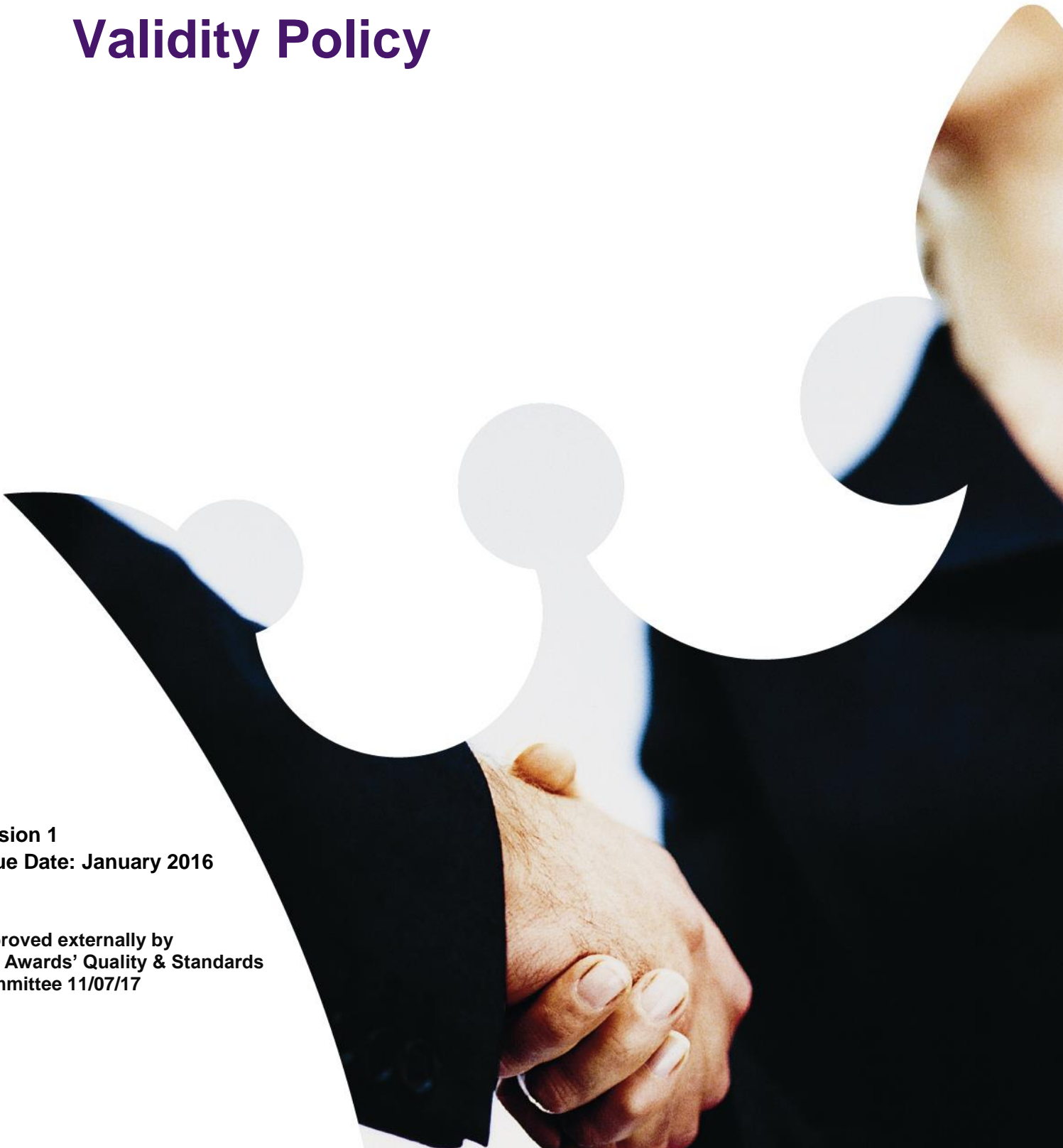


# Validity Policy

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Approved externally by  
SFJ Awards' Quality & Standards  
Committee 11/07/17



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# 1 Purpose

The policy sets out SFJ Awards' intentions and approach to validity and the lifecycle of its regulated qualifications.

SFJ Awards is committed to ensuring that all qualifications developed are valued, credible and fit for purpose.

# 2 Definition

By Validity<sup>1</sup> we mean ensuring we measure what we intend.

Qualifications must provide evidence that learners who successfully complete and achieve them have met the aim or purpose and the assessment outcomes of the qualification.

Our qualifications must fit with SFJ Awards' mission, values and objectives.

# 3 Principles

Qualifications must be right at all stages - design, development, delivery, awarding and review. We ensure validity at each stage through our qualification development, quality assurance and certificating procedures.

A qualification is fit for purpose if that qualification, as far as possible, secures the requirements of:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Comparability
- Manageability, and
- Minimising bias

Since validity relates to purpose, the purpose of a qualification is critical in assessing its validity. Letters of support are obtained and market research is conducted.

Stakeholders are involved in setting a clear purpose for all SFJ Awards qualifications. A wide variety of stakeholders are consulted including Employers, Training Providers, Sector Skills Councils, External Quality Assurers and Learners.

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<sup>1</sup> The Qualifications Regulator, Ofqual, define validity as:

*“The extent to which evidence and theory support the interpretation that the assessment outcomes meet their intended uses.*

*The evaluation of Validity involves the development of a clear argument to support the proposed interpretation of the outcomes and as a consequence the intended uses of the assessment. The Validity argument should be built on statements of the proposed interpretation and supporting evidence collected from all stages of the assessment process.”*

*Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition, June 2016 (Ofqual/16/6023)*

Guidance and detail relating to the design of SFJ Awards qualifications is documented within our Qualification Development processes.

Qualifications in development must have clear user involvement. Qualifications must assess the correct standards and should be delivered by our approved centres securely, consistently, efficiently and effectively.

Guidance is provided in our Centre Handbook and Qualifications Handbooks.

## 4 Roles and Responsibilities

### **SFJ Awards' Awarding Organisation Manager (Responsible Officer):**

- To ensure all qualifications meet the General Conditions of Recognition

### **SFJ Awards' Qualifications Development Manager:**

- Ensure qualifications respond to the needs of different sectors and to different employers
- Ensure qualifications are fit for purpose, have a clear objective, user support, and are reviewed and enhanced based on user feedback

### **SFJ Awards' Quality and Assessment Manager:**

- Ensure that all SFJ Awards Quality Assurance and assessment processes and activities comply with the Qualifications Regulators' General Conditions of Recognition and meet customer needs
- Ensure all External Quality Assurers provide the highest quality of service and reflect SFJ Awards' values
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to support quality assurance and assessment activities

## 5 Assessment

SFJ Awards set learning outcomes and assessment criteria, clearly defined and articulated in our Qualification Handbooks and made available to all providers through the website. The learning outcomes (defining what the student will be able to do, know or understand) and the assessment criteria (the standard upon which assessment evidence will be judged) remain unchanged requiring the same assessment process regardless of when or where it is followed, assuring qualification consistency over time.

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria allow for differentiation. SFJ Awards aims to offer qualifications designed to provide clear steps and progression to further learning or employment.

Assessment models are determined, as appropriate, through consultation with stakeholders at the point of design and development. SFJ Awards qualifications provide competence based assessment of skills essential to the subject/role, which are effectively assessed by a variety of appropriate methods through internal assessment and quality assurance within the centre and external quality assurance by SFJ Awards.

Assessment models take into consideration cost effective arrangements for delivery, using only reasonably expected resources to allow learners to generate authenticated product evidence, permit reasonable adjustments to be made, whilst minimising the need for them.

## **6 Level of Demand**

The level of demand on learners of an assessment for qualifications SFJ Awards makes available is always determined by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria set out for the individual units of the qualification. The level of demand for an assessment will therefore not change unless the set learning outcomes and assessment criteria change.

The criteria are set out in a clear and unambiguous way, allowing learners' levels of attainment to be differentiated. This allows internal assessors, internal quality assurers and external quality assurers to accurately and consistently differentiate between ranges of attainment by learners and standards of challenge put on to the learners over time.

## **7 Lifecycle**

To provide confidence in our qualifications; to link to stakeholder needs; offer appropriate progression routes and meet the needs of employers, SFJ Awards review its qualification provision on a planned basis.

Throughout the life cycle of qualifications SFJ Awards review its qualifications, and the units within those qualifications.

Where qualifications have been unused, SFJ Awards reviews the qualifications and in consultation with the stakeholders who supported their development, take action to retire the qualifications.

Further information outlining the review and withdrawal processes are detailed within the qualification development processes.

## **8 Quality Assurance**

We ensure a close links between qualification design and development and quality assurance. Our approach to assessment is informed, rigorous and valid.

A quality assurance team nominee is consulted at the design stage for each qualification to ensure appropriate quality assurance resources can be allocated to intended providers of the qualifications under design and to advise on assessment and internal/external qualification assurance considerations.

We provide clear assessment guidelines for centres to follow. Documentation and guidance provide detailed information on internal assessment and quality assurance approaches for all our qualifications. Our Centre Handbook, Qualification Handbooks and all quality assurance documents are made available through our website.

We have a well-documented and rigorous process of external quality assurance, which is regularly reviewed.

Our team of external quality assurers have all been (or still are) serving professionals and subject specialists, with a wide breadth of experience in the sector. We recruit, train and evaluate external quality assurers in a manner that ensures consistent and repeatable interpretation of our assessment arrangements. The external quality assurance teams' performance is monitored and reviewed over time through thorough quality assurance checking of their reports carried out by the Quality Assurance Officer, and through a rolling programme of accompanied visits by the Quality and Assessment Manager.

We have a Standardisation Policy and offer standardisation events to enable our approved centre representatives and external quality assurers to develop, promote and share a clear understanding of the required national standard and identify and share good practice.

## 9 Feedback

To ensure qualifications remain fit for purpose throughout their life cycle we believe it is vital to engage with our stakeholders. We have a number of ways in which to do this. Feedback is welcomed via our website, via written or oral communication from our stakeholders, via questionnaires, via EQA visits, learners and also by feedback received at our events.

We utilise this feedback to review and improve our portfolio over time.

## 10 Data Collection

We seek information from stakeholders using a variety of methods, pre-development of a qualification, to ensure the purpose and objectives are clear. The information comes from a variety of sources including labour market intelligence, local market needs and data held internally.

During the lifecycle of the qualification ongoing information is used to determine the validity of the qualification.

We seek destination or progression data from our approved centres, where this is possible, to analyse the extent to which learner's progress.

All data is collected and stored in line with our Data Protection Policy. Further information about Data Protection can be found in SFJ Awards' Data Protection Policy available from the website – [www.sfjawards.com/dataprotection](http://www.sfjawards.com/dataprotection)

## 11 Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Quality and Assessment Manager on a regular basis as part of SFJ Awards' self-evaluation arrangements and revised as necessary in response to lessons learnt, customer feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the Qualifications Regulators.

Our review of the policy will ensure that SFJ Awards procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied appropriately and equitably.

Policies and formal amendments to policies are approved at the next meeting by the Quality & Standards Committee.

If you have any queries about the content of the policy or you wish to give feedback then please contact SFJ Awards Tel: 01142 841970 or email [info@sfjawards.com](mailto:info@sfjawards.com)

## 12 Location of the Policy

You can download copies of the policy from our website: [www.sfjawards.com/validity](http://www.sfjawards.com/validity)