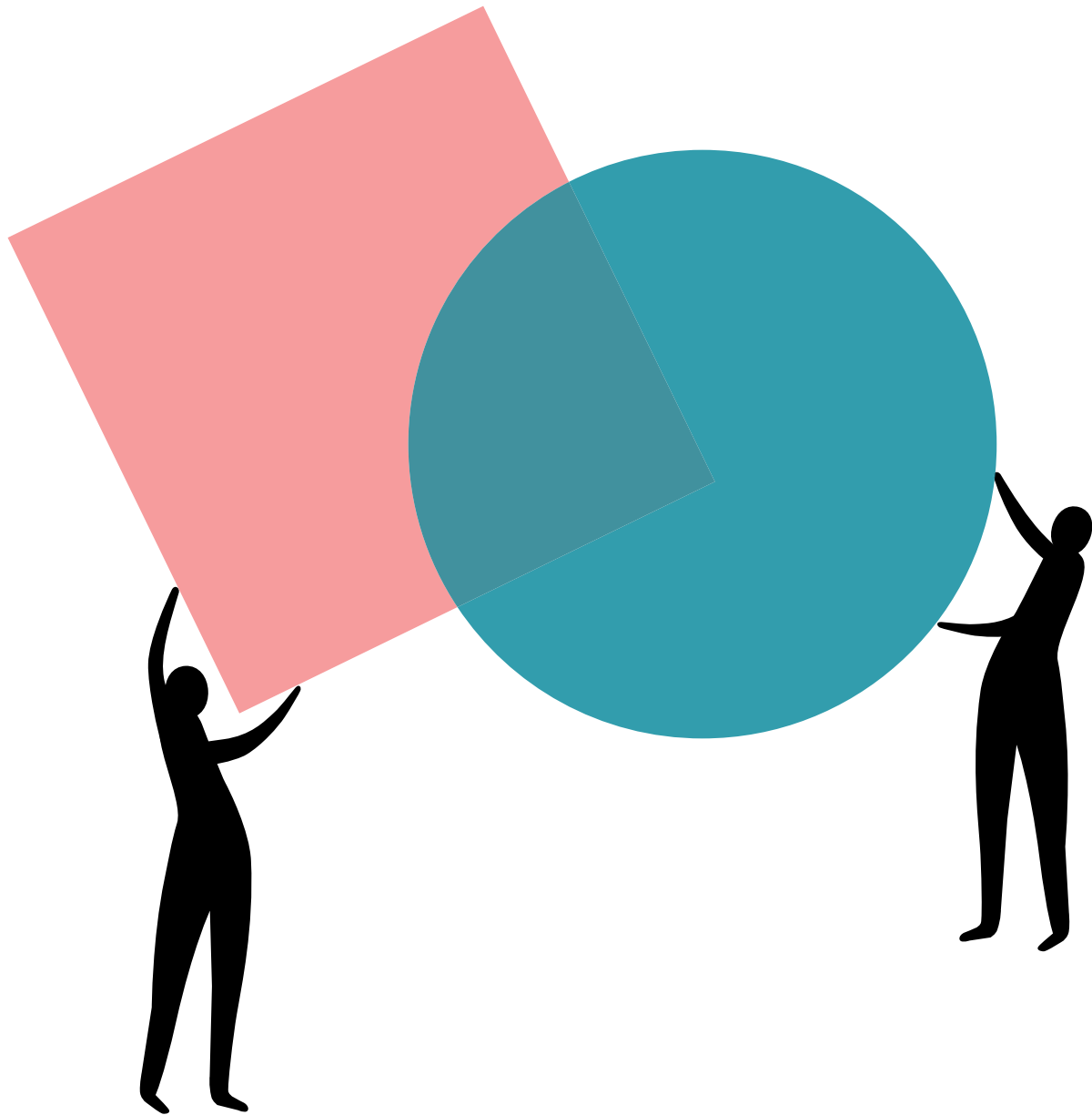


For:

- Consortium management
- Lead assessors
- Domain assessors



**Qualifications
and Curriculum
Development
Agency**



**Spring
2010**

Delivering the Diploma

A training guide for lead and domain assessors

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**Qualifications and Curriculum
Development Agency**

Earlsdon Park
53-55 Butts Road
Coventry
CV1 3BH

Telephone: 0300 303 3010
Enquiry line: 0300 303 3011
Textphone: 0300 303 3010
Fax: 0300 303 3014
info@qcda.gov.uk
www.qcda.gov.uk

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Introduction

Consortia introducing Diplomas face a range of challenges. One is the need to put in place effective quality assurance processes for internal assessment. To help consortia achieve this, QCDA has identified two roles – lead assessor and domain assessor – that it believes can ensure effective management of consistent and high quality internal assessment for learners, whatever the size of a consortium and Diploma provision it offers.

QCDA has produced detailed descriptions of these roles which form the basis of this training guide, intended for use by:

- consortium and centre managers, to help them identify and appoint appropriately

qualified individuals to take on these responsibilities

- individuals being considered for or taking on the responsibilities of lead or domain assessor.

The guide provides information on the competencies, skills and knowledge required to carry out these roles, and can be used as:

- a reference point against which to assess current knowledge and skills
- a basis for identifying knowledge and skills gaps and planning personal development
- a 'specification' for structured training and development programmes.

Further resources

This guide is one of a series of resources developed by QCDA to support centres and consortia in delivering robust internal assessment.

Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment

An overall view of how internal assessment for Diplomas can be managed, that defines and provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of lead and domain assessors.

Diploma internal assessment toolkit

Brings together resources a consortium might find helpful when planning (or reviewing) delivery of Diploma internal assessment. It includes comprehensive links and references to other relevant materials and is accompanied by a range of downloadable example documents and templates that can be adapted for local use.

Good practice case studies

These feature the experiences of consortia delivering Diploma internal assessment. Key themes in the studies published so far are the importance of effective communication, filling key assessment roles, embedding a quality cycle and easy access to shared systems.

Staff development resources

These support the development framework discussed in this training guide. Their purpose is to increase awareness of the issues and challenges faced by those who undertake lead and domain assessor roles.

All these documents can be downloaded from the *Assessing the Diploma* pages of the QCDA website.

Brief descriptions of the lead and domain assessor responsibilities are set out below.

The main body of the guide has detailed descriptions of development outcomes for both lead assessors (numbered LA 1-9) and domain assessors (DA 1-9) specifying the relevant performance criteria.

Lead assessor

LA

A lead assessor should be identified when a consortium offers or plans to offer multiple lines of learning. The lead assessor takes overall responsibility for all internal assessment work carried out for all the lines of learning offered by a consortium, including:

- ▶ management and leadership of all aspects of the internal assessment of principal learning and project components for all Diploma programmes offered by the consortium
- ▶ ensuring that assessment policies and procedures are in place in the consortium
- ▶ ensuring adequate resources are allocated so that all Diploma programmes can conduct internal assessments effectively as required by the specifications
- ▶ quality assuring assessment processes used in all Diploma programmes
- ▶ ensuring that all administrative requirements for running Diploma programmes are met
- ▶ ensuring that review and evaluation procedures are in place to ensure relevant lessons are learnt within and across Diploma programmes.

Domain assessor

DA

A domain assessor should be identified for each Diploma line of learning offered by a consortium. The domain assessor takes overall responsibility (where no lead assessor has been identified) for all the internal assessment work that takes place for a particular line of learning, including:

- ▶ developing staff understanding of the requirements of that Diploma and the consortium's assessment policies and procedures
- ▶ quality assuring the assessment activities undertaken for that Diploma
- ▶ quality assuring standards of internal assessments on principal learning and/or project components
- ▶ meeting administrative requirements (both internal and external)
- ▶ reviewing and evaluating assessment practice, including awarding body feedback.

Managing internal assessment

In some centres staff may already be carrying out the equivalent of lead and domain assessor responsibilities, as quality assurance managers, chief internal verifiers, assessment coordinators, head of faculty, senior teachers or deputy heads.

It is important that current good practice continues and contributes to Diploma internal assessment and the way that lead and domain assessor roles are implemented may reflect existing arrangements. This should help those carrying out these responsibilities by giving them the authority they require within the consortium. It should also facilitate communication with awarding bodies and colleagues undertaking similar roles in other consortia.

A consortium's responsibility for internal assessment and standardisation complements the awarding body's responsibility for ensuring (through external moderation) that learners' evidence has been assessed at the appropriate standard for the level of the Diploma.

While awarding bodies are responsible for determining standards, consortia will benefit by ensuring their staff understand and apply those same standards, as far as possible, through their own internal standardisation procedures.

It is important to ensure that work undertaken by learners allows them to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the specification. While external moderation guarantees that appropriate standards are applied, learners will have a better chance of demonstrating their achievement if the evidence they present for assessment matches the specification requirements.

Lead and domain assessor roles and responsibilities

Consortia are encouraged to identify individuals to carry out the roles of lead and domain assessor in order to promote good practice and consistent internal assessment.

The diagram opposite shows how the lead and domain assessor roles relate across a consortium and how they interact with consortium management (which has overall responsibility for overseeing Diploma assessment for that consortium).

A key responsibility of consortium management is to support lead and domain assessors to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. Some consortia may choose to identify only a domain assessor if they are offering just one Diploma line of learning in the first year of delivery. In this case the domain assessor would work directly with the consortium management.

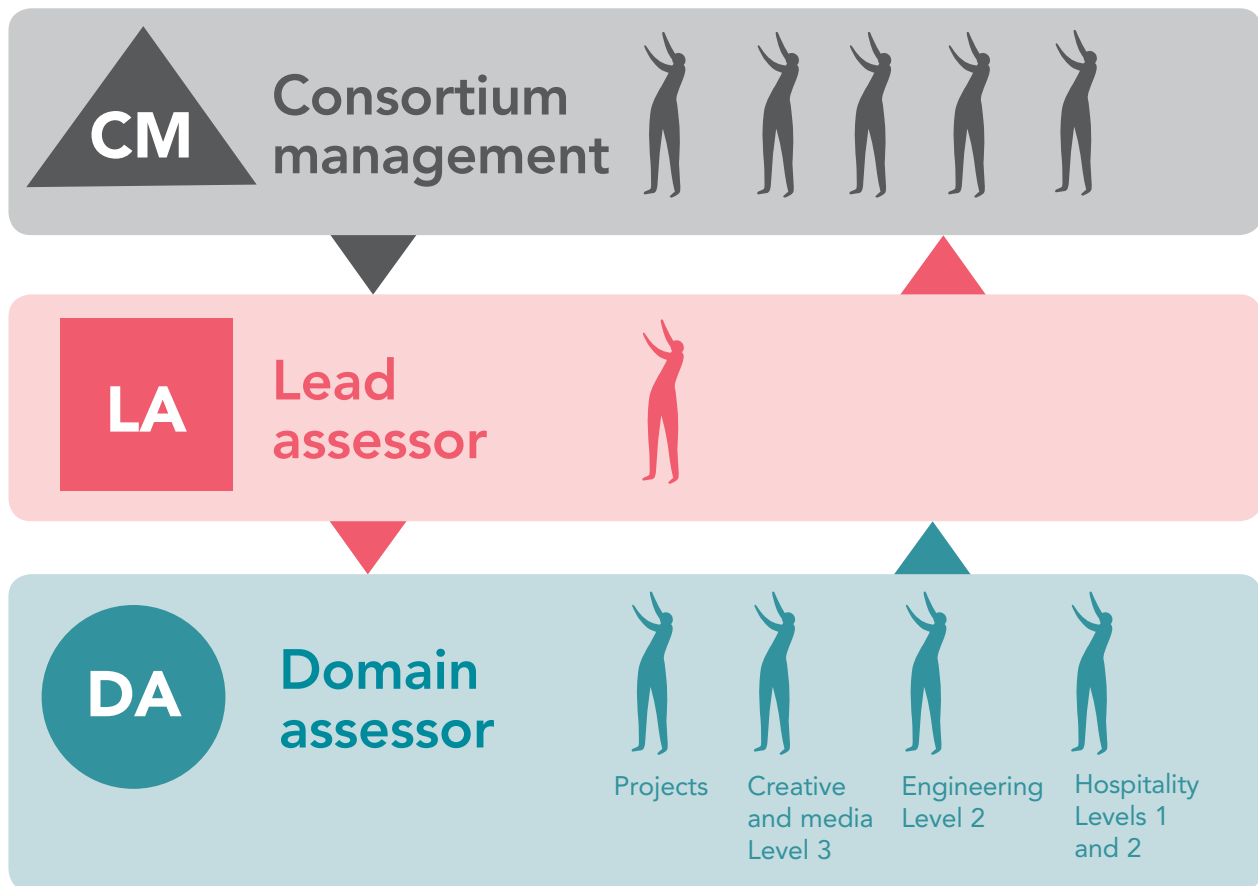
However, there is value in identifying a lead assessor in these circumstances, since he or she could ensure appropriate assessment policies and procedures are in place across the consortium pending the introduction of further lines of learning (and levels) in subsequent years.

The responsibilities identified for the lead and domain assessor roles specify what needs to be done to ensure high quality internal assessment. It is up to the individual consortium to decide how they can best be put into practice and the procedures and systems selected will vary depending on local circumstances.

The roles themselves are not compulsory but it is important that a consortium ensures the responsibilities form the basis of its quality assurance arrangements since this will safeguard high quality, consistent and robust internal assessment.

It is also critical that staff taking on these roles and responsibilities have sufficient seniority, knowledge, experience and influence to meet the requirements effectively and to demonstrate the value of their work to other members of staff.

Diploma internal assessment management structure



Lead assessor role

The role of lead assessor is distinct from that of the domain assessor. The purpose of the role is to ensure the consistency of internal assessment practice in Diploma consortia that are offering or are planning to offer multiple lines of learning.

It is envisaged that the lead assessor will have overall responsibility, reporting to the consortium management team, for all aspects of the quality assurance of the internal assessments carried out for all the Diploma lines of learning (principal learning and project components) offered by that consortium.

This is a pivotal role and should normally be undertaken from a position of appropriate seniority to be able to influence decisions in the consortium.

The lead assessor role normally involves:

- ▶ managing and leading all aspects of the internal assessment of principal learning and project components for all Diploma programmes offered by the consortium
- ▶ ensuring that assessment policies and procedures are in place in the consortium

- ▶ ensuring adequate resources are allocated so that all Diploma programmes can conduct internal assessments effectively as required by the specifications
- ▶ quality assuring assessment processes used in all Diploma programmes
- ▶ ensuring that all administrative requirements for running Diploma programmes are met
- ▶ ensuring that review and evaluation procedures are in place to ensure relevant lessons are learned within and between Diploma programmes.

The role of lead assessor may not be required in a consortium that is offering only a single line of learning. In such a case, the consistency of assessment practice applies only within a single subject or line of learning and may be part of the responsibilities of the domain assessor.

Background and experience

To perform this role effectively, lead assessors will require a high degree of knowledge, experience and understanding of assessment design, assessment administration and people management. In addition they are likely to require significant teaching experience.

These expectations define the scope of the knowledge and skills required to perform the role, and are specified in more detail under performance criteria. Experience in any of the following roles will contribute to prospective lead assessors' understanding of and performance in the role:

- ▶ in a team or senior leadership position such as a team leader, senior moderator, internal verifier, head of department or a local authority assessment coordinator
- ▶ as a manager responsible for quality assurance
- ▶ as a teacher, trainer, tutor or verifier in internal assessments
- ▶ as an external examiner, a moderator or a verifier for a recognised awarding body.

Development outcomes and performance criteria

The development outcomes, with associated performance criteria, are based on the job profile for lead assessor as described in *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* and agreed with Diploma stakeholders. They have also been informed by:

- ▶ CIEA's professional framework for assessors
- ▶ LLUK's professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector
- ▶ TDA's professional standards for teachers
- ▶ national standards for conducting internal quality assurance of the assessment process (V1 unit).

On the following pages you will find guidance on each development outcome designed to help potential lead assessors and consortia/centres interpret the development outcomes for the role, highlighting specific competencies as a focus for learning and development activities.

These notes are not exhaustive and you should use your experience and discretion when determining appropriate learning or development activities.

LA1

Understand the role and responsibilities of the Diploma lead assessor

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- summarise the role and responsibilities of the lead assessor with reference to domain assessors, consortium management and Diploma and component awarding bodies (CABs)
- explain assessment requirements of Diplomas across all lines of learning offered by a consortium
- explain internal assessment requirements for principal learning for each line of learning and for the project
- explain key features of competency-based assessment and compensatory assessment.

Guidance on the development outcome

The rationale for the lead assessor role lies in the need to ensure consistency of internal assessment practice in consortia offering multiple lines of learning. The lead assessor should develop a:

- clear understanding of the responsibilities of the role within the consortium for overseeing all aspects of the quality assurance of internal assessment, particularly with respect to:
 - consortium management, who have overall responsibility for all aspects of assessment within the consortium
 - domain assessor, who is responsible to an awarding body for the application of standards within a line of learning
- clear understanding of how to organise day-to-day activities and work with others to achieve a balance between accountability to the consortium and visibility to awarding bodies intent on ensuring that the consortium meet their requirements
- broad understanding of the assessment requirements of the Diploma, lines of learning and the learning activities (principal learning or project).

See *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* pages 36–45 for further information on the lead assessor role.

LA2

Evaluate the current capabilities, systems and resources of the consortium to deliver and meet Diploma assessment requirements

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- ▶ identify the requirements of awarding bodies, the consortium and *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* as they apply to the consortium
- ▶ evaluate current processes and procedures within the consortium for setting, conducting, recording evidence from and feeding back on assessments, and recommend improvements as appropriate
- ▶ evaluate the capabilities and readiness of the assessor teams within the consortium to undertake appropriate assessments and recommend improvements and/or personal development as appropriate
- ▶ assess the quality of assessment information and the effectiveness of systems within the consortium for managing the quality of assessment, for recording relevant records of assessments and learners' progress and for sharing assessment information
- ▶ assess the quantity and quality of resources available within the consortium for supporting assessment activities.

Guidance on the development outcome

The lead assessor may be the person responsible within a consortium for judging the fitness for purpose of its internal assessments. Lead assessors should be capable of:

- ▶ undertaking a periodic, objective evaluation, or audit, of all aspects of the consortium's internal assessment activities against awarding bodies' requirements and good practice. This should focus on resources allocated to assessment and the overall competence of the systems and staff. The lead assessor should be able to objectively judge:
 - policies; processes and procedures for setting, conducting, standardising and quality assuring assessments
 - skills and knowledge of assessors and administrators
 - resources allocated and systems used for management and administration
- ▶ recommending an action plan as an outcome from the audit. For example, given the Diploma's reliance on internal assessments, a key challenge for some consortia, at least in the early stages of the Diploma, will be setting assessment activities which may require the development of new practices, training for assessors involved and verification procedures
- ▶ routinely monitoring changes in awarding body requirements and good practice, assessing the need for changes in the consortium and recommending an appropriate action plan.

LA3

Develop, implement and maintain assessment policies and procedures within the consortium

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- ❖ write and maintain assessment policies and procedures that reflect the requirements of the awarding bodies, the specification, the consortium and *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment*
- ❖ advise on, and take a role in providing, where necessary, briefings and training as required for assessors and teaching staff in assessment policies and procedures
- ❖ operate a system for periodically monitoring compliance with the relevant assessment policies and procedures within the consortium
- ❖ operate a system for monitoring the requirements of awarding bodies, the consortium and *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* to detect changes which need to be reflected in the consortium's policies and procedures
- ❖ operate a system for periodically reviewing the assessment policies and procedures within the consortium against a changing context or requirements and updating them as appropriate
- ❖ assist as required in preparing and submitting an application for registration with an awarding body for a consortium or centre

Guidance on the development outcome

The lead assessor may be the person responsible within a consortium for drawing up assessment policies and procedures and keeping them under review. Lead assessors should be capable of:

- ❖ identifying and producing the policies and procedures needed to meet these requirements, providing clear direction and oversight without burdening consortia with unnecessary bureaucracy. The scope of these will be determined from awarding body requirements and should be appropriate to the type of assessment activities being performed. They will include formative as well as summative assessment activities such as the setting, conduct, standardisation of assessments; feedback, appeals and quality assurance
- ❖ defining the key accountabilities and responsibilities for each role involved in implementing the internal assessment policies and procedures
- ❖ recommending an action plan for implementing policies, procedures and systems. The plan should include the resources allocated to each task and timescales
- ❖ taking a leading role in the implementation of the action plan once it has endorsement from the consortium management. This is effectively a project management role and requires the relevant skills.

LA4

Advise and guide assessors in the design, selection and use of appropriate forms of assessment

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- explain theories and principles of assessment and the application of different forms of assessment within Diplomas, including initial, formative and summative assessment in teaching and learning
- guide assessors in selecting and designing assessment activities and criteria in their specialist areas, including where appropriate those that exploit new and emerging technologies, which are valid, fit for purpose, reliable and robust, fair and equitable and consistent over time
- guide assessors in applying appropriate assessment methods fairly and effectively to produce valid, reliable and sufficient evidence
- evaluate the effectiveness of appropriate forms of assessment in producing information useful to the teacher and the learner.

Guidance on the development outcome

The lead assessor may come to be recognised as a focal point of assessment expertise in the consortium. Lead assessors may be expected to guide and advise domain assessors, and possibly other assessors, in the more 'technical' aspects of designing assessment activities. The lead assessor should be capable of:

- guiding assessors on the interpretation of awarding body requirements for assessments
- challenging assessors to draw from a wider repertoire of assessment methods when designing assessment activities and advising them on how to apply the chosen methods so they are fit for purpose in the line of learning. It is an easy option for assessors simply to use, or closely copy, specimen awarding body assessments
- advising assessors on good practice in assessment design, with which lead assessors should be familiar, and their application in an assessment activity
- acting as an objective 'sounding board' for assessors who are designing assessment activities, in particular in helping to judge the validity, fitness for purpose, reliability, robustness, fairness, equity and consistency over time.

LA5

Ensure that the processes used to conduct internal assessment in Diploma programmes are quality assured

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- monitor and guide domain assessors in applying good practice in the following assessment activities in their lines of learning:
 - interpreting the requirements of the specification
 - setting assessment activities
 - gaining agreement on the consistent application of assessment criteria
 - ensuring learners understand the assessment activities and criteria
 - conducting assessments and making sure that the conditions set by the awarding body under which assessment evidence is gathered are in place
 - checking that all assessors apply health, safety and environmental protection procedures during assessment
 - standardising assessments for each internally assessed principal learning and project component
 - compiling samples for moderation by the awarding body
 - selecting, collecting and recording suitable data for the purposes of assessment
 - briefing learners on the consortium's procedures for challenging or appealing against assessment decisions
 - handling learner challenges and appeals
 - maintaining complete and accurate records of assessment decisions and learners' progress
 - contributing to the consortium's quality cycle by producing accurate and standardised assessment information
 - reporting internally to senior managers in the consortium and externally to awarding bodies.

Guidance on the development outcome

Responsibility for quality assuring assessment processes is at the heart of the lead assessor role. While domain assessors are responsible for quality assuring assessments within their line of learning and possibly only at a single level, the lead assessor is responsible for quality assuring processes across lines of learning and at all levels within the consortium so that the consortium can provide evidence to the effect that it has met awarding body requirements. The lead assessor should be capable of:

- ▶ determining what evidence is required to demonstrate that awarding body requirements are being met and that the consortium's policies and procedures are being followed, in short that the internal assessment results are consistent and reliable
- ▶ specifying a system for recording, tracking and reporting and managing its implementation and maintenance
- ▶ determining an appropriate level of monitoring to collect, record and evaluate evidence in areas such as the setting, conduct and standardisation of assessment activities. The lead assessor should consider a range of factors including the role of domain assessors, the need for independent evidence, time and cost involved, and the impact monitoring can have on assessors' motivation
- ▶ collaborating with domain assessors and assessment teams in the lines of learning to minimise duplication of effort
- ▶ monitoring assessment activities independently of the teams in the lines of learning and recording evidence as per the procedures. The lead assessor should be able to use different techniques such as observation, interviewing, sampling and auditing
- ▶ evaluating the evidence gathered from monitoring activities to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes and recommending improvements as appropriate.

LA6

Use appropriate procedures to review and evaluate learning, teaching and assessment

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- ensure constructive and consistent feedback is provided to learners and assessors
- ensure regular opportunities are provided for assessors and teaching staff to discuss and feed back on assessment issues
- review and evaluate feedback from an awarding body with assessors and assist in drawing up appropriate actions plans as required
- encourage lines of learning assessment teams.

Guidance on the development outcome

Independently of the assessment activities in the lines of learning, the lead assessor has a significant contribution to make in leading the continuous improvement in learning, teaching and assessment activities across the consortium. The lead assessor should be capable of:

- defining the evidence required to evaluate learning, teaching and assessment activities and identifying cost-effective methods for obtaining and recording that evidence
- leading the implementation of procedures to use data and qualitative evidence to evaluate the learning, teaching and assessment activities in the consortium. The lead assessor should be capable of working with other assessors and teaching staff as appropriate
- identifying and facilitating the sharing of good practice between assessment teams
- identifying areas for improvement, recommending appropriate action plans and winning the support of consortium management and staff for the implementation of improvements
- giving feedback to assessors and also coaching teaching staff and assessors to give feedback to learners.

LA7

Advise and communicate with senior managers within a consortium on assessment matters

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- ▶ provide advice to senior managers in the consortium on assessment matters
- ▶ advise on and assist senior managers in the appointment of domain assessors
- ▶ negotiate with senior managers as required to ensure that appropriate levels and quality of resources, including continuing professional development (CPD) for assessors, are allocated for assessment
- ▶ provide reports to senior managers on the quality of assessments and compliance with policies and procedures, and adherence to awarding body requirements.

Guidance on the development outcome

As a focal point in the consortium for assessment matters, the lead assessor may act as a channel of communication between assessment teams and consortium management to ensure that issues relating to the conduct of internal assessment within the consortium are escalated and dealt with appropriately. The lead assessor should be capable of:

- ▶ communicating with different audiences using appropriate techniques such as presentations, written reports, data analyses and discussions
- ▶ attending and contributing effectively at senior management meetings
- ▶ advising senior managers on the selection and development of suitably qualified and experienced domain assessors and ensuring that domain assessors meet all the requirements of the role
- ▶ determining an appropriate level of resources for a given activity or action plan that takes into account the needs of the task, the people involved and commercial realities
- ▶ using a range of personal skills to influence and negotiate with senior managers, for example: using personal judgement on how to deal with an assessment issue or escalate it to the consortium management; or negotiating on behalf of domain assessors for a budget allocation for their CPD. This involves adopting and maintaining an independent viewpoint based on the need for the consortium to meet awarding body requirements for internal assessments.

Guide and coach assessors across the consortium

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- build and maintain relationships with domain assessors and assessment teams within the consortium
- provide advice, guidance and feedback to teaching staff and assessors in all lines of learning on assessment matters
- ensure that domain assessors remain fully aware of awarding body requirements
- set appropriate objectives for an assessment team and monitor progress by establishing and using robust feedback mechanisms
- encourage assessors to collaborate with others and to share good assessment practice
- identify staff development needs and relevant training or CPD to address them
- provide coaching, training and CPD for domain assessors and assessors as required.

Guidance on the development outcome

The lead assessor will be responsible for managing and leading all aspects of the internal assessment of Diploma qualifications offered by the consortium. This responsibility requires the lead assessor to use a range of interpersonal skills. The lead assessor should be capable of:

- building relationships both within and between the assessment teams and with senior managers
- supporting domain assessors in interpreting and applying standards in assessments in their respective lines of learning
- reviewing assessors' performance and identifying and advising them on CPD opportunities
- planning and running CPD sessions for assessment teams or teaching staff.

LA9

Advise and guide senior managers, assessors and teaching staff on issues of ethics, equality, diversity and fairness in assessment

Performance criteria

The lead assessor can:

- ▶ explain the concepts of equality, diversity and fairness in assessment
- ▶ advise senior managers on the processes and practices needed within the consortium to ensure equality, diversity and fairness in assessment
- ▶ give examples and discuss ethical issues that may arise in assessment, showing how they might be resolved satisfactorily
- ▶ advise domain assessors and other assessors on accessibility requirements both in terms of access to the individual tasks and access arrangements for those who qualify for them.

Guidance on the development outcome

There is a specific (and important) set of assessment issues related to ethics, equality, diversity and fairness which, if not managed, can impact on the performance of learners and assessors. Good practice requires that policies, procedures and training are in place to ensure that any such impact is minimised. The lead assessor should be prepared to advise and guide consortium management and all those involved in assessment with regard to these issues. The lead assessor should therefore be capable of:

- ▶ articulating good practice in each area through appropriate policies, procedures and training
- ▶ advising senior managers on appropriate policies and courses of actions for implementing and assuring compliance with the policies within the consortium
- ▶ recognising potential and actual causes of bias in assessments and recommending actions to mitigate their impact and, where possible, to remove their causes
- ▶ using appropriate personal skills when working with others on potentially sensitive issues.



Domain assessor role

The role of domain assessor is distinct from that of the lead assessor. The domain assessor will be responsible for quality assuring internal assessments (for both principal learning and/or project components) at one or more levels in a line of learning in accordance with the awarding body's procedures and standards.

The purpose of the domain assessor role therefore is to take overall responsibility for the application of the standards in all the internal assessment that takes place on a particular line of learning offered by a Diploma consortium. Domain assessors will normally hold a post of appropriate seniority to be able to influence assessment decisions in the consortium.

The domain assessor role normally involves:

- developing staff understanding of the requirements of a Diploma and the consortium's assessment policies and procedures

- quality assuring the assessment activities undertaken for that Diploma
- quality assuring standards of internal assessments
- meeting administrative requirements (both internal and external)
- reviewing and evaluating assessment practice, including feedback from awarding bodies.

In consortia where multiple lines of learning are offered, a domain assessor will work closely with the lead assessor on the conduct of internal assessment and internal standardisation, particularly on those issues that contribute to the quality of that assessment.

Background and experience

It is envisaged that, to perform this role effectively, domain assessors will require significant teaching experience and knowledge within the line of learning.

They will also require understanding and experience of assessment design, all aspects of the conduct of assessments and people management. These expectations define the scope of the knowledge and skills required to perform the role and are specified in more detail under performance criteria.

Experience in any of the following roles will contribute to prospective domain assessors' understanding of and performance in the role:

- In a team leadership position such as a team leader, head of department, moderator, internal verifier or a local authority assessment coordinator, with experience of standardising assessments between assessors.
- As a teacher, trainer, tutor or verifier in internal assessment.
- As an external examiner, a moderator or a verifier for a recognised awarding body.

Development outcomes and performance criteria

The development outcomes, with associated performance criteria, are based on the job profile for domain assessor as described in *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* and agreed with Diploma stakeholders. They have also been informed by the:

- CIEA's professional framework for assessors
- LLUK's professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector
- TDA's professional standards for teachers
- National standards for assessors (A1 and A2 units).

It is important to note that the focus of this guide is the internal assessment process. Awarding bodies remain responsible for providing any training for domain assessors that they deem necessary on the assessment requirements in specifications for principal learning and project components (including the standards expected in learners' work).

On the following pages you will find guidance on each development outcome designed to help potential domain assessors and consortia/centres interpret the development outcomes for the role, highlighting specific competencies as a focus for learning and development activities. These notes are not exhaustive and you should use your experience and discretion when determining appropriate learning or development activities.

DA1

Understand the role and responsibilities of the Diploma domain assessor

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- summarise the role and responsibilities of the domain assessor with reference to the lead assessor, consortium management and the Diploma and component awarding bodies
- explain the assessment requirements of the Diploma in the relevant line of learning
- explain the internal assessment requirements for the principal learning units for the line of learning
- explain key features of competency-based assessment and compensatory assessment.

Guidance on the development outcome

The rationale for the domain assessor role lies in the requirement to quality assure the application within the consortium of the awarding body's standards in internal assessment. The domain assessor should develop:

- a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the role and its relationship to both awarding bodies and (where appointed) the consortium's lead assessor
- a clear understanding of the assessment requirements and their contribution to learning in the context of the Diploma, the line of learning and the specific learning activity (principal learning or project)
- an understanding, and an ability to explain and give examples to teaching and assessment teams, of how competency-based and compensatory assessment can be applied effectively. This is important given the wider freedom that assessors have in a Diploma than in wholly externally controlled assessments.

See *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* pages 46-55 for further explanation of the domain assessor role.

DA2

Develop and reinforce staff understanding of assessment requirements

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- ▶ brief, and check the understanding of all staff involved in the delivery of a line of learning on the:
 - requirements of the awarding body specification for the line of learning and their implications for learners and assessors
 - assessment criteria to be applied to internal assessments
 - conditions set by an awarding body that must be complied with when learners produce their assessment evidence
 - standards expected by the awarding body of learners' work for internally assessed components
 - consortium's assessment policies and procedures, including for health and safety, as they apply to the line of learning
- ▶ establish and operate a process by which assessors in the line of learning remain fully aware of the requirements of the awarding body.

Guidance on the development outcome

The domain assessor is responsible for developing staff understanding of the requirements of the internally assessed components in the line of learning and the consortium's assessment policies and procedures. The domain assessor should be capable of:

- ▶ interpreting and summarising awarding body requirements and expectations and their implications for learners, teaching staff and assessors. This involves understanding how these requirements might be met through teaching and learning programmes
- ▶ understanding the assessment criteria and how they are to be applied. This applies not just to those assessments that are set internally but to all components that are assessed internally
- ▶ understanding and knowing how to apply the consortium's policies and procedures for assessment within the line of learning
- ▶ monitoring changes in the awarding body requirements and consortium's policies and procedures and assessing their impact on learners, teaching staff and assessors
- ▶ preparing and briefing assessors on the requirements, expectations and assessment criteria of the awarding body and the consortium's policies and procedures, and on any subsequent changes. The domain assessor should also be able to use a range of techniques (for example, coaching) to ensure assessors understand what is required of them and reinforce this knowledge.

DA3

Guide and supervise assessors in the selection, design and writing of assessments

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- ➊ know theories and principles of assessment and the application of different forms of assessment including initial, formative and summative assessment in teaching and learning as they apply to the line of learning
- ➋ guide assessors in setting learning and assessment objectives that learners are required to demonstrate in their evidence
- ➌ guide assessors in selecting and designing assessment instruments and criteria, including where appropriate those which exploit new and emerging technologies, and in writing assessment tasks which are valid, fit for purpose, reliable and robust, fair and equitable and consistent over time
- ➍ guide assessors in modifying or contextualising any assessment activities provided by the awarding body to reflect local circumstances
- ➎ review and 'sign off' all assessment tasks, along with the assessment activities and evidence requirements, before they are undertaken by learners, to confirm that each assessment activity:
 - will enable learners to demonstrate the achievement required
 - can be completed under the conditions specified by the awarding body for the component(s) concerned
 - is accessible to all learners using them
 - is free from bias, as far as possible, that would adversely affect any of the learners using them
 - is accompanied by a clear statement to learners indicating what they are required to do to be successful
 - is supported, if needed, by a mark scheme that accurately reflects the requirements of assessment criteria stated in the component specifications
 - will enable differentiation across the full mark range available
 - will enable the contributions from individual learners, where group assessment activities are planned, to be separately identified and marked
 - places no undue burden on learners and only requires of them what the specification requires
- ➏ guide and supervise assessors in applying appropriate assessment methods fairly and effectively to produce valid, reliable and sufficient evidence
- ➐ evaluate the effectiveness of appropriate forms of assessment in producing information useful to the teacher and the learner within the line of learning.

Guidance on the development outcome

As part of applying awarding body standards, the domain assessor is responsible for ensuring internally set assessment activities meet awarding body requirements. Domain assessors may be expected to oversee or guide other assessors in selecting, designing and setting assessment activities. The domain assessors should be capable of:

- ▶ interpreting awarding body requirements for assessments as per the specification
- ▶ drawing from a repertoire of assessment methods when designing assessment activities and applying the chosen methods. (It may initially be a more appropriate option to use, or adopt, specimen assessments provided by the awarding body.)
- ▶ overseeing assessors in the line of learning in the design and development of assessment activities. Domain assessors should be able to guide and advise assessors on the application of good practice in assessment activities
- ▶ evaluating an assessment activity objectively using such criteria as validity, fitness for purpose, reliability, robustness, fairness, equitability and consistency.

DA4

Guide assessors in the conduct of assessments

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- guide assessors in the line of learning in applying good practice in the following assessment processes:
 - agreeing assessment plans with learners
 - ensuring learners understand the assessment activities and criteria
 - agreeing with learners how assessment criteria are applied
 - conducting assessments and applying the conditions set by an awarding body under which assessment evidence is gathered
 - selecting, collecting and recording suitable data for the purposes of assessment
 - compiling samples for moderation by the awarding body
 - ensuring learners are aware of the consortium’s procedures for challenging or appealing against an assessment decision
 - handling challenges and appeals by learners as per the consortium’s procedures
 - maintaining complete and accurate records of assessment decisions and learners’ progress
 - contributing to the organisation’s quality cycle by producing accurate and standardised assessment information.

Guidance on the development outcome

The domain assessor is responsible for ensuring awarding body standards and requirements are met in conducting assessment activities. This covers the way assessment activity is conducted and evidence is collected and involves applying assessment criteria accurately and consistently to learners’ work. The domain assessor should be capable of:

- briefing assessors on the requirements of an assessment and the application of the assessment criteria. This is an early and key step in standardising assessments
- setting out and agreeing assessment plans with learners, briefing learners on an assessment activity and assessment criteria, and agreeing with learners how the assessment criteria are applied
- conducting an assessment, including applying the controlled conditions under which assessment evidence is gathered
- complying with procedures for selecting, collecting and recording data for assessment purposes and maintaining records of decisions and learners’ progress
- briefing learners on consortium procedures for challenging or appealing against an assessment decision and handling a challenge or appeal by a learner as per these procedures
- overseeing assessors in the line of learning in the conduct of assessments, guiding them as required in the application of appropriate good practice in assessment.

DA5

Quality assure standards of internal assessments in the line of learning

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- as an assessor, apply the assessment criteria, as stated in the awarding body specification(s), accurately and consistently to learners' work
- guide assessors in applying the assessment criteria accurately and consistently in the line of learning. This includes:
 - allocating clear responsibilities to assessors in the line of learning for carrying out assessments of learners' work for each unit and for 'signing off' work that is to contribute to learners' Diploma awards
 - undertaking effective internal standardisation for each internally assessed principal learning unit in a line of learning and/or project component
 - checking that records of the internal standardisation processes are maintained
 - checking that staff provide regular feedback to learners on their performance in internal assessments
 - checking that no unnecessary barriers are placed in the way of learners who wish to challenge the assessment of their work under the consortium's appeals procedure
- review and evaluate the marking of assessments for all internally assessed components in the line of learning.

Guidance on the development outcome

Arguably the main responsibility of the domain assessor is quality assuring standards of internal assessments in the line of learning. This requires the domain assessor to apply the standards personally and to oversee their application by assessors. The domain assessor should be capable of:

- applying assessment criteria accurately and consistently to learners' work under the conditions set by an awarding body
- overseeing and guiding assessors in applying assessment criteria accurately and consistently under controlled conditions. Domain assessors should be able to allocate responsibilities for assessing and authenticating learners' work, standardising and recording judgements, and handling appeals. They should also be able to judge how effectively controlled conditions and assessment criteria have been applied
- directing or overseeing effective internal standardisation for each internally assessed component
- carrying out checks and judging the quality of records of assessments and recognising the existence of, and overcoming, implicit barriers that may stand in the way of learners who wish to challenge the assessment of their work.

DA6

Guide assessors in evaluating and feeding back on learning, teaching and assessment in the line of learning

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- ❖ establish and operate a process in the line of learning by which feedback is regularly provided to learners and assessors
- ❖ establish and operate a process in the line of learning by which regular opportunities are provided for assessors and teaching staff to discuss and feed back on assessment issues and opportunities for learning and teaching in the line of learning
- ❖ review and evaluate feedback from the awarding body with assessors
- ❖ lead, work with and encourage assessors in the improvement of learning, teaching and assessment activities in the line of learning
- ❖ provide feedback to the lead assessor on the conduct of each internal standardisation activity and agree with the lead assessor how improvements could be made for future standardisation activities.

Guidance on the development outcome

The domain assessor's role is to evaluate not only the performance of learners in an assessment, but also the performance of the assessment as a process and its contribution to teaching and learning. The focus of the former is the learners; the focus of the latter is the assessment process and system (including assessors). The domain assessor should be capable of:

- ❖ giving feedback to learners, judging the quality and frequency of feedback given by assessors to learners on their performance in internal assessments, and coaching assessors in giving feedback to learners as required
- ❖ defining the evidence required to evaluate learning, teaching and assessment activities and identifying cost-effective methods for obtaining and recording that evidence. The domain assessor may work in conjunction with the lead assessor who has this responsibility across a consortium
- ❖ using data and qualitative evidence to evaluate the learning, teaching and assessment activities in the line of learning and to identify areas for improvement. The domain assessor should be able to lead assessors and teaching staff in reaching objectives and agreed outcomes
- ❖ preparing action plans and winning the support of the lead assessor, consortium management and staff in the line of learning for the implementation of improvements
- ❖ creating a culture and opportunities that are conducive to the sharing of good practice between assessors
- ❖ giving feedback to assessors on their performances in an assessment, and recognising good practice and opportunities for further professional development.

DA7

Manage compliance with administrative procedures in the line of learning

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- explain the consortium's systems for the administration of Diploma programmes and apply these in the line of learning
- work with examinations officer(s) and assessors in the line of learning to ensure that all the administrative requirements of the awarding body in relation to internally assessed units are complied with
- check that all assessors working in the line of learning comply with all the administrative requirements of the consortium in relation to internally assessed units
- check that all assessors apply health, safety and environmental protection procedures during assessment
- provide reports on assessment activities and the progress of learners for use within the consortium.

Guidance on the development outcome

The domain assessor is responsible for ensuring that assessors in the line of learning meet a number of administrative requirements, both external and internal. The domain assessor should be capable of:

- explaining the consortium's systems for the administration of Diploma programmes and how they apply in the line of learning
- collaborating with examinations officer(s) to ensure that all the administrative requirements of the awarding body are complied with
- monitoring compliance by assessors in the line of learning with all the administrative requirements of the consortium including the application of health, safety and environmental protection procedures during assessment
- communicating with different audiences using appropriate techniques such as presentations, written reports, data analyses and discussions.

DA8

Contribute to the quality assurance of assessment in the consortium

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- contribute to the drafting, review and updating of assessment policies and procedures, particularly on any specific requirements or characteristics of the line of learning
- contribute to the appraisal of the skills, experience and readiness of assessors within the line of learning to undertake assessments, and recommend personal development for individual assessors as appropriate
- contribute to the evaluation of assessment processes, procedures and systems used within the line of learning for setting, conducting, recording evidence and feeding back on assessments, and recommend improvements as appropriate
- monitor, and take action to retain, the quantity and quality of resources required within the line of learning for undertaking assessment activities.

Guidance on the development outcome

To enable the domain assessor to discharge key responsibilities for quality assurance within the line of learning, the consortium will set up and operate a quality assurance system across all lines of learning.

The domain assessor should work in close cooperation with the lead assessor or quality manager responsible for the quality assurance system since he or she may be responsible for producing policies and procedures for their own line of learning. The domain assessor should be capable of:

- recognising the scope of policies and procedures required. If no lead assessor has been appointed, the domain assessor may also have to be capable of advising consortium management on appropriate wording of assessment policies in particular
- recognising any requirements or circumstances specific to the line of learning and drafting, or contributing to the drafting of, the consortium's policies and procedures
- appraising the skills, experience and readiness of assessors within the line of learning to undertake assessments, recommending personal development for individual assessors as appropriate
- contributing to the evaluation of assessment processes, procedures and systems used within the line of learning. This may be routinely within the line of learning, for example after a batch of assessments, or as part of a periodic 'audit' of the consortium's overall capabilities, systems and resources by the lead assessor or another senior role.

DA9

Guide and coach assessors across the line of learning

Performance criteria

The domain assessor can:

- ▶ provide advice, guidance and feedback on assessment matters to teaching staff and assessors in the line of learning
- ▶ set appropriate objectives for assessors in the line of learning and monitor progress by establishing and using robust feedback mechanisms
- ▶ build and maintain effective working relationships with assessors within the line of learning
- ▶ encourage assessors to collaborate with others and to share good assessment practice
- ▶ identify staff development needs and relevant training or CPD to address them
- ▶ provide coaching, training and CPD for assessors as required.

Guidance on the development outcome

An important, albeit implied, part of the domain assessor's role is to guide and coach assessors in a line of learning both on the application of the awarding body's standards and to demonstrate that the appropriate standards have been applied. This responsibility requires the domain assessor to work effectively with assessors using a range of interpersonal skills. The domain assessor should be capable of:

- ▶ building and maintaining effective relationships with and between members of the assessment team
- ▶ supporting assessors in interpreting and applying standards in assessments at their respective level(s) within the line of learning
- ▶ reviewing the performance of assessors in the line of learning and assisting them in identifying and planning appropriate CPD opportunities
- ▶ planning and providing coaching, training or CPD sessions for assessors or teaching staff as required.

Further information

You will be able to find out more about Diploma delivery and assessment through these key contacts.

Awarding bodies

AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) and City & Guilds

queries@diplomainfo.org.uk
www.diplomainfo.org.uk

Edexcel (Edexcel Limited)

08445 760 028
enquiries@edexcel.com
www.edexcel.com

EDI (Education Development International plc)

02476 516 500
customerservice@ediplc.com
www.ediplc.com

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)

01223 553 998
general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk
www.ocr.org.uk

VTCT

02380 684 500
customerservice@vtct.org.uk
www.vtct.org.uk

WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee)

0292 026 5000
info@wjec.co.uk

Other Diploma delivery partners

CIEA (Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors)

0845 672 2123
info@ciea.org.uk
www.ciea.org.uk

DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

0870 000 2288
info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
www.dcsf.gov.uk

LLUK (Lifelong Learning UK)

020 7936 5798
advice@lluk.org
www.lifelonglearninguk.org

QCDA (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency)

0300 303 3011
info@qcda.gov.uk
www.qcda.gov.uk

LSIS (Learning & Skills Improvement Service)

0870 060 3278
enquirieslondon@lsis.org.uk

National College

0845 609 0009
enquiries@ncsl.org.uk
www.ncsl.org.uk

NDAQ

(National Database of Accredited Qualifications)

0300 303 3344
info@ofqual.gov.uk
www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk

SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust)

020 7802 2300
info@ssatrust.org.uk
www.ssatrust.org.uk

TDA (Training and Development Agency for Schools)

020 7023 8000
corporatecomms@tda.gov.uk
www.tda.gov.uk

UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service)

0871 468 0 46
enquiries@ucas.ac.uk
www.ucas.ac.uk

About this publication

Who is it for?

- Senior managers and consortium staff with responsibility for managing internal assessment
- Lead and domain assessors
- Training providers offering professional development activities relating to the lead and domain assessor roles.

What is it about?

This guide outlines development outcomes and performance criteria that can be used in training provision for the lead and domain assessor roles.

It should ideally be read alongside *Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment* which defines these roles and their associated responsibilities.

Related materials

Delivering the Diploma – a guide to managing internal assessment QCDA/10/4692

Delivering the Diploma – managing internal assessment – an introduction
QCDA/10/4694

Diploma internal assessment toolkit QCDA/09/4419

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Email: orderline@qcda.gov.uk

This publication may also be downloaded
free of charge from <http://orderline.qcda.gov.uk>

QCDA/10/4693

Delivering the Diploma – a training guide for lead and domain assessors