		
ISSUED BY: AO Director Caroline Walton	Awarding Organisation Policies and Procedures	**ISSUE DATE:** September 2026 **REVIEW DATE:** September 2027
	Standardisation Policy	**ISSUE:** V7

Scope and Purpose

This policy sets out Explosive Learning Solutions' (ELS) approach to standardisation when working as an Awarding Organisation (AO). We are committed to ensuring that all our standardisation practices and processes are robust.

This document is applicable for all our regulated Apprenticeship Assessment (AA) products and services. ELS ensures that the requirements within this document are reviewed regularly to maintain compliance with relevant regulatory requirements, including Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition.

ELS Standardisation Policy is to be used in conjunction with the ELS Assessment Strategy.

Definition

Standardisation is a process that ensures assessment requirements are applied consistently by Independent Apprenticeship Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs), and any individuals involved in quality assurance, monitoring or regulatory oversight activities.

Standardisation ensures that individual Assessment components and Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) are being consistently administered, assessed and awarded over time. They must also align with the level and weighting applied to the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for maintaining version control and ensuring all staff have access to the current approved version.

Aims

This policy applies to the following individuals and groups involved in the design, delivery, quality assurance and governance of ELS Apprenticeship Assessments:

- ELS AO staff
- SME's

- Authors
- Assessors / Independent Assessors (Independent Apprenticeship Assessor)
- Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)
- Scrutinisers / Peer Reviewers
- Moderators
- External Quality Assurers (EQAs)/Ofqual
- Other ELS Departments

ELS is committed to ensuring that assessment and IQA decisions are accurate and consistent.

ELS will achieve this through the implementation and review of our Apprenticeship Assessment policies and procedures, which will be reviewed annually by the ELS Directors, Senior Managers, Quality Assurance Manager, AO Director, IQAs and scrutinised by the ELS Board of Governors.

Our assessment and Standardisation processes have been designed and developed to ensure that our staff, employers, training providers, apprentices and regulators can be content about the validity, consistency, reliability and manageability of our assessments and certificates achieved through ELS.

ELS have developed a robust training and standardisation process and plan. This is applied within our own AO and nationally with our Independent Apprenticeship Assessor and IQAs.

ELS ensures assessment standards and judgements are consistent across all areas of Assessment delivery by:

- Ensuring all ELS staff are following our robust Internal Quality Assurance processes and procedures
- Ensuring our standardisation planner is communicated and followed
- Ensuring on-going monitoring takes place
- Developing compensatory assessment for learners with special requirements to allow reasonable adjustments to be made while ensuring that judgements are not compromised
- Ensuring Assessors receive training on conducting Apprenticeship Assessment, using marking schemes and grading
- Ensuring Assessors and IQAs undertake regular mandatory training, upskilling activities and standardisation to ensure assessment is Valid, Authentic, Current, Sufficient, Reliable (VACSR) and manageable.
- Ensuring all regulatory documentation is in place and reviewed regularly, as part of our robust continuous quality improvement processes and policy conducting formal audits and Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) annually analysing all customer feedback from learners, apprentices, employers, training providers and discussing, on an on-going basis, as part of our Apprenticeship Assessment Life Cycle Process.
- Holding quarterly standardisation meetings to ensure consistency of application of the guidance, provide updates and share good practice
- Carrying out regular moderation and internal quality assurance of assessments

- Working closely with the Quality Team (Quality Assurance Manager and IQAs to ensure quality assurance standards are consistently monitored and upheld
- Identifying and sharing best practice
- To ensure all assessors, assessment delivery teams and IQA receive the appropriate training on the new assessment strategies and models under the new assessment reforms.

Responsibilities

Independent Apprenticeship Assessors will:

- Take part in standardisation activities as part of their continuing professional development (CPD).
- ELS conducts quarterly quality and standardisation updates. Formal apprenticeship standard-specific standardisation activities take place at least every six months
- This is a mandatory requirement. All Independent Apprenticeship Assessor who works for or on behalf of the ELS AO must attend mandatory standardisation if they wish to continue assessing for ELS
- Complete mandatory training

Internal Quality Assurers will:

- Facilitate opportunities for Independent Apprenticeship Assessor to engage in standardisation and CPD activities
- Record and provide evidence of internal standardisation activities for EQA/Ofqual audits and monitoring visits
- Assist with any complaints and appeals.
- Take part in CPD activities.
- Support and mentor Independent Apprenticeship Assessors

AO Director (Responsible Officer to Ofqual) will:

- Act in accordance with this policy
- Follow and adhere to all responsibilities, under the role of Responsible Officer and as an authoritative point of contact for Ofqual, in relation to all activities undertaken by the ELS AO (Awarding Organisation).

Principles

ELS has 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 our work and over time.

Procedure

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

ELS Standardisation: where there is more than one Assessor delivering the same Apprenticeship Assessments or similar Apprenticeship Assessments 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 and Lead Assessor for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard is responsible for arranging and facilitating standardisation opportunities. The AO Director will support with the facilitation of standardisation (if required).

Independent Apprenticeship Assessors review and sample apprentice assessment evidence and undertake assessment activities together. The group works their way through the learner evidence, checking to see if the assessment judgements are valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable, and they agree with the assessment decision/judgement. The group offer supportive recommendations on how Assessors might improve their assessment practice.

The group then agrees any actions required:

- To ensure all assessors apply assessment requirements consistently and make assessment decisions to the same standard.
- To review, agree and record any changes to assessment decisions and assessment practice.
- To discuss updates to apprenticeship standards, assessment plans and regulatory requirements.
- To review the environments and conditions in which Assessments are conducted.
- To discuss any challenges, issues, risks or emerging trends that may impact assessment delivery.
- To review and declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- To review and discuss Apprenticeship Assessment support materials and guidance documentation.
- To review Apprenticeship Assessment tools and identify any required improvements or updates.
- To record meeting minutes and any actions arising from standardisation activities.
- To ensure actions arising from standardisation activities are monitored and followed up by the Quality Assurance Manager, AO Director, Lead Assessors and IQAs

ELS are subject to External Quality Assurance from our Regulator Ofqual via monitoring activities.

Where possible ELS IQAs and Independent Apprenticeship Assessors attend national standardisation events run by other AOs, Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), Skills England, DWP, or any other supporting related organisations.

Our contributions would include contributing sanitised/anonymised sample materials to the event, and or by sending an ELS representative to participate.

Assessment Consistency

ELS monitor and quality assure all aspects of the Apprenticeship Assessment A Life Cycle and the processes contained within each stage of the Apprenticeship Assessment Life cycle.

We provide quality assurance on all Apprenticeship Assessment processes, providing guidance and support to our teams.

Independent Assessors make Valid, Authentic, Current, Sufficient and Reliable assessment judgements. Decisions are moderated, audited and sampled by IQAs and the AO Director.

Performance Monitoring and Rating Framework
ELS uses a structured traffic light rating system to monitor Independent Assessor performance and to plan Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) activity. This approach ensures that the level of IQA monitoring is proportionate to risk and assessor competence.

Independent Assessors are rated Red, Amber, or Green, with each rating determining the frequency of sampling and observation activity undertaken by the IQA.

Red Rating – High Level of Support and Monitoring:

An Independent Assessor will be rated Red where they have not yet demonstrated sufficient competence in delivering apprenticeship assessments. IQA activity has identified multiple non-compliances that affect the quality or integrity of assessment delivery, and urgent improvement is required.

This rating will also apply to new assessors who have not yet delivered any Apprenticeship Assessments, until sufficient evidence of competence has been gathered through sampling and observation.

Actions and Support
The IQA will create a formal Action Plan detailing required improvements. Targeted training and support will be provided. The level of monitoring will reflect the severity of the issues identified.

IQA Monitoring Requirements
Sampling:
100% of the first five assessments delivered will be sampled by an IQA.
This applies across all apprenticeship standards the IA assesses.

Observations**:**
The Independent Assessor will be observed for every assessment delivered, or until the IQA is satisfied that required improvements have been made.
Where the Independent Assessor delivers across multiple standards, observations will alternate between standards.

Progression:
Once sustained improvement in assessment delivery and decision-making is evidenced, the Independent Assessor may progress to an Amber rating.

Amber Rating – Developing Consistency:

An Independent Assessor will be rated Amber where they demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence but require further improvement in consistency of assessment delivery or application of assessment requirements. Some compliance issues may have been identified during IQA activity, and both the Independent Assessor and IQA recognise these as areas for development.

This rating will also apply to new assessors who have delivered between 1 and 10 apprenticeship assessments in their occupational standard within the last two years.

IQA Monitoring Requirements
Sampling:
New assessors: 30–50% of the next 6 to 10 assessments will be sampled.
Experienced assessors: 30% of their next 6 to 10 assessments will be sampled.
Sampling applies across all apprenticeship standards assessed.

Observations:
One observation every three months. Where multiple standards are delivered, observations will alternate between standards.

Progression:
Where the Independent Assessor demonstrates consistent improvement and effective use of IQA and peer feedback, they may progress to a Green rating.

Green Rating – Consistent and Low Risk:

An Independent Assessor will be rated Green where they demonstrate a consistently high standard of assessment practice. They effectively use peer, IQA, and self-reflection feedback to continuously improve and show strong understanding of apprenticeship assessment requirements.
New assessors who have delivered 10 or more apprenticeship assessments in their occupational standard within the last two years may be graded Green once competence has been evidenced.

IQA Monitoring Requirements
Sampling:
15% of assessments will be sampled for both new and experienced assessors.
Sampling applies across all apprenticeship standards assessed.

Observations:
One observation every six months. Observations will alternate between standards where applicable.

Additional information: Observation outcomes are confidential; however, they are discussed with the Independent Assessor, Quality Manager, and Delivery Manager during monthly one-to-one meetings with staff or associate assessors.

The IQA will use the Observation and Sampling Non-Compliance Crib Sheet (Annex A) for all observations to ensure consistent identification and management of non-compliance.

Where an Independent Assessor receives a lower rating for a different apprenticeship standard, observation and sampling activity will be adjusted to reflect the requirements of that rating for that standard.

Continuous Improvement

ELS is committed to the continuous improvement of its Apprenticeship Assessment activities. Feedback from apprentices, employers, training providers, assessors,

IQAs, regulators and external stakeholders will be reviewed and analysed to identify opportunities for improvement. Trends identified through standardisation activities, observations, sampling, complaints, appeals and audit findings will inform updates to practice, training and policy documentation to ensure assessment validity, consistency, reliability and compliance are maintained.

Contact Information

Email: assessments@explosivelearningsolutions.com
Telephone: 01235 861805 ext 3
Address: 4 The Terraces, Library Avenue, Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 0SG

Review and Version Control

ELS is committed to ensuring all policy documentation is subject to document control and reviewed annually.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:-	**APPROVED BY:-**
020AO Assessment Strategy 027AO IQA Strategy	Caroline Walton, AO Director