

# Standardisation Policy

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# 1 Purpose

The policy sets out SFJ Awards' approach to standardisation and the expectations of its partners to maintain the value, quality and consistency of SFJ Awards qualifications.

SFJ Awards is committed to ensuring that all developed qualifications are valued and have credibility. Key to this is valid and reliable standardisation.

# 2 Definition

Standardisation is a process to ensure that the assessment criteria for a qualification, unit or component are applied consistently by assessors, IQAs and EQAs.

Standardisation ensures that individual units are being consistently administered, assessed and awarded over time, and aligns with the level and value placed on the units.

# 3 Roles and Responsibilities

## **Tutors/Assessors:**

- Take part in standardisation activities as part of their continuing professional development.

## **Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs):**

- Facilitate opportunities for assessors to engage in standardisation and continuous professional development activity.
- Provide evidence of internal standardisation activities for EQA purposes.
- Contribute sanitised/anonymised samples for external standardisation events.
- Take part in SFJ Awards external standardisation activities as part of their continuing professional development.

## **Heads of Centre:**

- Act in accordance with SFJ Awards' standardisation policy as part of the centre's compliance with the approved centre agreement.

## **SFJ Awards External Quality Assurers (EQAs):**

- Check centre internal standardisation activity (and evidence) as part of your SFJ Awards EQA approved centre ongoing compliance monitoring activities.
- Take part in SFJ Awards external standardisation activities as part of your ongoing continuous professional development.

### SFJ Awards' Quality and Assessment Manager:

- Plan and oversee the standardisation event schedule.
- Issue event facilitator reports to centres.

## 4 Principles of Standardisation

Awarding organisations must have procedures in place to ensure its own staff and its associates are competent and have access to appropriate training and guidance to ensure quality and consistency of standards across centres and over time.

Confirmation of the consistent application of assessment to assure learner achievement, is a key priority for all awarding organisations and approved centres.

Development of a robust standardisation process, which can be applied both within centres and nationally, provides evidence of consistent practice and contributes towards an awarding organisation assuring itself that it is meeting its regulatory responsibilities.

The process ensures that standards are comparable both across centres and over time.

SFJ Awards ensures standards are consistent across all centres:

- through the centre approval process, and ongoing centre compliance monitoring.
- by ensuring that standardisation occurs within centres as part of a centre's rigorous internal quality assurance process.
- by planning and delivering a comprehensive programme of national external standardisation events that enable IQAs and EQAs to compare outcomes of assessment.

Holding external Standardisation events is part of SFJ Awards' quality objectives.

## 5 Standardisation Activity

Three inter-related features of standardisation activity underpin the achievement of quality and consistency:

- **Internal Standardisation** - in any centre where there is more than one tutor/assessor delivering the same qualification/course or similar qualifications/courses/units and making assessment decisions and recommendations for certification of learners, it is essential that the Internal Quality Assurance process includes an opportunity for the standardisation of their practice. The Internal Quality Assurer for the course(s) is responsible for arranging and facilitating standardisation opportunities.

A typical internal standardisation meeting includes the following activities:

- each assessor brings a sample of assessed learner's work.
  - the group works their way through the learner evidence, checking to see if the evidence of achievement is valid, sufficient and reliable, and they agree with the assessment decision.
  - the group comment on the feedback given to the learner.
  - the group offer supportive recommendations how assessors might improve their assessment practice.
  - the group agree what action(s) is needed to ensure that everyone assesses to the same consistent standard going forward.
  - any changes to assessment decisions are agreed and recorded.
- **External Quality Assurance** – SFJ Awards ensures, through its centre approval process and ongoing compliance monitoring of all its centres by External Quality Assurers (EQAs), that all its units and qualifications are subject to robust centre standardisation, and approved centres contribute to the external standardisation of its qualifications.
  - **External Standardisation** – SFJ Awards will organise national standardisation events. These events will be the responsibility of the Quality & Assessment Manager, facilitated by an EQA with a specialism in the sector area. Centres will be informed of the dates for standardisation events for the year, at the beginning of each academic year.

Centres will be asked to participate in these events in two ways:

- to contribute sanitised/anonymised sample materials to the event, and
- by sending a representative to participate.

External standardisation events provide an opportunity for SFJ Awards to ensure the consistency of the award of certificates to learners across different assessors/verifiers/different types of organizations, and agree the standards to be achieved (benchmark).

Benefits of attending SFJ Awards' external standardisation events include:

- networking with peers from other SFJ Awards approved centres/organisations
- sharing resource ideas
- sharing good assessment and IQA practices
- receiving updates on qualification developments and processes
- continuing professional development (CPD).

A review of a centre's risk rating will be carried out for centres that do not send a representative/participate in standardisation events.

Continuation of Direct Claims Status will be dependent on a centre IQA representative attending at least one SFJ Awards' external standardisation event every two years.

## **Schedule of SFJ Awards National Standardisation Events:**

The Standardisation event schedule will be produced as part of a three year rolling programme. All sectors/qualifications will be covered over a three year rolling cycle. The programme will be designed to respond to:

- the need to ensure the comparability of standards of widespread units across the range of qualifications.
- the volume of uptake of particular qualifications/levels.
- units/qualifications where concerns have been raised by Assessors, IQAs, EQAs, the Qualifications Regulators or other stakeholders, including those units where queries have been raised about the unit content.
- units at different levels
- the need to standardise across centres, nationally and between EQAs
- the need to ensure standardisation of quality across all organisations

Centres will be informed of the sanitised/anonymised sample they must bring to the external standardisation event in sufficient time for them to allow them to collect the required learner work and anonymise it. Centres will also need to bring along the associated records of their assessment and IQA records for the sample.

Samples will be retained by SFJ Awards for the lifetime of the qualification/unit(s). This allows SFJ Awards to build up a sample to compare standards over time.

## **Dissemination of Event Outcomes:**

A report recording the outcomes of the event(s) will be authored by the facilitators. The facilitator report will be disseminated to all attendees after the event and made available to all centres for information through SFJ Awards' website secure centre login area.

Where exemplars can be identified, these will be made available.

## **Further Standardisation Opportunities:**

SFJ Awards will plan a rolling programme of free short themed live online webinar events, delivered to participants' computers.

The events will be designed to provide training opportunity, standardise approach, share good practice and provide a forum for questions. The webinars will be recorded so they can be viewed again at a later date.

## **Standardisation of similar units/qualifications across other Awarding Organisations:**

SFJ Awards is committed to monitoring assessment and achievement standards of units common across sectors and subject areas and will participate in standardisation activities with other awarding organisations as appropriate.

## 6 Monitoring

SFJ Awards Quality and Standards Committee will monitor the effectiveness and outcomes of standardisation activity over time, as part of the awarding organisation's self-evaluation arrangements.

## 7 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)

## 8 Location of the Policy

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