

C ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE NOTES (QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND PROGRAMMES)

- C.1 The university policy and processes for assessment and verification fully align with Qualifications Scotland (QS) quality assurance requirements for the university as a single QS centre. The current QS guidance documents on assessment and verification are available in the QS SharePoint and on QS webpage (qualifications.gov.scot). Further guidance is available from each academic partner quality manager.
- C.2 The QS Guide to assessment is very helpful and identifies principles, modes of assessment, guidance on reassessment and provides examples of best practice. QS guidance documents of interest to staff (such as the set of quality assurance criteria applied by External Verifiers) have been extracted and placed on the intranet at the reference above. These provide benchmarks for practice and an important resource for staff induction and staff development.
- C.3 Faculties and academic partners provide a clear focus on quality assurance of QS awards. Academic staff are required to be familiar with, and comply with, defined quality assurance processes. The university and academic partners have developed set procedures and work collaboratively to meet specific QS requirements in assessment and verification. These procedures are available on the website and in each academic partner's quality manual.
- C.4 The university procedures satisfy QS national requirements. Network HN Programme Leaders support cognate subject groups as they review how standardised approaches operate at programme level across the partnership. Guidance for staff on assessment and verification criteria and standards is on the staff intranet and is available centrally. This guidance is provided within cognate subject groups and at faculty level, as well as in academic partners.
- C.5 External verification events are determined at the start of the academic year. There are a range of modes including visiting and virtual. It is managed across the partnership through the role of the QS coordinator located within executive office. This role provides a central point of contact between the university and QS. The QS coordinator reports on the management of verification via Quality Forum (QF) and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) which in turn link into other academic structures such as cognate subject groups and Faculty Board.
- C.6 Where regulated qualifications are delivered; the university must allow QS Accreditation or Ofqual staff access to the relevant people and documentation required to ensure an objective assessment of the university's compliance with QS quality assurance can be made.
- C.7 All academic partners maintain updated lists of staff that are assessors and / or internal verifiers. The quality requirements related to the necessary training and updating of these staff is identified within the QS quality assurance criteria listed on the staff intranet. Each academic partner is responsible for providing selection, initial induction and further training opportunities to ensure staff are competent in their role(s) and are up to date with current QS assessor and internal verification (IV) requirements.
- C.8 All assessors and internal verifiers must have occupational experience, understanding and any necessary qualifications as specified in the QS requirements for the qualification. Additionally, assessors and verifiers of regulated qualifications must achieve a relevant assessor/verifier qualification within 18 months of starting to practice where no alternative timescale is stated

in an assessment strategy. Assessors and internal verifiers for regulated conversations must undertake relevant continuing professional development activities, and maintain records of those activities.

- C.9 Internal verification in academic partners utilises a standard, three stage process addressing pre-assessment, during assessment and post-assessment requirements. It is managed within a range of academic structures dependent on the organisational structure of each partner. Under the leadership of the HE Operations Manager, with support from programme leaders and quality managers, it is being progressed on a cognate subject group basis for multi-site provision. Appendix F provides staff with information on the internal verification procedure.
- C.10 The assessment of each QS HN and SVQ unit is allocated to a verification group. Each academic partner quality manager provides guidance and support for staff in relation to all partner management aspects of assessment and IV. Associate deans support QS network PLs and other staff in IV collaborations within cognate subject groups. This aspect is further strengthened through the work of the growing number of network progression boards.
- C.11 There is regular review of assessment and internal verification practice across the partnership. Further guidance on current practice is developed collaboratively and is disseminated using internal and external feedback and through College events, development days and other cognate subject group activities.
- C.12 A log of the outcomes of all external verification (EV) visits (including identification of good practice) is maintained by executive office and is reviewed by Quality Managers, Quality Forum and QAEC. The EV reports are regularly updated and are placed on the QS SharePoint area alongside an annual summary, so staff can access this valuable resource of current practice, recommendations and development areas. This activity, and those in the preceding paragraphs, aim to strengthen best practice in a range of aspects of delivery, assessment and quality assurance.
- C.13 At all stages of the assessment process, due consideration is given to the individual needs of the learner as appropriate, taking into account the Equality Act 2010. In the interests of fairness to all students, opportunities for re-assessment must be applied consistently across all academic partners. University policy, in line with QS recommendation, states that for summative assessment, if the initial outcome is not successful, normally one re-assessment attempt should be provided. There are exceptions to this and the university seeks to address these exceptions through careful consideration of mitigating circumstances in accordance with the university's [mitigating circumstances procedure](#). Further guidance on re-assessment attempts and other aspects, e.g. remediation is provided within the QS SharePoint area.
- C.14 Fairness and transparency of process in assessment is important and QS requires that the assessor, IV and invigilator are responsible for ensuring that there is no potential for a conflict of interest to arise when learners are undertaking an assessment. If a potential conflict of interest from the assessor, IV or invigilator is identified; the assessor, IV or invigilator must bring this to the attention of the line manager. The line manager will carry out action to neutralize any conflict of interest. This could involve changing the arrangements for assessment, IV or invigilation of a learner or group of learners, so that no single member of staff with a personal interest in the outcome of the assessment is solely involved in the assessment, verification or invigilation process.

- C.15 Passing an assessment first time, within a criterion-referenced assessment framework is not a condition of an QS award and no additional penalty should apply for a re-assessment. This applies equally in assessment of HN graded units and particular care should be taken by staff to ensure that all grades reflect the assessment grade requirements of the unit specification, with no additional requirement added - such as “must be passed at first attempt for a specific grade” etc.
- C.16 Assessment arrangements for students with additional support needs have been developed by QS to meet fairness requirements. Information for staff is provided in the Student Personal Learning Support Plans - staff guidance document (and in QS Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements in Internal and External Assessment: Information for Colleges document, available via the QS website). Specific questions should be directed to the local academic partner student support and quality teams in the first instance.

Staff guidance

- C.17 If a student has passed a graded unit (GU) and then wishes to use the re-assessment opportunity to achieve a higher grade (e.g. to meet a course admissions requirement) this is clearly possible under QS guidance, as long as the assessment employs a significantly different project or a completely new examination. The amount of student effort required to undertake a new graded unit project in the remaining time in the term means this is an unlikely scenario. As assessment issues arise the professional judgement will be required with the guiding principle being fairness to students. Quality managers and associate deans will consider such issues as they emerge and seek to adopt an equivalent position across the university.
- C.18 The EV coordination of QS Graded Unit examinations is managed through the university QS coordinator. It is an important principle for the university that all QS GU examinations (including re-sit examinations) are prior verified (PV) by QS before being implemented. This is essential as some aspects of GU examinations have been problematic in the past and remediation of these key units may be difficult to address at a late stage in the session. Guidance on prior verification arrangements is available through the College quality manager and documentation to submit a PV request is listed on the QS SharePoint area.
- C.19 Faculties and cognate subject groups have an important role in collaborative quality development of QS provision across the university. Through the work of network programme leaders and the network QS programme leader initiative, cognate subject groups are expanding their capacity to address quality issues within the network. Quality managers are working closely with cognate subject groups to develop a shared view of network assessment and verification practice.

Assessment process for QS graded unit assessments

- C.20 These arrangements apply only to the final Graded Unit Assessments taken under examination conditions. Arrangements for practice examinations and for other Graded Unit Assessments, e.g. projects, will be made within cognate subject groups.
- C.21 The main deadlines arise from QS requirements for prior verification of the assessment instrument and external verification of marked work. All GUs delivered across the university will be administered to the same deadlines, irrespective of whether the assessment is sent to

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Assessment guidance notes (Qualifications Scotland programmes)

QS for prior external verification and whether the unit is selected for external verification. This will help to avoid last-minute arrangements after QS has identified which units are to be externally verified.

C.22 Examination GUs will be taken during May each year. This is late enough for students to have covered sufficient work and early enough to allow for marking, internal verification and re-sits before the end of session.

C.23 It will be possible to make arrangements for GUs to be taken out with the schedule if required.

C.24 The arrangements allow for a choice of marking and internal verification models.

C.25 Assessments can be marked where the students sat the assessment (or posted to the marker) and then sent on to the internal verifier. Assessments to be marked and verified using this model should be taken earlier in the diet to allow for posting time.

C.26 Assessments can be posted or taken to a meeting at which both marking and internal verification can be achieved. This model may allow the assessment to be taken later in the diet.

C.27 Re-sits will be scheduled to take place during the term wherever possible. Re-sit papers must be prepared along with other papers, and held in case they are needed.

C.28 The key dates associated with these arrangements are as shown in the table below.

Qualifications Scotland Graded Units timeline

Week	Task	Responsibility
Semester 1: Week 5	All HN graded unit exam units to be entered in SITS.	Academic partners
Semester 1: Week 6	Start production of main and re-sit exam papers. Teams developing papers for the first time contact their QM regarding support, such as requesting an EV development visit request or collaboration with peers in other areas who have experience and expertise to offer.	Delivering team led by network HN programme leader (HN PL) or local programme leader where no HN PL is in place.
Semester 1: Week 10	All active HNs with a graded unit (exam) to be identified.	University QS Coordinator
Semester 1: Week 16 (at latest)	Papers to be sent to QS for prior verification via the university QS Coordinator	Delivering team, AP quality manager or unit and university QS Coordinator
Semester 1: Week 17	Set exam and re-sit dates.	Network HN PL or SNL where no QS PL is in place.

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Assessment guidance notes (Qualifications Scotland programmes)

Week		Task	Responsibility
Semester Week 2	2:	Prepare exam attendance registers by identifying all students (name and number) taking graded unit and at which sites they are based.	HN PL / programme team.
Semester Week 2	2:	Agree exam papers to be used (where courses are provided with a bank of papers that have been prior verified by QS).	Network HN PL / local PL where no network HN PL is in place / programme team.
Semester Week 7	2:	All amendments required by the prior verification service are actioned.	HN PL / programme team.
Semester Week 7	2:	The papers should be in their finalised format, i.e. ready to be issued with no further checking, editing or amendment taking place. Specific instruction, e.g. the need for graph paper to be issued, should be included.	Network HN PL / local PL where no network HN PL is in place.
Semester Week 7	2:	Room bookings to be made in each academic partner.	Network HN PL / local PL where no network HN PL is in place, with the assistance of the lecturer with responsibility for the exam in the AP.
Semester Week 13/14/15	2:	Graded unit exams take place.	Programme team.
Semester Week 13 onwards	2:	First and second marking occurs. Candidates who need to re-sit are identified and informed.	Programme team.
Semester Week 16	2:	Collation of results and evidence for QS.	Network HN PL, Programme team and AP quality unit.
Semester First Friday in June (2 June)*	2:	QS pick up sample of completed evidence.	QS
9-20 June*		QS external verification.	QS
End of June onwards		EV feedback received from QS and disseminated to academic partners.	University QS Coordinator

Table 1: *QS Graded Units timeline*

QS DATA ENTRY

C.29 QS student entries (group awards and units) for full-time and part-time students starting in September to be entered by all academic partners by 1 December at the latest.

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Assessment guidance notes (Qualifications Scotland programmes)

- C.30 All student entries for part-time students entering after September to be entered by academic partners within six weeks of starting the programme.
- C.31 All student entries for semester 2 to be entered within six weeks of starting the programme.
- C.32 All results due to complete within the academic session to be entered by academic partners by 1 August (in the small number of cases where post-summer HN re-sits are involved, results should be completed and entered within two weeks of the September start of the programme).