

OCNSWR QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS TO HE PROVISION 2009-2010

The following Guidelines are intended to provide a brief overview of the OCN quality processes and procedures relating to Access to HE programmes. They complement the more detailed information to be found within the two key documents:

“Access Tutor Handbook September 2009”
“OCNSWR Guidelines for Access to HE Moderators”

After a successful introduction of the Access to HE Diploma in 2008-9 and the conclusion of the QAA review of OCNSWR, new challenges lie ahead in 2009-10 with specifically the introduction of grading and early reports of significant increases in student numbers reflecting the current economic situation. Totally new centres to Access to HE are few and far between, but we are pleased that North Devon College has restarted its Access provision and across the region we have seen an increase in the number of Pathways running.

OCN contacts

The two Access to HE Officers, Edwina Allison and Emma Chilcott, cover the north and the south of the region respectively. They are the first points of contacts for all matters relating to Access and work closely with centre Access Course Co-ordinators. They advise on the curriculum offer and provide regular information on curriculum development as well as offering support and guidance on all aspects of provision.

The Access to HE Officers also work closely with the Director of Access, Steph Hulford, and the Director of Quality, Judith Byrne, and are supported by administrative staff within OCN.

The OCN Quality Support Officer, Lorraine Osborne, liaises with centres regarding all external moderation arrangements.

Centre Approval

Centre approval for Access allows a centre to run appropriate Pathways within the Common Access Framework (CAF). Applications for approval need to be submitted when offering Access provision for the first time, when programmes become due for re-validation or when a centre adopts CAF provision. The Access to HE Officers will assist with applications and check that the centre meets all AVA requirements before recommending acceptance and forwarding applications to the Director of Access for final approval.

Internal Moderation

It is a key requirement that centres have a rigorous, effective and well documented internal moderation system in place. Internal moderators are responsible for advising and supporting tutors with all aspects of assessment, including pre-course planning. Detailed information about our requirements can be found in the Tutor Handbook and Moderation Guidelines documents mentioned above and advice is also available from Access to HE Officers and OCN External Moderators.

Please note that Direct Claims Status cannot be authorised for Access provision: all Recommendation for the Award of Credit forms are signed by OCN External Moderators.

Standardisation

OCNSWR expects centres to carry out appropriate internal standardisation activities throughout the year. These activities should be documented and records made available to External Moderators on request.

Regional standardisation events are organised by the Access to HE Officers and all centres are required to participate.

Usually, one GCSE Equivalence subject and a number of other specific subjects will be standardised across the region. Taking place over one day a range of subject areas will be discussed and reviewed.

Providers are asked to supply a photocopy of work in advance of the standardisation meeting. A selection of the pieces of work submitted will be photocopied and brought to the meeting by OCNSWR staff to form the basis of a set of standardisation exercises.

Standardisation this year will focus upon opportunities for supporting grading but will cover as required the Pathway and modules due for review, this year coming from the Combined Studies Pathway.

Submitting work

- Work may be from the previous or current academic year provided it has been moderated.
- The Access Officer will ask the provider to submit evidence for specific units or Learning Outcomes of units.
- Where possible, work should be selected that reflects three categories; borderline level two pass, good level two pass, level three pass for the mapped L3 unit.
- It is not necessary for the evidence to cover all the Learning Outcomes in the unit.
- Any top sheet, mark sheet, work brief etc used should be copied and attached to the relevant piece of work and the mark awarded included.

On the day. Providers will also be asked to bring one other piece of work to the meeting for discussion. This may be work that is unusual, problematic, complex or outstanding in some way.

It is intended that the standardisation process should be a helpful, constructive exercise that reassures tutors that they are marking consistently.

External Moderation

All Access to HE programmes have at least one OCNSWR appointed External Moderator who oversees the security of the award of credit and reports back to OCNSWR. Where a number of Pathways are being offered, Pathway Moderators with appropriate knowledge and expertise will also be appointed to visit and report on specified Pathways. There are three models for external moderation as described below:

1. A single Pathway has one External Moderator who visits and reports on the programme midway through the year and at the end of the programme run.
2. Two Pathways (or, rarely, more than two if learner numbers are very small) have two Pathway Moderators who both visit and report on the programme midway through the year and at the end of the programme run. **One Pathway Moderator who is designated as having a Lead role completes the annual summary report for the centre and leads on the Exam Board process.**
3. Three or more Pathways have a Lead Moderator whose role is to co-ordinate, lead and advise a team of Pathway Moderators allocated to specified Pathways. The Lead Moderator visits the centre three times a year; once early in the cycle to check progress on actions from the previous cycle and to discuss and agree any requirements for interim visits; once mid-cycle to sample learner work which has been assessed and internally moderated, to meet learners and to meet members of the course team; and finally, once

at the end of the programme to support and advise the team at final moderation and to attend the Final Assessment Board meeting. Lead Moderators also produce an annual summary report.

Please note that a centre may request moderation visits at any time in addition to those provided by OCNSWR as described above; charges of £260 per visit will be applied.

End of year arrangements

Dates for end of year moderation will be agreed with centres and set well in advance and all moderation will take place on a single day except where this is agreed with OCNSWR as logistically impossible – normally because there is a large amount of provision spread over more than one site. Where moderation takes place over more than one day, the Lead Moderator will discuss and agree arrangements for Final Assessment Board meetings with the Access co-ordinator.

Preparing for end of year moderation

Centre staff must ensure that:

- All learner evidence has been completed, assessed and all assessment records are available
- All portfolios have been subject to internal moderation and records are available
- All evidence of learner achievement is available for inspection
- **All RACs have been checked for accuracy and all individual achievement has been clearly confirmed by the tutor(s) on each RAC. Coordinators are asked to ensure that each RAC has been signed and dated to confirm that the criteria to achieve the Diploma have been fully met.**
- Any borderline work has been identified and singled out for scrutiny by the External Moderator
- Every learner has fully achieved the specification for the award of the QAA recognised Access Diploma: any portfolios for learners who have only partially achieved must be identified and kept separate

The Final Assessment (Exam) Board

Following external moderation, a formal meeting is held for all Pathways. Full details and guidance on this process can be found in the Access to HE Tutors Handbook.

Following the end of year moderation and the receipt of correctly completed RACs, OCNSWR registration and awards staff double check that all learners have completed their courses successfully according to the conditions for successful completion set out in either the current CAF Handbook or in the approved programme document for any non-CAF programme.

Centre staff are advised that they should **not** issue letters/internal certificates or arrange award ceremonies in advance of such confirmation by OCNSWR.

OCNSWR aims to issue all certificates to centres before the A Level results day each year.

Publication of results on the OCNSWR website

At the end of the academic year, following final Moderation events and checking of RACs, OCNSWR is now in a position to make available to interested parties results detailing student achievement of the Access to HE Qualification. Currently the information listed only confirms achievement of the qualification per student, with students identifiable by Name and Date of Birth and Access Centre. To ensure security access to this information is being controlled by OCNSWR and individuals must accept terms and conditions to be eligible to receive a password.

It is hoped that in making this information available receiving HEIs will be able to confirm to students more quickly that they have achieved their desired place within HE.

Students who do not wish to be named or have this information made available should in the first instance make this known to their Access to HE coordinator, who should then inform OCNSWR.

Certification

OCNSWR staff aim to issue all results for Access learners on or before A-Level results are announced, but can only keep this standard if the RACs are correctly completed. RACs with tippexed results, altered results which have not been previously agreed with an Access to HE Officer and/or without moderator's initials, unclear results, results that do not seem to add up or match up with successful completion requirements will require clarification and may be returned to the programme provider. Results may be delayed if designated staff are not available to deal with them during the summer break.

Providers should not issue letters or internal certificates or arrange award ceremonies indicating successful completion of the Access Certificate in advance of confirmation by OCNSWR. However, Access Coordinators are at liberty to provide HE admissions staff with interim results agreed by the Moderator at final moderation which should be supplied 'subject to OCNSWR confirmation'

All Access to HE results will now be published on our website. Nominated individuals from HEIs and FE Colleges who provided HE are able to access this information by using a log-in and password. The results are not available to anyone without a login and password and currently only contain student name, date of birth and achievement of the Access to HE Qualification.