



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Post-accreditation monitoring report: The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

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Executive summary

The Chartered Institute of Personnel's awarding body (the CIPD) is transparent in its organisation structure and has effective and robust systems. Staff at head office demonstrate appropriate knowledge and suitable expertise in all areas of operation. The CIPD takes seriously its obligation to monitor and self assess its activities. The organisation is aware that there are a number of documents that need to be banked with the regulators. Some of these need amendment to make them compliant with the regulatory criteria.

The monitoring team found little fault with the operation of the CIPD's assessment activities but its system of internal assessment carries inherent risks. These could be reduced if assignment creation were confined to a smaller number of people than at present, where over 200 centres are allowed to set their own assignments and projects, and where agreement of centres' assignment and project proposals is delegated to a team of almost 100 moderators. Even a reduction in these numbers would leave a system that would require close supervision. The regulators have agreed to the removal of independent assessment from this qualification with effect from summer 2007. This will have little impact as the independent assessment was minimal in any case, consisting only of the moderator's agreement of the candidate's project plan.

There are four areas where the CIPD needs to improve its procedures or guidance:

- More guidance to its centres on issues such as record keeping and how helpful they can be as tutors when internally assessing candidates' work.
- Formalising the supervision of its moderators and producing individual reports on their work.
- Guidance to moderators when inconsistent internal assessment is revealed.
- Explaining more clearly to the public what the grades mean in its qualifications.

The overall impression of the CIPD is of an awarding body with competent staff who are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation. They need to record their systems a little more in order to give others confidence that, as staff change, the same quality processes will continue.

Accreditation conditions

1. The CIPD must bank all the documentation required under the banking system run by the regulators and the documents must be in accordance with the statutory regulation criteria.
2. The CIPD must have more robust and transparent procedures in place to monitor the work of its moderators.

3. The CIPD must provide the internal assessors with written guidance on the extent to which candidates can redraft work before it is assessed and the limits on the assistance that can be given to candidates.
4. The CIPD must provide written guidance to its centres on matters such as the records they are expected to keep and how to carry out internal verification.
5. The CIPD must use the minimum number of moderators consistent with other factors, such as the geographical spread of centres, in order to facilitate consistency.
6. The CIPD must provide its moderators with written guidance on what to do where marking is found to have been inconsistent.
7. The CIPD must provide information for employers and other users so that they can understand the significance of the grades allocated.

Observations

1. The CIPD should ensure that it examines the adequacy of its internal controls for managing potential for conflict of interest when it carries out its annual self-assessment.
2. The CIPD should check that the retention of evidence of candidates' work or assessment decisions is fully under its control to allow the monitoring of provision over time.
3. The CIPD should consider whether exemplar material would be helpful in improving centres' uniformity of assessment.
4. The CIPD should clarify the position of single named point of accountability on its centre approval documentation

Introduction

Regulating external qualifications

Responsibility for regulating external qualifications lies jointly with three regulators:

- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- 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 regulators 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 regulators 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 regulators and its implementation monitored.

The regulators 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.

Banked documents

As part of its awarding body recognition processes the regulators require awarding bodies to submit certain documents to QCA for the purposes of 'banking' in an electronic file. Information from banked documents will be used to inform monitoring activities and may also affect the awarding body's risk rating.

A suite of documents has been identified as suitable for banking and are those that are considered to be the most crucial in supporting an awarding body's ability to operate effectively. In order to maintain the currency of the banked documents, awarding bodies are responsible for

updating them as and when changes occur. They are also reminded to review them at least annually at the time of completion of their self-assessment.

About this report

This report is the outcome of a monitoring activity carried out on the CIPD awarding body and was carried out by QCA on behalf of the regulators between May and July 2007. It draws together the regulators' findings on areas of corporate governance, resources and expertise, quality assurance and control of both independent and internal assessment, determination and reporting of results and registration.

This is the first post-accreditation monitoring activity on vocationally related qualifications (VRQs) and is focused on the level 3 certificates in:

- personnel practice
- recruitment and selection
- training practice.

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulators, including the previous national vocational qualifications (NVQs) monitoring report and awarding body recognition up-date (ABRU) submission as well as scrutiny of the CIPD website. The monitoring team visited the CIPD's head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation. It also visited a small selection of centres to see how internal assessment was managed.

About the CIPD

The CIPD is a professional organisation that offers qualifications in people management and development and related subjects to its members in the UK and overseas.

For more information on the CIPD and the qualifications it offers visit its website at www.cipd.co.uk.

Corporate governance

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

Findings

The CIPD provided the monitoring team with clear organisation charts and statements of its fee structure for centres. Terms of reference and minutes of all relevant committees were made freely available for monitoring. These evidenced proper control of the awarding body being exercised.

There are no separate published accounts for the awarding body. The CIPD is incorporated and governed by its royal charter, which was granted in July 2000. There is a council that meets twice a year and has ultimate authority within the CIPD. Executive powers are delegated to the executive board, which meets six times a year. Below this, there are various sub-committees and it is the membership and education sub-committee that runs the awarding body side of the CIPD. There is a single named point of accountability for maintaining the quality and standards of all qualifications.

The membership and education sub-committee has three working parties that assist with the running of the awarding body. Those most relevant to this monitoring activity are the quality management working party, which carries out an overall monitoring function, and the certificate moderation working party, which oversees assessment and moderation and reviews results. The third working party is concerned with continuing professional development.

The CIPD has its own approved centre for its own qualifications and this centre has accommodation in the head office building. The monitoring team explored the extent to which the awarding body managed potential conflict of interest. For example, it noted that one accredited qualification was awarded exclusively by the CIPD's own training centre. However, the take-up on this qualification was extremely low and there was no evidence of competitors being frozen out of this market.

The CIPD's reading list contains some of its own publications as recommended reading but there is no compulsion to buy these and other texts are offered as equally suitable. New centre workshops are provided as part of the approval process. The monitoring team could understand the importance of these, given the method of assessment for the level 3 certificates, and was satisfied with the content revealed by the agendas provided. Professional events are also provided for centres, including the professional standards annual conference and other updating events.

The monitoring team was satisfied that the CIPD was alert to managing the potential for conflict of interest. The monitoring team recommended, however, that self-assessment should always examine the potential for conflict of interest in the structure and operation of the organisation.

The documentation that the regulators require awarding bodies to bank with them was examined and some amendments were needed. The CIPD must meet this requirement in accordance with the list of prescribed documents provided to awarding bodies. The monitoring team agreed with the CIPD some changes that were required to make the proposed bankable documents conform to the requirements of the regulatory criteria.

Accreditation conditions

1. The CIPD must bank all the documentation required under the banking system run by the regulators and the documents must be in accordance with the statutory regulation criteria (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*) paragraph 6c).

Observations

1. The CIPD should ensure that it examines the adequacy of its internal controls for managing potential for conflict of interest when it carries out its annual self-assessment.

Resources and expertise

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

Findings

The CIPD awarding body forms part of the CIPD membership organisation and the monitoring team only looked at the resources allocated to the level 3 certificate programme. This amounted to approximately 10 head office staff and a field team of about 100 moderators. No undue pressures were identified during the course of monitoring.

The monitoring team looked at job and people profiles and was satisfied with their content. No gaps in required expertise were identified.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Application of assessment methods: quality assurance and control of internal assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 13, 36, 38–42, 56, 57, 59, 60–62.

Findings

For the three level 3 certificates that were used by the monitoring team to test the awarding body's systems, the method of assessment consisted of four assignments and a project that were internally assessed, internally verified and externally moderated. Only one item, the project's plan, was externally assessed. The CIPD had received permission from the regulators to dispense with independent assessment of the project plan with the result that, in the very near future, all assessment would be internal.

The awarding body had a bank of assignments that centres could use but the centres could choose to set their own. These had to be agreed by the external moderator. The CIPD had 214 centres for these qualifications and there were 93 external moderators allocated to them, an average of less than three centres per moderator. The monitoring team considered that there were inherent problems of standardisation with such a multiplicity of assignments, agreed by a large number of moderators and marked by such a large number of assessors.

Candidates and centres confirm the authenticity of the evidence and it is the duty of the moderator to ensure that centre-created assignments cover the specification sufficiently.

The assignments were marked following two different generic marking schemes, one for theory and the other for skills-based assignments. Given the potential for wide variances of marking, as outlined above, it was surprising that the CIPD had not provided any exemplar material. The monitoring team noted the compulsory training events and records of standardisation meetings but felt that this was an area where exemplar material would have been useful. Centres commented that exemplar material would be useful and did not always find the generic mark schemes easy to use, especially for the skills-based assignments.

Centres received insufficient guidance on what records they were expected to keep and how they were to carry out internal verification. Centres depended upon knowledge acquired elsewhere to keep records and carry out internal verification.

There were no CIPD standardisation events taking place at the time the audit occurred. Centres reported that they found the events generally useful but felt that greater differentiation could be made between sessions for new centres and those that had attended many such events in the past.

The monitoring team understood the reasons why the CIPD wanted to tailor assignments to each individual candidate's circumstances but did not think that the CIPD had, in terms of agreeing the assignment topics, met the regulatory requirement to minimise the number of external moderators involved.

There were a number of areas of work where, although the assessors, verifiers and moderators were usually carrying out their duties in accordance with the regulatory requirements, there were no written requirements for them to do so. This covered issues such as the retention of records sufficient to monitor provision over time, the extent to which candidates could be allowed to redraft work before it is assessed and the limits on assistance that could be given to candidates with work that is to be assessed. For example, senior moderators were retaining examples of assessment decisions to facilitate standardisation events but there was no clear written requirement about how long such evidence was to be held after the event had occurred. The CIPD was in the course of revising its handbooks and took note of comments during the audit so that any necessary changes would be incorporated in the next edition.

Centre visits revealed a generally high standard of centre performance but the external moderation reporting form did not appear to be a useful monitoring tool. It did not necessarily record the detail of people met and documents examined, and had no clear action requirement. For example, major weaknesses were reported and then identified again on subsequent reports for the same centre. Where poor practice is found and reported by the external moderator, either the external moderator or the awarding body must ensure that it is corrected and within a defined timescale.

The CIPD looked at the work of the moderators as part of its standardisation activities but there was no procedure for them to do so. No reports were made on each of them. A pilot performance review was underway, however. When this is rolled out, it will allow the CIPD to meet this criterion.

Guidance was clear on how the moderators should carry out sampling and what to do if a centre's marking was too high or too low. However, there was no guidance on how to deal with inconsistent marking by a centre. Moderators did, however, provide clear feedback to the centres on their performance, although some centres believed the moderators had no power to alter what the centres had awarded.

The CIPD allows assessment in languages other than English (Welsh) but this was not an issue for the qualifications used in this monitoring activity.

Accreditation conditions

2. The CIPD must have more robust and transparent procedures in place to monitor the work of its moderators (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 36 and 61f).
3. The CIPD must provide the internal assessors with written guidance on the extent to which candidates can redraft work before it is assessed and the limits on the assistance that can be given to candidates (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 60).
4. The CIPD must provide written guidance to its centres on matters such as the records they are expected to keep and how to carry out internal verification (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 61a and 61b).
5. The CIPD must use the minimum number of moderators consistent with other factors, such as the geographical spread of centres, in order to facilitate consistency (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 61c).
6. The CIPD must provide its moderators with written guidance on what to do where marking is found to be inconsistent (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 61g).

Observations

2. The CIPD should check that the retention of evidence of candidates' work or assessment decisions is fully under its control to allow the monitoring of provision over time.
3. The CIPD should consider whether exemplar material would be helpful in improving centres' uniformity of assessment.

Application of assessment methods: 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

Given the imminent change away from any form of independent assessment, and the fact that the independent assessment only amounted to the assessment of a project plan, the monitoring team did not consider this aspect of assessment in any depth. Were the system to be continuing it would have debated the logic of allowing a candidate to change the project plan without further reference as long as the original plan had been found to be satisfactory.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

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

All assessment is by means of assignments and project work. The CIPD centres use generic marking schemes, one for theory and one for skills-based assignments. These allocate grades to the individual pieces of work (refer, pass, merit or distinction) based on the marks allocated. Candidates must achieve at least a pass in all of the assessments to be awarded the full qualification.

Marks are not aggregated to produce an overall result for the qualification. Instead, the pass, merit or distinction awarded for assignments is allocated a points value of 1, 2 or 3 (and the project has double value of 2, 4 or 6). The points are then totalled and a final grade allocated for the entire qualification of pass, merit or distinction depending on the points score. A candidate is debarred from the overall pass grade if any of the separate elements has been allocated a refer grade.

The meaning of the grades is not explained on the certificate awarded and it is difficult to see how users such as employers will be able to interpret the grades.

The moderators have access to the mark sheets completed by the centres and base their sampling on this and other information held. Disagreement with centres' judgements is fed back and centres are visited again if the situation is considered serious enough by the CIPD. Centres may be requested to re-mark if the generic assessment criteria have not been followed. Marks can be adjusted up or down for the entire cohort where lenient or harsh marking has occurred.

Visits to centres by the monitoring team confirmed that the moderators gave considerable feedback to centres on their marking.

The comparison of standards year on year is not an easy task given the varied nature of the assignments, as discussed earlier in the internal assessment section of this report. The CIPD does attempt to collate data and carries out an annual review in order to do this.

Accreditation conditions

7. The CIPD must provide information for employers and other users so that they can understand the significance of grades allocated (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraph 67).

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Registration

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

Findings

The CIPD has detailed procedures in place for centre registration and these are contained in the centre handbook. Staff expertise and resources are thoroughly investigated. However, it is not totally clear who is the single named point of accountability for the quality assurance and management of the qualifications at each centre. The monitoring team had to ask for this to be clarified when examining documentation.

Candidates have the option to register online or use a paper-based method. Centres reported no major difficulties or concerns in either process.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

4. The CIPD should clarify the position on single named point of accountability on its centre approval documentation.