



Qualifications and  
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



*Rewarding Learning*

# Post-accreditation monitoring report: British Gymnastics (BG)

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# Introduction

## Regulating external qualifications

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
- 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 the British Gymnastics awarding body (BG) by QCA on behalf of the regulatory authorities started in December 2006.

This is the second post-accreditation monitoring activity on BG's activities since its recognition as an awarding body. This report draws together the regulatory authorities' findings on the arrangements BG has for supporting its qualifications.

## **About British Gymnastics (BG)**

The awarding body <sup>1</sup> is part of the British Gymnastics National Governing Body (NGB), which has a remit to promote coaching and deliver courses in gymnastics. As the awarding body, BG offers a range of vocationally related qualifications (VRQs) in coaching. The coaching qualifications at level 1 are externally assessed through practical examinations and the completion of a logbook. Levels 2 and 3 have an additional written external assessment component. The existing qualifications are in the process of re-development to align them with the requirements of the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) framework. For more information on BG and the qualifications it offers visit the BG website at [www.british-gymnastics.org](http://www.british-gymnastics.org).

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report the awarding body will be referred to as BG and the wider organisation as the NGB.

# Corporate governance

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

## Findings

1. The organisational chart shows the lines of reporting but it is not clear that the coaching and judging department is the awarding body. In addition, neither the Examination Board (EB) responsible for the quality assurance and quality control of qualifications nor the National Coach Education Panel (NCEP) are included on the overall committee structure. BG has developed policies to manage the split between the functions of awarding and training so that any potential conflict of interest is suitably managed.
2. Potential coaches have to be members of the NGB to take the accredited qualifications<sup>2</sup>. Coaching qualifications are seen as a licence to practice and coaches must have public liability insurance to protect their gymnasts. This insurance is included in the membership fee paid to the NGB.
3. The awarding body team has regular meetings enabling staff to understand their roles and the aims and objectives of BG.
4. Senior and experienced examiners from each sports discipline are represented on the EB and may have a dual role as external verifiers. While the monitoring team recognises the links between the functions of external verification and the moderation of examinations the documented procedures could be more explicit and include a remit for each role.
5. The challenge for BG is to promote itself as an awarding body, particularly on the website, so that its function for awarding and developing qualifications can be identified as separate from the NGB.

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<sup>2</sup> From 2008 coaches will need a licence to practice, which includes membership of the NGB.

## Accreditation conditions

1. An organisational chart must be developed which shows the position of the awarding body within the NGB. It must include clear lines of reporting from the awarding body to the EB and NGB (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), paragraph 5a.

## Observations

1. BG may wish to consider changing its name to differentiate its role from that of the NGB.
2. BG should consider reviewing the remit and functions of the EB so that the roles of board members and external verifiers are clear.
3. BG should consider using the website to show that it is an awarding body responsible for developing and awarding qualifications and is separate from the wider organisation, the NGB.

# Resources and expertise

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), paragraphs 8, 10, 97e and 98.

## Findings

1. BG has sufficient staff at its head office to deal with the existing arrangements for registering and certificating candidates. The monitoring team noted that BG will be employing an additional staff member in 2007 to develop systems and procedures for the proposed coaches' licensing scheme.
2. The awarding body has an appraisal system linked to agreed performance objectives. External examiners and external verifiers do not have formal appraisals but performance is monitored. They sign an agreement to provide services and agree to specific terms and conditions, which includes maintaining accredited examiner or external verifier status through continuing professional development (CPD). The monitoring team noted that the terms and conditions do not include the requirement to attend an annual workshop in their sport's specific discipline, which the awarding body said was mandatory.
3. The existing database is linked to the membership data held by the NGB. The awarding body uses this to track the qualification status of its examiners and external verifiers. The web-based system will enable BG to view the history of each member, run reports on examiners and external verifiers and log information on appeals and reasonable adjustments.
4. The awarding body and NGB is supported by a volunteer network of regional coaching coordinators (RCCs) who organise courses for levels 1 and 2, and arrange the examinations. Due to the complexity of the coaching skills required at level 3 and above, the courses are organised by BG. While the awarding body has access to about 376 registered tutors and examiners BG staff said that only 60 per cent are active. The database is currently being updated to show active tutors and examiners.
5. There are suitable documented procedures for recruiting examiners and external verifiers including application forms and curricula vitae. The minimum

requirements for examiners and external verifiers are clearly stated and these include set prerequisites. Examiners must be verified tutors, have delivered a minimum of two coaching courses and be recommended by their mentor as suitable. The awarding body has a network of volunteer mentor examiners who observe and support individuals while training. BG may consider individuals as examiners only if they have the relevant experience and expertise.

6. Potential examiners attend training events run by experienced examiners from the EB. These include information from the tutor training programme. Attendees receive a range of support documentation to assist them in their roles including information on tutor and examiner training.
7. It is unclear whether the awarding body or the NGB approves tutors for courses. The awarding body said that tutor and examiner application forms are endorsed by the RCCs and checked by the director of coaching education. In addition, BG checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) before accepting an individual as a potential tutor.
8. The monitoring team recognises that some individuals may have a dual role as a tutor, examiner or external verifier but the awarding body needs to ensure that the differences between the roles are clear. This may mean reviewing the content of the training programmes and separating out the training materials for each role.
9. Although BG does not offer NVQs its external verifiers are drawn from the pool of existing examiners and trained to V2 standards. This is good practice. All examiners and external verifiers have a copy of the *Awarding body operations manual*, (2006), which includes information on quality assurance arrangements and policies and procedures.

## **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.



## **Observations**

4. BG should up-date its terms and conditions for examiners and external verifiers and specify the minimum number of mandatory training days.
5. BG should clarify in its written procedures who is responsible for examiner training.
6. BG should consider separating the training programme materials so that the differences between the functions of a tutor and an examiner are clear.

# 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 and 56-58.

## Findings

1. BG uses independent assessment for all qualifications. This includes both practical and theoretical examinations for levels 2 and 3 and a practical examination at level 1. Candidates also hand in a logbook showing that they have completed the required number of post-course guided learning hours. Examiners may also ask oral questions about the assessment tasks to check knowledge at all levels. Examination papers are multiple-choice (MCQ), short or long answer questions depending on the level of the qualification.
2. The EB decides on the topics for theory papers where applicable and approves individuals to write either the questions, the papers or both. An independent person evaluates the papers to ensure that they are at the correct level and unbiased. However there were limited records available. Only half of the existing theory papers have marking guidelines and this could affect the consistency of marking across examinations. The awarding body recognises this as an issue and is preparing mark schemes for all theory papers for the next cycle of examinations. Activities relating to the development of the questions and mark schemes need to be supported by suitable auditable records.
3. Practical examinations are standardised. BG devises the practical assessment tasks, which are of comparable difficulty for qualifications at each level. Examiners send each candidate details of four tasks designed to test their coaching skills before the examination. These tasks are marked against set assessment criteria, which remain constant for the lifecycle of that qualification. A member of the monitoring team observed a level 1 examination and was confident that the examining process for practical examinations is robust.
4. External examiners mark the scripts after the examination. If any script is a borderline pass between 55 and 65 per cent a second qualified examiner (the

tutor) re-marks the script. The average of these marks determines the candidate's final mark. If there is a difference of more than five per cent the scripts must be returned to the director of coach education for moderation.

5. External verifiers visit examinations to ensure that standards are consistently applied and monitor examiner performance. These include planned and unplanned visits and desk-based sampling. BG did not meet its targets for 2006. The awarding body said that the re-development of its qualifications and mapping to the UK Coaching certificate (UKCC) requirements had affected the schedule of visits. The majority of external verifiers are also members of the EB and this additional responsibility may have contributed to BG not meeting its monitoring targets.
6. Desk-based sampling of logbooks and scripts from specific examinations is used to promote standardisation. This is a useful exercise. BG identified inconsistencies in examiner marking and misinterpretation of the technical standards at levels 4 and 5. Although these qualifications are not in the national qualifications framework (NQF) the awarding body provided workshops to explain the technical requirements and introduced new marking arrangements for examination scripts.
7. While the arrangements promote consistency and standardisation the monitoring team would have more confidence if a larger sample of examination scripts at levels 2 and 3 were moderated by members of the EB as a discrete activity separate from external verification. It is not clear how BG monitors consistency in examiner marking over time if some examiners are not included in the external verification sampling.
8. Clear instructions for the invigilation of examinations and security of examination papers are included in the operations manual and BG checks that its regulations are complied with during unannounced visits. However, the regulations do not require centres to check the identity of candidates before examinations.

### **Accreditation conditions**

2. BG must provide mark schemes for all theory papers (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications*, paragraph 58b).

3. BG must review its systems and procedures for standardisation (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications*, paragraph 56)
4. BG must ensure that examination venues check the identity of candidates before examinations (*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), paragraph 58f).

### **Observations**

7. BG should consider using a pool of external verifiers separate from the EB to carry out the role of monitoring examiners and practical examinations. This will allow the board to have an independent overview of BG's quality assurance arrangements.
8. BG should consider using the EB to monitor the consistency of examiner marking and standards over time by increasing the number of scripts sampled.
9. BG may wish to extend its pilot scheme for marking higher-level scripts to levels 2 and 3 to promote consistency in marking.

# 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. None of the qualifications are aggregated or graded. Information on how the overall award is determined is stated in the relevant *Coaching qualification specification* and syllabus.
2. Qualifications at level 2 and above have two examination papers; a common core and sports specific theory paper each with a set pass mark of 60 per cent. External examiners complete the *Coaching qualification application form (CC5)* clearly showing the marks achieved and the results for the practical examination and logbook.
3. External examiners are required to give a clear indication of the result of the practical examination when it finishes. The assessment checklist for level 1 includes written feedback from the external examiner and the candidate on their performance. In effect, the candidate will know the final result before BG has made any further quality assurance checks. While the monitoring team recognises that the emphasis of these practical examinations is to improve coaching performance, external examiners must stress that the result is provisional.
4. There are no formal awarding meetings to determine overall results. The awarding body uses the information provided by the external examiners to determine final results and carries out a series of quality assurance checks. These include checking that: candidates meet the qualification prerequisites, all assessment components have been completed, the pass marks achieved where applicable and candidates' CRB status.
5. There are suitable arrangements to adjust marks if errors are identified or if assessments are inaccurate. The EB can appoint an independent external examiner to mark or moderate either theory scripts or practical assessments or both if there are concerns about examiner marking. BG's self-assessment report in 2006 identified that 64 scripts were moderated and eight results were amended.

6. BG keeps assessment records indefinitely. Copies of examination scripts achieving high marks are used to compare standards year on year. However these arrangements are not documented. The director of coach education also looks at moderated papers and any issues or concerns are highlighted and reported to the EB.
7. The EB considers any requests for special consideration. They can offer re-sits for theory examinations because of environmental issues such as excessive noise or re-assessment of candidate performance for practical examinations if applicable. No additional charge is made if special consideration is given.

### **Accreditation conditions**

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

### **Observations**

10. BG should make clear to candidates after the examination that the result is provisional until the awarding body has carried out its quality assurance checks.
11. BG should include its arrangements for keeping candidate evidence such as examination scripts and assessment records in its operations manual.

# Registration

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

## Findings

1. BG has devolved the approval of assessment sites to the RCC which nominates a qualified tutor or BG examiner to visit the site. Each site has to have suitable apparatus and meet BG's minimum requirements as stated in the operations manual. The nominated person completes an approval form which records the sports specific disciplines to be delivered, the level of qualification, the equipment available and its condition. The completed form is sent to the director of coach education for final approval. If approved, the site is added to the register of approved sites. Existing sites are re-assessed if they want to offer new qualifications or acquire additional equipment.
2. Candidates are required to be members of BG to take qualifications. The membership number is used as their unique identifier and lifetime registration number.
3. It is not clear whether candidates are registered for the qualification before or after examination. The CC5 is an application form and clearly states that the information provided will be used on the certificate when issued. The form also includes the candidate's final results and is sent to BG with the examination fee. Although the documented procedures explain how candidates are registered for membership of the NGB it does not explain how they are registered for qualifications. The registration requirements for qualifications need to be more explicit.

## Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

## Observations

12. BG should include information on how candidates are registered for qualifications in its written procedures.