

Black Mountains College

Internal Quality Assurance Policy

Applies To: Students, members of staff and visiting tutors/lecturers.

1. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all BMC staff members, students external contractors (e.g. Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs), External Examiners) involved in the delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of the qualifications offered by Black Mountains College.

It covers all programmes delivered under awarding/validating body approval and applies to all assessment and internal verification activity.

2. Review Arrangements

This policy is reviewed:

- Annually as part of Black Mountains College's formal quality assurance cycle
- As a result of:
 - Student or customer feedback
 - Awarding organisation guidance
 - Regulatory or legislative updates
 - Internal or external quality review recommendations

3. Location of the Policy

This policy is available to:

- All staff
- Students
- Third parties
- Awarding body representatives
- Public

It is accessible via the Black Mountains College website, on the relevant course VLEs and in the FE/HE student handbooks, which are introduced in all course inductions.

4. Communication of the Policy

- All staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of qualifications will be introduced to this policy during their induction.
- All students studying accredited qualifications at Black Mountains College are informed of this policy as part of their student induction process.

5. Policy Statement

Internal Quality Assurance at Black Mountains College is central to ensuring high-quality delivery, fair and accurate assessment decisions, regulatory compliance, and positive student outcomes across the College's Further and Higher Education provision.

Internal Quality Assurance monitors the student journey across the full qualification lifecycle, from enrolment to certification. It ensures that:

- Assessment decisions are valid, authentic, sufficient, fair, reliable, and current
- Standards are consistently applied
- Students achieve outcomes that fully meet awarding body requirements
- Delivery and assessment meet required quality benchmarks

6. Statement of Principles

Black Mountains College's Internal Quality Assurance framework is underpinned by the following principles:

- Maintaining high-quality standards throughout the student journey
- Ensuring accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions
- Identifying emerging issues, risks, and trends
- Supporting and developing tutors/assessors
- Maintaining accountability for assessment decisions
- Ensuring student achievement is:
 - Correctly assessed
 - Accurately recorded
 - Fully compliant with grading criteria
- Ensuring appropriate and effective assessment strategies are used
- Maintaining confidentiality and data protection
- Ensuring interim and summative sampling takes place

7. Equality, Inclusion & Professional Practice

Internal quality assurance activity at Black Mountains College ensures that assessment strategies decisions:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure all students are treated fairly and without bias
- Requires standardisation to ensure consistency across all assessors
- Are auditable and transparent

Internal quality assurance also ensures that:

- Health and safety practices are maintained
- Risk assessments are used appropriately

- Staff have access to:
 - Training
 - Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Clear and regular communication takes place between all members of the assessment team

8. Internal Quality Assurance Activities

Black Mountains College undertakes structured internal quality assurance sampling to ensure that the following principles of assessment are consistently met:

- **Validity:** Has an appropriate assessment method been used to match the learning outcomes for each unit or module?
- **Standards:** Where relevant, has there been differentiation between different levels of performance, for example by providing a grade or in assessment feedback?
- **Comparability:** How well can the results from one assessment be viewed as equivalent to results from a different assessment at the same level?
- **Authenticity:** Is the student's work genuinely their own and properly authenticated/referenced?
- **Reliability:** Is the student's work:
 - Directly relevant to the criteria?
 - Accurately and consistently assessed?
- **Sufficiency:** Has the student provided enough evidence to meet all learning outcomes and assessment criteria?
- **Fairness:** Have students been assessed in a fair and unbiased manner?
 - Internal quality assurance activity also:
 - Identifies teaching staff development needs
 - Highlights good practice
 - Informs standardisation discussions

Sampling Arrangements

- Sampling is both:
 - Formative (during learning)
 - Summative (at completion)
- A minimum of 10%-20% of student portfolios are normally sampled.
- 100% sampling applies to:
 - New (qualified) teaching staff (first assignment only)
 - Trainee teaching staff
 - Recently qualified assessors

Following qualification completion:

For Further Education

- IQA reports are completed within 30 working days
- Sampling plans are updated accordingly

For Higher Education:

- The partner university exam board is carried out within 8 weeks of completion of studies each year
- An External Examiner's report is completed by the end of the academic year
- Sampling plans are updated accordingly

Sampling plans:

- Are in place for every qualification
- Identify:
 - Students
 - Assessors
 - Units/modules, learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Meet all requirements of relevant awarding organisations

Standardisation

The Further and Higher Education Leads at Black Mountains College conduct both:

- Formal standardisation meetings (once per term)
- Informal standardisation activities via:
 - One-to-one meetings
 - Email

All teaching staff are required to attend standardisation and staff development meetings.

Formal Standardisation Meetings Include:

- Student progress
- Achieved students and IQA/External Examiner findings
- Student survey and student representative feedback
- Issues and risks
- Black Mountains College business updates
- Awarding body and sector updates
- Equality, safeguarding & health and safety updates
- Any Other Business (AOB)

Minutes are produced and circulated within 20 working days.

Observations & Staff CPD

- All teaching and assessing staff are observed at least once annually
- New teaching staff are observed in their first term of teaching
- All staff are required to reflect on the feedback from their observations

- Teaching staff who have completed their probation are required to engage in peer observation once annually
- Observation outcomes are:
 - Recorded on formal observation report forms
 - Followed by action plans where required
- Staff identified as requiring improvement receive:
 - Support
 - Monitoring
 - Additional training
- All Black Mountains College teaching staff are required to engage in:
 - Reflective practice
 - Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
 - Sector-relevant upskilling

9. Student Feedback

- Student feedback is collected via:
 - Termly evaluation forms
 - Staff/student meetings
 - The NSS
 - Ongoing liaison with elected student representatives
- Feedback is:
 - Reviewed regularly by the FE/HE Leads and the CADQO
 - Analysed for trends
 - Used to drive quality improvement

10. Records, Data Protection & Confidentiality

All Quality Assurance documentation is:

- Stored securely
- Managed in line with UK GDPR
- Accessible only to:
 - Authorised Black Mountains College staff
 - Awarding body External Quality Assurers (EQAs) and External Examiners

11. Linked Policies and procedures

- Black Mountains College maintains a range of quality and compliance policies and procedures, accessible via:
 - The Black Mountains College website
 - Relevant Student Handbooks
 - Email request
- Policies are reviewed annually and updated in line with:
 - Awarding body requirements
 - Legislative change
 - Internal quality reviews
- Linked policies and procedures include:
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
 - Complaints policy
 - Academic Appeals policy
 - Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
 - Academic Misconduct policy
 - Fitness to Study policy
 - Student code of Conduct

12. Quality Cycle / Quality Calendar

Black Mountains College operates formal Quality Calendars for both Further and Higher Education. These set out termly quality assurance activity expectations.

Quality calendars can be obtained from the Further Education Lead, Higher Education Lead or the Chief Academic Development and Quality Officer.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of scheduled quality activities
- Completing actions within agreed timeframes
- Supporting the continuous improvement cycle

Version	Date Reviewed	Who reviewed	Next review date
1	15/6/26	Christianne Wakeham	July 2027