Upload of Results to UCAS**

- 12.1 The AVA will upload all results including grades to UCAS that have been received and processed by the date stipulated by UCAS. Where students have been granted extensions to complete and achieve their Access to Higher Education Diploma providers must advise the students that this could result in a delay to results being submitted to UCAS. In such situations, providers are expected to support their students in confirming results with their chosen university.