



Qualifications and  
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



# Post-accreditation monitoring report: BIIAB

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# Introduction

Responsibility for regulating external qualifications lies jointly with three regulatory authorities:

- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the authority for England
- the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS), the body for Wales
- and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the authority for Northern Ireland.

Following the accreditation of a qualification, the regulatory authorities systematically monitor awarding bodies against the requirements set out in the statutory regulations. The aim of this activity is to promote continuing improvement and public confidence in the quality of external qualifications.

Where an awarding body is found not to comply with relevant criteria, the regulatory authorities set conditions of accreditation. Even if an awarding body is compliant, the monitoring team may make observations on ways that the awarding body could change its systems and procedures to improve clarity or reduce bureaucracy.

Accreditation conditions and observations arising from this monitoring activity are specified at the end of each section of this report. Awarding bodies are required to produce an action plan to show how they will deal with accreditation conditions imposed as a result of a monitoring activity. The action plan will be agreed by the regulatory authorities and its implementation monitored.

The regulatory authorities will use the outcomes of monitoring and any subsequent action taken by awarding bodies to inform decisions on the re-accreditation of qualifications, or, if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation.

## About this report

This report is the outcome of a monitoring activity carried out on BIIAB, the awarding body of the BII and was carried out by QCA on behalf of the regulatory authorities in September 2006. It draws together the regulatory authorities' findings on areas of corporate governance, resources and expertise, quality assurance and control of independent assessment, determination and reporting of results and registration.

This is the second post-accreditation monitoring activity on BIIAB's activities and is focused on the sections of the regulatory criteria not previously covered by BIIAB's Awarding Body Recognition Update (ABRU) for which there were no outstanding accreditation conditions.

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulatory authorities, including the previous monitoring report and ABRU submission, and scrutiny of BIIAB's website. The monitoring team visited BIIAB's head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation.

### **About BII**

BII is a professional body within the licensed retail sector, which has a remit to raise standards and professionalise the industry. It's wholly owned subsidiary, BIIAB, currently has nine VRQ qualifications accredited including those for responsible alcohol retailing, licensees and licensed retailing and door supervisors. All the qualifications are externally assessed through examinations. For more information on BIIAB and the qualifications it offers visit the website at [www.biiab.org](http://www.biiab.org).

# Corporate governance

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England in Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), paragraphs 5a and 7.

## Findings

1. The director of BIIAB provided the monitoring team with an overview of the organisation. The structure as described and documented is clear and fully understood by staff. Since completion of the Awarding Body Recognition Update (ABRU) in July 2005, BIIAB has undertaken some restructuring to include a qualifications development role in order to maintain a programme of expansion. Due to these and other developments the organisation chart and some of the job specifications for senior staff have been changed and BIIAB now needs to update those 'banked' by QCA.
2. BIIAB's senior staff produce a three year strategic plan that is aligned to budget setting and current legislation, for instance that relating to licensing law. This is updated annually and approved by the Council, which oversees the work of BII and BIIAB. It is available electronically to all staff and BIIAB also holds company days that all staff are required to attend. There was evidence of elements of the strategic plan being incorporated into documents and procedures as part of BIIAB's ISO arrangements, known as the BII Excellence Programme.
3. BIIAB maintains close communication links with centres that deliver its qualifications by issuing a bi-annual newsletter (*BIIAB update*), running workshops and organising an annual conference for centre staff. Further information is received through the BII's membership updates and journal (*BII business*) and through its website.
4. Fees are reviewed annually by the executive committee and approved by the Council. Additionally, fees for the jointly delivered Level 2 National Certificate for Door Supervisors' qualification are agreed with the partnership awarding body.

## Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

## **Observations**

1. BIIAB is reminded to update the banked documents with regard to organisation charts and job descriptions of senior staff.

# Resources and expertise

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England in Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), paragraphs 8 and 10.

## Findings

1. BIIAB is organised across four main areas. These are assessments, examinations, quality systems and qualifications development. The managers of these sections all report to the director of BIIAB and have weekly meetings. Each section also has monthly meetings.
2. There are 38 staff who work on the development and administration of all of BIIAB's qualifications including those that are not accredited.
3. BIIAB's employees have two appraisals a year; these are known as performance management reviews. These are used to identify training needs.
4. BIIAB contracts suitably qualified personnel to carry out item writing/reviewing and examining. It maintains consultants' database of these personnel that states their expertise and skills. For example, the door supervisor's qualification requires specialist personnel to have conflict management experience. The requirements for the different roles are found in the job specifications for each qualification.
5. Sector experts involved in the development of new qualifications may be targeted to undertake item writing or examining roles. Other personnel are recruited from contacts within centres and across the industry. Currently BIIAB appoints personnel for specific pieces of work but it is reviewing this system and is looking at the development of an annual generic contract. BIIAB's staff stated that there are sufficient numbers of contracted staff for each qualification to deal with the current level of demand.
6. BIIAB carries out regular training sessions on multiple choice question writing, short answer question writing and marking. Contracts are not renewed for personnel that do not fulfil the work to the required standard.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

There are no observations for this section.



# The quality assurance and control of independent assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 13, 36, 38-42, 56-58.

## Findings

1. BIIAB's qualifications are knowledge based and the majority is assessed by multiple-choice questions. Candidates receive a handbook containing the specification, which they may use in conjunction with attendance at a short course prior to taking the examination. However it is not mandatory to attend a course. Where applicable BIIAB's approved centres appoint nominated tutors to deliver the courses.
2. Moderation meetings are held for new or revised qualifications. The role of the moderation meeting is to review and amend questions to ensure they are technically correct, fit for purpose and that they meet the assessment criteria and learning outcomes. Item writers submit questions against the assessment criteria and these are entered on to the questions database, once they have been approved.
3. The 'bank' of questions for each unit contains a minimum of three questions for each assessment criteria.
4. BIIAB's staff review the questions for language, punctuation and house style. The relevant qualifications manager and assessments manager attend all moderation meetings.
5. BIIAB has detailed, documented procedures and guidance that support all aspects of the quality assurance process. These include *Process for question bank development and maintenance*, *Guidance for writing multiple choice items* and *Procedure for holding a moderation meeting*.

6. The assessments department of BIIAB follows a process for monitoring question banks using paper analysis and distracter analysis reports. The monitoring is carried out monthly for those qualifications with a high entry (the Level 2 National Certificate for Personal Licence Holders and the Level 2 National Certificate for Door Supervisors) and quarterly for the remaining qualifications. The outcomes of this monitoring will inform the content of standardisation meetings and describe the additional checks carried out following those meetings.
7. BIIAB tests questions for new qualifications by piloting them at specific centres. These are analysed and evaluated before the qualification is launched and made available to centres. Centre feedback is collected and closely monitored during the first six months of a new qualification. Centre feedback is also collected annually for more established qualifications. The feedback contributes to the standardisation meetings that review question banks by looking at the interpretation and performance of questions.
8. All of BIIAB's examinations are undertaken on demand with a minimum of two working days notice. Late fees are charged for entries less than eight working days before the examination date. The database generates the question papers taking into account the qualification structures, mandatory questions etc. Completed question papers are proof read by the relevant assessments manager. A further check is made to ensure questions do not overlap.
9. Question papers have an 18-week lifespan and all versions are numbered to ensure that examination venues are not issued with the same paper more than once. The monitoring team was shown the system from receipt of the request for examination papers to the printing of results.
10. Candidates taking the Level 1 Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing have a choice of assessment method. They can sit a formal examination or be assessed orally over a secure telephone line. Invigilators have to enter a personal identification number (PIN) before passing the handset to the candidate who answers further security questions and then answers randomly selected recorded questions. The PIN has an eight-week lifespan after which it is not useable and the candidate has to re-register. As with all the BIIAB qualifications there is no limit to the amount of times a candidate can re-take an examination.

11. The Unit 2 examination for the Level 2 National Certificate for Door Supervisors uses pre-filmed scenarios to which the candidates respond by selecting answers from written multiple choice questions. There are currently 10 DVDs available, each with four scenarios. For this qualification the question papers are tailored to the respective DVD. There are specific administrative requirements for examination venues offering this qualification about having the correct resources available.
12. BIIAB has two Level 3 qualifications, the Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Licensed Hospitality and the Level 3 Diploma in Licensed Hospitality. The former is made up of three mandatory units and the latter is achieved by taking, in addition to the three mandatory units, four units from a choice of ten. Together these make up BIIAB's own award, the Profitable Business Portfolio (PBP).
13. The units for the PBP have two parts. Part A is an open book examination consisting of five questions that can be answered in the candidate's own time or taken in controlled conditions at centres or can be done as part of a course. Part A questions are externally set and marked. Part B of the PBP units consists of 10 short-answer questions that are answered under formal examination conditions.
14. Take up of the PBP was slow and there were few examiners to start with. Now that the take-up rate is increasing there are more examiners in place and BIIAB has used this time effectively to build up the number and expertise of examiners. The structure of the examiner panels has been reviewed and BIIAB intends to introduce a principal examiner for each unit. Although currently the more experienced examiners are carrying out this function it will become a more formalised structure in the future. Job specifications, duties and terms and conditions for these roles have already been produced and were shown to the monitoring team.
15. Currently BIIAB holds standardisation meetings for the PBP by unit where a sample of scripts for the relevant unit is reviewed. New examiners marking for the first time send marked scripts to the principal examiner and are given feedback on accuracy, consistency and clarity. Records of this feedback are kept for new examiners but currently there is no other formal record keeping

or performance review for all examiners. However, in the revised procedures that BIIAB intends to implement, all examiners will have their initial marking re-marked by the principal examiner and will have feedback given to them on the *External examiner report form*.

16. The new role of the principal examiner will also include reviewing the borderline scripts. Currently this is being done by the BIIAB's head of examinations in liaison with the chief examiner. Changes to marking, if made, are noted on the scripts but as these are done before marks are entered on to the database, this is the only record of changes that is made. There is no documented procedure for new principal examiners to follow.
17. If a problem with an examiner's performance is identified through the review of borderline scripts other work is looked at.
18. The Security Industry Authority (SIA) has specific requirements for door supervisor candidates to prove their identity by providing at least three types of identification based on stringent criminal record bureau criteria. BIIAB has adapted these requirements for use with all its other qualifications. Candidates are informed in advance of the requirement to bring proof of identity with them to examinations and this is checked by invigilators. For the open book tests candidates are required to sign a declaration that it is their own work.
19. On entry to the examinations candidates sign a nominal roll. For the purposes of these qualifications approved centres are required to keep a copy of the nominal roll for up to one year. In all cases the original nominal roll is sent with the completed examination papers to BIIAB.
20. BIIAB carries out regular invigilator training workshops, which the monitoring team considers good practice. These take place around the country at various times throughout the year. BIIAB also holds qualification workshops for any centre staff to attend in order to share information and best practice.
21. To avoid any potential for conflict of interest examiners are required to inform BIIAB if they have an interest in a particular centre or course and are not permitted to mark in these cases.

22. Examination results are sent directly to centre contacts who are then responsible for forwarding these to candidates.

### **Accreditation conditions**

1. BIIAB must ensure that principal examiners recognise that there may be times when decisions made by examiners can be changed and have a documented procedure that principal examiners can follow in order to make and record changes. (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004, paragraph 64*).

### **Observations**

There are no observations for this section.

# Determination and reporting of results

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), paragraphs 63-67.

## Findings

1. Pass marks for all of BIIAB's qualifications are pre-set and are determined following piloting of the new qualification. If a question is identified as poorly performing it is taken out of the system.
2. BIIAB produces monthly statistics on pass rates and these are monitored for consistency. Statistical information is reviewed by the management committee. Information on each centre's pass rates is provided to it every six months.
3. None of the qualifications are graded and pass marks are detailed for candidates in the qualification handbooks. These should also be included on the examination papers for all BIIAB qualifications. The monitoring team saw a question paper for Unit 3 of the PBP that did not include information on the pass marks.

## Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

## Observations

2. BIIAB should review the examination question papers for the PBP to ensure candidates are provided with information on how the marks are allocated and the how a pass is achieved.

# Registration

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 11 and 12.

## Findings

1. Some of BIIAB's centres deliver the qualification and the examination from a single location or venue. Others use a number of venues sometimes known as satellites. In the latter case all administration is carried out from the centre's main office. For example, the centre contact is responsible for despatching examination papers to the venues as well as ensuring that their facilities meet BIIAB's requirements. All examination venues and satellite sites are linked to an approved centre.
2. Prospective centres undergo an approval process and are approved to offer specific qualifications. Centres receive a centre handbook and a CD-ROM containing information and guidance. They are provided with access to a secure area of the website, 'Centre Zone', where they can order examination papers and access their results. They can also obtain information including examination statistics, forms and materials. BIIAB's system does not allow centres to access examination papers for qualifications they are not approved to deliver.
3. Approved centres are monitored annually by BIIAB's centre monitors. Reports are completed on the day using a laptop and submitted to BIIAB on the same day. Centres are risk assessed and any problems identified trigger further investigation.
4. BIIAB operates a programme of assessment inspection checks at examination venues. BIIAB contracts 14 inspection assessors for this purpose. BIIAB's staff check for possible problems with the time, date or venue of the examination. Repeated faults will result in additional assessment inspections and the centre will be invited to attend an invigilator training event. Pass rates for examinations at new centres are also monitored.
5. The nature of the sector and the qualifications means that BIIAB is not aware of the names of candidates until after they have completed the examination and the

papers arrive at BIIAB. Candidates for the majority of BIIAB's qualifications are considered as registered on arrival at the examination, once they have signed the nominal roll. However, candidates for the PBP undertaking the Part A open book tests in their own time may be doing so without being registered. These candidates usually register when they sit the Part B examination. BIIAB's staff consider that these candidates are the responsibility of the centre but the awarding body also has a duty of care to those candidates should they suffer some disadvantage during assessments.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

3. BIIAB should consider reviewing its arrangements for candidates taking the open book tests in their own time to ensure that their interests are protected.