Delivering ATHE Qualifications

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About ATHE

The ATHE mission is to provide outstanding qualifications, customer service and support, enabling centres to thrive and their learners to achieve and progress.

We will deliver this mission by:

- providing qualifications which enable learners to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to society both socially and economically
- delivering the highest standards of customer service
- delivering support and guidance which meet the needs of all centres and enable them to improve performance
- upholding and maintaining the quality and standards of qualifications and assessments
- having a commitment to lifelong learning and development

Role of the Regulator

- ATHE is regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) which is the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England ATHE is also regulated by the Qualifications Wales for qualifications which are delivered in Wales
- The Regulators set conditions upon all awarding organisations which they must adhere to in order to ensure their continued recognition
- The Regulators report directly to their respective parliament/assembly

ATHE is committed to being an equal opportunities organisation. ATHE is opposed to discrimination on any grounds, including those of race, language, colour, nationality, ethnicity, regional or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religious belief, disability or social background.

Data Protection

ATHE is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of data protection legislation. ATHE will therefore follow procedures that aim to ensure that all employees, contractors, agents, consultants and other partners of ATHE who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of ATHE, are fully aware of and abide by their duties and responsibilities.

Becoming a Recognised ATHE Centre in the UK

What is centre recognition?

Centre recognition is a process which a potential centre completes in order to offer ATHE qualifications. Recognition status is granted based upon the centre's capacity to comply with the ATHE standards and requirements. It cannot be achieved without a formal application and a health check which is conducted by an External Verifier (EV).

Who can become a recognised ATHE centre?

Any organisation can become a recognised ATHE centre if it can demonstrate it is able to provide evidence that it meets the ATHE standards required for delivery, assessment and quality assurance of ATHE qualifications.

To become a recognised ATHE centre, the applicant first has to complete the initial online application providing basic centre details. Once this is complete the centre will be directed to a page where it can download the centre recognition application form. To access the initial form go to www.athe.co.uk/apply.

Centre recognition application form

The centre application form is intended to provide ATHE with information on the centre applying for recognition. You will need to return the completed application form to your contact at ATHE or admin@athe.co.uk. When the application form has been submitted, an invoice for the application and recognition fee will be issued.

Initial centre check

Once the invoice has been cleared, ATHE will conduct an initial centre check on your organisation. This is a desk-based activity where ATHE will check through some details including whether your centre is a registered company/charity and if the organisation is regulated by the appropriate authorities. Upon successful completion you will be sent details of what to expect during the health check, guidance on the documents required and a copy of the centre agreement.

Health Check

When ATHE has completed the initial centre check, an External Verifier will contact you to arrange a health check. The health check is designed to ensure your centre is able to deliver, assess and quality assure ATHE qualifications to the required standard. The External Verifier will ask to see a range of evidence, which is listed below under the 'Centre Policies and Procedures' section of this document.

After the health check, the External Verifier will produce a report with recommendations for a Regional Standards Manager/Head of Quality and Assessment to approve. If there are shortfalls in the standards required, the EV will produce actions for the centre to complete within defined timescales. These actions are intended to help the centre improve the quality of provision and ATHE will assist you in achieving the standards needed. If there are serious shortfalls the centre will not be recognised, and it will need to address the action points within the given timescales before recognition will be gained.

ATHE Centre Agreement

An agreement will be issued for the centre to sign and return to ATHE. The agreement clearly specifies the roles and responsibilities of ATHE and the recognised centre.

Centre recognition pack

Upon completion of the centre recognition process a pack will be sent to the centre which will include the certificate of recognition, the signed ATHE centre agreement, a copy of the health check report along with key ATHE policies and procedures.

Timescales

We aim to contact the centre to arrange a health check visit within 3 working days of successful completion of the initial checks and send a centre recognition pack to centres within 3 working days of the notification of recognition.

Maintaining Recognised Centre Status

ATHE will support and work with centres to ensure recognised centre status is maintained. In this way ATHE is assured that the required standards for delivery and assessment of the qualifications are upheld and that learners have the opportunity to achieve.

ATHE will monitor the quality of centres in a number of ways, primarily this will be through monitoring and development visits which check that centre policies and procedures, which impact on teaching, learning and assessment, are being implemented. These visits will also provide an opportunity to give centres some initial feedback on learner work and whether it is meeting the standards required.

In addition to these visits, Regional Standards Managers will be actively checking that any action points for the centre, which were identified at earlier visits, have been completed. ATHE will take appropriate action where centres have not attempted to complete action points or do not respond to requests for information. This action will be in accordance with the ATHE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

ATHE will provide standardisation events and other training days which representatives from centres are expected to attend annually. This will enable centre staff to examine learner work and further develop their ability to make correct assessment judgements. These events will also further develop the ability of verifiers in centres to provide accurate feedback to assessors and help staff in centres gain a greater insight into the structure of the qualifications, the units and the implications for teaching and learning and assessment.

Throughout these processes ATHE is striving to constantly improve quality in the interests of centres and their learners. Our experience shows that centres which embrace the quality agenda are the most successful organisations.

Satellite Centres of Recognised ATHE Centres

What is a satellite centre?

A different centre and legal entity, but there is a formal agreement with a recognised ATHE centre. We recognise that the model of operations and the nature of the formal agreement may vary from one lead centre/satellite to another. For example the satellite centre may utilise different policies and procedures for some aspects of its work. However as far as the recruitment of learners, planning, delivery, assessment or QA of ATHE qualifications are concerned, the centre must work to the same standards as the lead centre. In this respect the satellite centre may use the same policies and procedures as the lead centre. Irrespective of the formal agreement with the satellite centre, the lead centre has responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of the quality of provision in the satellite centre meet ATHE standards.

How do lead centres get approved?

ATHE will use the following criteria to steer judgements on the ability of the lead centre to manage satellite provision.

- The centre has had three 'green' summative judgements in a row for external visits. This shows that the centre is working to the required standards. At these visits there were no issues with the validity of assessment judgements or the internal verification process.
- The centre has appropriate QA processes in place and action points are completed on time and to the required standards.
- The external verification visits relating to learner certification have normally had a minimum of three months between them. The centre has had green status for other EV visits during this period.
- There have been no documented cases of malpractice in the centre in the last 12 months and the centre produces evidence to show that all learner work is checked for malpractice in accordance with ATHE policy.
- All learners have been registered on time in accordance with ATHE policy.
- The learner records held at the centre and those submitted to ATHE are accurate
- All potential conflicts of interest at the centre, particularly as they relate to assessment and internal verification, have been appropriately managed so there are no issues.
- There have been no complaints against the centre within the last 12 months that have required action from ATHE.
- ATHE has not received any adverse comments from other AOs.

We need the following information/evidence:

- CVs of staff who will administer, teach, assess and manage provision in the satellite centre.
- How the lead centre monitors the quality standards of the satellite centre including assessment, verification, malpractice and quality assurance.
- Evidence of physical resources in the satellite centre.
- Centre application form.
- How the lead centre will ensure that learners are appropriately informed about the qualifications on offer
- How the lead centre will manage the enrolment and registration of learners and ensure they meet the entry criteria for the chosen course of study
- Evidence of a contractual relationship with the lead centre.

This list of information is not exhaustive and other information may be required. ATHE will also use other information in the public domain for example inspection reports to support its judgements.

How ATHE will monitor the quality of provision in satellite centres

- The satellite centre may only register learners on qualifications for which the main centre is approved.
- The satellite centre may not appoint sub-satellite centres.
- The lead centre must continue to obtain 'green' status in the monitoring visits conducted by EVs. If any issues emerge with the lead centre which give cause for concern, then ATHE will contact the satellite centre to inform it of the concerns and any resulting change in status.
- Annual visits by ATHE staff and associates to satellite centres as appropriate.
- Video meetings with teaching, assessment and administrative staff in satellite centres
- Learner work will be subject to external verification.

The support ATHE will provide to satellite centres

- Access to sample assignments, teaching and learning guidance and reading lists
- Service for checking any centre devised assignments, which centres may require to ensure relevancy of learning and assessment
- Sample policies and procedures
- Remote training and support with teaching, assessment and administrative staff in satellite centres
- Access to the ATHE international webpage which contains training materials, information and advice
- Support with queries as they arise

Starting the application process

To become a recognised ATHE Centre, the applicant first has to complete the initial online application providing the basic centre details. Once this is complete they will be directed to a page where they can download the Centre Recognition Application and have access to ATHE policies. To access the initial application for go to www.athe.co.uk/apply alternatively, the lead centre can contact the ATHE office to begin the application process.

Centre recognition application form

The centre application form is intended to provide ATHE with detailed information on a centre applying for recognition. The application process will expect the satellite centre or the centre with overall responsibility for the QA (lead centre) to return the completed form. Once submitted, an invoice for the application and recognition fee will be issued.

Initial centre check

Once the invoice has been cleared, ATHE will conduct an initial centre check on your organisation. This is a desk-based activity where ATHE will check through some details including whether the centre is a registered company/charity and if the organisation is regulated by the appropriate authorities. Upon successful completion you will be sent details of what to expect during the health check, guidance on the documents required and a copy of the centre agreement.

Health Check Visit

An External Verifier will make contact to arrange a health check visit to the lead centre.

The health check visit is to ensure the satellite centre is able to deliver and assess ATHE qualifications to the required standard, and the lead centre is able to effectively manage the

relationship with the satellite centre. After the visit the External Verifier will produce a report with recommendations for a Regional Standards Manager/Head of Quality and Assessment to approve. If the health check judgement shows that the centre meets the standards required, the centre will be recommended for recognition. If there are areas requiring improvement, the EV will produce actions for the centre to complete within stated timescales. If there are serious shortfalls, the centre will not be permitted to continue the recognition process. In these circumstances a centre may reapply, when it believes it has addressed the action points. In cases where there are serious shortfalls and there are concerns that the centre cannot deliver, assess or quality assure the qualifications to the required standards, ATHE will not allow the centre to reapply.

What evidence/information do we require in the health check visit?

In addition to the information listed above, other information needed for a standard health check will also be required. A complete list is available on the Qualifications Guidance webpage. These lists are not exhaustive and other information may be required.

ATHE Satellite Centre Agreement

Before the satellite centre is recognised, they will receive the satellite centre agreement which needs to be signed and returned to ATHE. After the centre has been recognised, you will receive one copy of the agreement back, signed by an ATHE representative. The agreement specifies the roles and responsibilities of the centre and ATHE. A centre recognition pack will then be sent to you.

Centre recognition pack

Upon completion of the centre recognition process a pack will be sent to the centre which will include the certificate of recognition, the signed ATHE centre agreement, a copy of the health check report along with key ATHE policies and procedures.

Centre training and support

ATHE offers training and support to new centres. With satellite centres this may take the form of remote video training with delivery, assessment and administrative staff, access to sample assignments and reading lists.

Monitoring visit

Lead centres should expect an annual visit from an EV to monitor their progress with delivering ATHE qualifications. This visit will ensure the satellite centre and the lead centre obtain invaluable feedback to enable further improvements to take place. Where appropriate and subject to prior agreement and arrangements, the annual visit will also provide an opportunity for customised training.

Centre Renewal

All centres sign a three-year agreement when they become recognised by ATHE. If centres wish to continue offering ATHE qualifications after their agreement has expired, it is essential they contact ATHE to begin the renewal process. Ideally this should be done six months before the expiration date but it must be no less than three months before the 'date of agreement', which can be found on the front page of the centre agreement.

Once the centre has notified us of their intention to apply for renewal we will take the following steps:

1. Complete an initial check to ensure the centre has not been involved in malpractice or maladministration and there are no other issues that would mean ATHE would not agree to progress the renewal.
2. A member of the ATHE Centre Support Team will contact the centre to explain the next steps. Depending on the status of the centre they may be,
    a. A health check visit takes place – where the centre has not had an EV visit of any kind for over 2 years
    b. A monitoring and development visit takes place – where the centre has had a recent visit but did not achieve a 'green'/stongamber judgement
    c. No visit required – where the centre has had a recent visit and received a 'green/strongamber judgement.
3. If the centre renewal is granted, a centre agreement will be issued to sign and return to ATHE, the centre will then be recognised for a further three years.
4. If the centre is not permitted to renew then the centre will be provided with the centre withdrawal procedure, (This procedure can be found in the Qualifications Withdrawal Procedure.)

Please note:

1. Centres may not submit registrations within three months of the expiry of the recognition.
2. Where centre renewal is not approved, centres must transfer their learners to an alternative qualification and/or allow those learners to transfer to alternative ATHE centre. Please see the Qualifications Withdrawal Procedure on the ATHE website for more information.

Changes to centre requirements

It is possible that over time centres may wish to change ATHE approvals for qualifications and there may also be changes to the mode of delivery or location of centre premises. We need to manage this in a way which allows the centre to operate in the best interests of the learners and is not over bureaucratic but does ensure that standards have been checked and are being maintained.

In cases where a centre wishes to offer ATHE qualifications at another premises which is not owned or leased by the same legal entity, then this is covered under the rules and processes relating to satellite centres (detailed above).

For other cases the following rules and processes should apply:

Process

1. All centres will be required to complete the centre changes form available on the Qualifications Guidance webpage. This form will enable the centre to provide information supporting their application to offer additional ATHE qualifications, deliver ATHE qualifications at different premises and/or apply for an additional mode of delivery. The information will include the reasons for changing the centre's provision as well as information on the staffing and physical resources available.

2. Once the form and any supporting evidence has been submitted to ATHE a decision will be made to either,

    a) approve the changes to the centre's recognition. The centre will be informed and will be able to make the changes to their provision immediately.
    b) inform the centre an EV visit will need to take place to assess in further detail the centre's ability to deliver, assess and quality assure the additional qualifications and/or the changed mode of delivery or at the new premises. The EV will also check whether action points from previous visits have been addressed. Based on the findings of the EV report, the centre will either be able to make the changes/additions or will have action points to address, before the approval is granted.
    c) inform the centre the changes have not been approved at this point. The centre will be given feedback on which areas they need to address before a further application will be considered.

Centre roles and responsibilities in relation to ATHE

This section gives details of the requirements and responsibilities of each role involved in the assessment and quality assurance processes. The centre will need to identify members of staff to fill each of the centre roles described.

Centre roles

Principal/Head of Centre

The Principal/Head of Centre in conjunction with other senior staff, sets the vision and direction for the centre and together they ensure that structure, resources and effective systems are in place to assure the quality of experience for learners. Experience shows that where qualifications are managed effectively at strategic and operational levels standards are maintained and a culture of continuous improvement is more easily established.

The Principal/Head of Centre is the final point of accountability for the standards within an organisation and will usually be the individual who signs the centre agreement with ATHE and will be the person contacted in the case of a sanction being imposed.

Centre Contact/Quality Assurance Co-ordinator

The centre contact is the person responsible for ensuring that the administrative and quality assurance systems for all ATHE qualifications are properly maintained throughout the centre and that communications between ATHE and the centre are dealt with efficiently. In order to ensure this, the centre contact will have a secure email address to which correspondence can be sent. The centre contact must inform ATHE immediately if their details change.

The person undertaking this role for ATHE qualifications will need to:

- have an appropriate background in assessment, management, administration and quality assurance
- possess the necessary authority and time to ensure that management, administration, assessment and internal quality assurance co-ordination procedures are implemented correctly and consistently across the centre as a whole
- have regular contact with the assessors and internal verifiers
- liaise closely with other staff members to obtain, and provide external verifiers and other ATHE personnel with, detailed information on the overall operation of the centre
- co-ordinate visit arrangements for external verifiers
- be responsible for ensuring that registrations/entries are sent to ATHE in accordance with specified procedures
- confirm registrations/entries have been received from ATHE and candidate enrolment numbers are checked
- ensure only appropriately qualified and experienced staff are used in the assessment process, in accordance with any specified vocational experience/qualification requirements
- ensure staff involved in assessment have access to and regularly participate in activities designed to promote continuous improvement
- ensure sufficient and effective verification processes are available for confirming assessment decisions
- ensure any internally devised assignments are checked by ATHE before issue to learners
- ensure those involved in assessment apply equal opportunity principles to assessment

- ensure everyone involved with assessment is familiar with the qualifications they are assessing or verifying, including rules of combination and has a knowledge base sufficient to enable them to interpret the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and all documentation
- ensure staff are familiar with the recording systems, documentation and procedures for assessment and quality assurance of individual units and qualifications
- ensure staff are prepared for their role, supported and allowed sufficient time to carry it out effectively
- ensure staff have discussed EV reports and any action plans agreed between the external verifier and the centre are met within the appropriate timescale
- provide proof of candidates' identities is obtained as appropriate
- ensure security arrangements in place for written papers, coursework assessments, project and practical work are in accordance with regulations (where applicable)
- ensure administration of assessments is in accordance with regulations
- ensure candidates' projects and other evidence are forwarded on time (where applicable)
- ensure appropriate records, results or other evidence of achievement are released to other centres or candidates (as applicable) in cases where candidates transfer to new centres
- ensure certificates and certificates of unit credit received from ATHE are securely stored prior to issue to candidates
- ensure results, certificates are properly issued to candidates at the centre
- disseminate promptly all general correspondence from and to ATHE, the centre and the relevant staff (the QAC acts as the point of contact for such correspondence)

Assessors

The role of the assessor is to:

- ensure that candidates understand the requirements of each unit of assessment
- produce and disseminate an assessment plan for candidates
- develop assignments and other forms of assessment that enable candidates to meet the learning outcomes and achieve the standards shown by the assessment criteria
- make valid, reliable and consistent assessment decisions
- provide learners with detailed feedback to show how they have met the learning outcomes and the standards set by the assessment criteria and where further evidence is required
- map evidence of learner achievement to the assessment criteria
- ensure that recommendations for the award of credit are valid, reliable and consistent
- record assessment decisions systematically and ensure that candidate records and centre documentation are completed in accordance with the requirements of the centre and ATHE

For information on the role of an Internal Verifier please see the Practitioners Guidance section.

ATHE training support

ATHE offers a variety of training and support to centres to enable further development and facilitate continuous improvement. This training and support is provided through open courses or is bespoke to centres so that it addresses specific areas for development. This can be in the following areas:

- Improving work with students in terms of planning and delivering teaching and learning
- Developing quality assurance systems and processes
- The application of mapping and RPL
- Improving the design of assignments and ensuring valid and reliable assessment decisions

Training may be delivered in small groups at centre premises or where required, at an external venue. If you would like to discuss training and support, please email admin@athe.co.uk.

Please note ATHE may use previous learner work to facilitate activities in training days.

The learner work will be anonymised. Please email admin@athe.co.uk if you would prefer learner work from the centre is not used for training days.

Support materials for ATHE qualifications

All of the support materials below can be found on the qualification guidance page which is accessible via the online portal.

Specification Guide

ATHE provides a specification guide for each of its qualifications to support course delivery.

Sample Assignments

These are example assignments which support lecturers and tutors in planning and delivering the specifications. Centre devised assignments may be used after approval has been given by ATHE.

Sample Materials

These include forms for use with assignments, internal verification, tracking sheets and documents to support RPL.

Additional Support Materials

There are a wide range of additional support materials available for staff to use to support the management, delivery and assessment of teaching and learning

Suggested Resources

Each unit is accompanied by a list of suggested resources to support lecturers and learners.

Teaching and Learning Guidance

This guidance is designed to help planning and ensure coverage of unit content.

Registration of Learners

Learner Registration

In order to register learners, the centre must have successfully completed the centre recognition process and can only register learners on qualifications it has been approved to deliver.

When to register

Learners must be registered within 28 days of enrolment on the course otherwise a late fee will apply. This is to ensure ATHE can provide all necessary support in qualification delivery and enable your learners to have the best chance of success. There is a minimum period between registration and results submission. The minimum duration varies for each qualification, please contact the ATHE office for further information and timeframes.

How to register

Centres can register learners online by going to www.athe.co.uk/learner-registrations

Format for registrations

ATHE needs the following data to register learners for units and qualifications:

- The start date (when the learners started the course)
- The end date (when the learners will finish the course)
- The learner's forename(s) and surname exactly as it appears on the passport (the name will appear on the unit/qualification certificate in this format)
- The learner's date of birth
- The learner's current home address including post code
- The ULN (where available)
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Language of assessment

The centre must ensure that learners are aware that their information will be passed to ATHE for registration purposes. ATHE may use these details to contact learners where appropriate.

Determination and reporting learner results

ATHE is committed to ensuring that the determination and reporting of results for ATHE qualifications and units is undertaken in a manner which is clear, accurate and timely.

The process of recording results and producing certificates is managed using the ATHE Learner Management System (LMS). The summary below shows how results travel through the system. The key points where the LMS requires input from ATHE and centre staff are highlighted.

This process needs to be followed for every verification or re-verification of learners.

Stage 1 - Learner completes units

On completion of each unit or group of units the centre administrator logs onto their secure ATHE registration portal account and downloads a semi prepared result sheet for the cohort. The result sheet is then completed (units chosen and provisional grades recorded).

Stage 2 - Results submitted

The centre administrator then uploads the result sheet(s) onto the ATHE registration portal. Once all result sheets have been submitted online, copies will need to be emailed to portal@athe.co.uk and an external verification visit requested. An invoice for the verification will then be issued.

Once the verification invoice has been cleared an External Verifier will be assigned. The EV will contact the centre directly within two working days to arrange the visit.

Stage 3 - Results verification

The External Verifier will review the assessment decisions submitted by the centre in line with ATHE procedures and qualification specifications and produce a report. The External Verifier's report will then be quality assured by a Regional Standards Manager/Head of Quality and Assessment, prior to confirming the outcome.

Stage 4 - Processing of results

Once the EV report, RSM/HQA approval and results are confirmed within the LMS, the system will identify the qualifications where the learners have achieved the required credits and units.

Stage 5a – Certification

The system will then generate certificates of the highest qualification available within the rules of combination. If the full qualification has not been achieved the learner may be eligible for a smaller qualification/certificate depending on the units achieved.

The certificates generated by the LMS are sent by recorded delivery to the centre (the system does not allow alteration or generation of certificates other than through the above process).

ATHE are able to offer direct claim status for centres that meet the all of criteria. For more information please see the Direct Claims policy on the policies and procedures page at www.athe.co.uk.

Stage 5b - Replacement certificates

Requests for replacement certificates can come from learners or centres. A form must be filled in which can be found at www.athe.co.uk www.athe.co.uk/replacement-certificate and must include proof of identification as noted in the replacement certificate guidance. Once learners and their achievement have been identified a replacement certificate can be generated for any qualifications the learner has been granted. Replacement certificates are clearly identifiable from originals on the LMS.

Note: A certificate replacement fee will apply.

Fraudulent or mistaken Claims for Certification

Only registered learner's results can be accepted, directly from ATHE recognised centres and only from authorised centre personnel. Learner's work must be clearly identifiable and is assessed on authenticity by the External Verifier. All learner work must be accompanied by a full plagiarism report. Only when results are approved is the certification process -detailed above- initiated.

Identifying errors in the LMS

All learners are registered electronically to reduce the likelihood of errors. We also ask that centres review the learners when first entered into ATHE registration portal. The spread sheet containing the results can be stored locally on the centres computer to give them time to review and change if necessary. If a centre identifies an error in learner registration details at any point before certification, they can contact ATHE to make amendments; the request must be made in writing by authorised centre staff.

All information requested from centres when dealing with external verification and certification is checked against records held on the ATHE LMS.

Use of ULNs in registration and ROC

The LMS has an inbuilt system to check if the ULNs supplied are correct when first registered i.e. length format etc. The LMS can also submit ULNs to the LRS (Learner Records Service) database (although this can take up to five weeks). Availability of the ULN allows ATHE to confirm previously achieved units and qualifications.

Please note ATHE expects centres to release results to students with 10 working days of ATHE providing the external verification report; unless there are unforeseen circumstances at the centre which have been fully discussed with ATHE. ATHE reserves the right to release the results directly to learners if this is not adhered to, ATHE will comply with current data protection laws in all cases.

The Personal Learning Record (PLR)

The Personal Learning Record (PLR) application offers access to verified participation and achievement records of individual learners from when they were at school, college or a recognised further education training provider from 14+ years. The academic and vocational records data is from 2009 but does not typically cover education completed at university.

The PLR is a free and important application. It allows individual learners access to their past and current achievement records. It can share records with the school, college, further education training provider, university or employer; where the individual is making an application to further their education, training and employment. It can also allow an individual learner to share their PLR with a Careers Advisor when taking advice on what to do in future.

Schools, colleges, further education training providers and universities staff can use the PLR to directly access records for individuals making applications or studying at their organisations. These organisations will inform individuals where they plan to access their records usually during an application process.

Any individual can opt-out of sharing their data with organisations by using the PLR, or by informing the relevant organisation(s) during the application process. Organisations typically use the PLR to verify learners' qualifications because it is quicker and easier than reviewing and checking certificates, so speeds up the application process.

They can quickly build up a picture of an individual's achievement to give the best next-step education or careers advice and/or ensure the individual receives all the public funding to which they are entitled.

The PLR makes it easy to plan an individual's future vocational training within the structures of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). You can search different routes to achievement. You can identify the best combination of units and calculate the credit needed to achieve a qualification all in a few clicks. You can also monitor an individual's progress by unit or qualification against their chosen route to achievement.

Which Centres Are Required to Use the PLR and the Learning Records Service?

Centres within the UK who have learners eligible and wish to gain funding from the Skills Funding Agency are required to register with the Learning Records Service and request ULN (Unique Learner Numbers) for their learners.

The PLR is not required for international learners studying in the UK but maybe beneficial if they are likely to further their study in the UK in the future.

More information on the PLR, the Learning Records Service and how to register can be found at www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk

Centre policies and processes

As part of the health check visit the ATHE External Verifier will ask for evidence that appropriate systems, policies and procedures are in place and working effectively.

	Suggested Evidence
Curriculum model The centre has in place a clearly structured model of delivery. The model identifies the units in the programme, has realistic timescales and shows when learning and assessment per unit will take place	Curriculum Plan
Staffing Appropriately qualified and experienced staff are in place to support the teaching/learning and administration of the programmes being delivered Teachers/tutors have appropriate specialist qualifications (including teaching qualifications) Staffing structures are in place showing how programmes are managed and coordinated Systems exist to identify and provide staff development	Staff CVs showing relevant specialist, academic qualifications and sector experience Organisational Chart with stated individual roles and responsibilities Appraisal systems, lesson observation schemes, training applications and plans, staff development policy and plan
Assessment opportunities The centre has in place appropriate assessment strategies and methods for each unit giving the learner opportunity to demonstrate achievement of all the assessment criteria There is an assessment plan in place showing when each unit will be assessed There is a policy to deal with reasonable adjustments and special considerations Where centre-devised assignment briefs are being used these have been through the ATHE approval process with ATHE and have a clear assessment framework	Assessment Policy/Strategy, assessment plan, assignment briefs Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and associated forms and records Assignment bank, assignments checked by ATHE
Assessment Feedback Assessors understand criterion referenced assessment and are trained and experienced in giving feedback to learners	Assessment Policy/Strategy, learner feedback forms Records of standardisation events Records of training events attended

Assessment Appeals An appeals procedure for internal assessment decisions exists for learners	Appeals Procedure and associated forms
Assessment Records Assessment records per learner/per unit/per criterion are accurate and kept securely There are appropriate administrative procedures for tracking progress of learners and notifying achievement including transfer of credits and where necessary the recording of exemptions Records show if a learner has been granted reasonable adjustments or special considerations in order to support access to assessment Records show if the learner has produced work in a language other than English	Assessment grids, records. Arrangements and evidence of secure storage of assessment outcomes/results Systems for tracking learner progress RPL Policy; Examination Boards/Assessment Boards
Internal Verification There is an internal verification system in place with a clear sampling plan. There is evidence of IV feedback to the assessor Standardisation of assessment takes place between assessors and IVs on a regular basis There is a member of staff leading on centre/qualification IV There are systems in place to identify all conflicts of interest in assessment and IV	Internal verification system and IV forms, sampling plan Standardisation processes and procedures Appointed Internal Verifier Assessment Policy; declaration forms and records
Delivery strategies There is a clear scheme of work demonstrating appropriate coverage of all units being offered. There is evidence of session planning and/or how learning will take place	Curriculum plan; session plans identifying methods of delivery and linked to specifications and learning outcomes
Recruitment of learners Initial assessment of learners is in place to ensure academic skills are at an appropriate level for the units being studied Appropriate diagnostic tests e.g. English are in place	Enrolment, guidance and induction procedures; processes for initial testing of learners Use of IELTS or equivalent (International Learners)

Appropriate initial advice and guidance is included in the recruitment process	Enrolment/Induction Procedure
Procedures for recognition of prior learning are in place.	Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and procedures
There are records showing learner registrations including photographic images of learners	Learner registration system
Availability of resources

Appropriate teaching/learning accommodation is available | Spacious and well equipped classrooms; social facilities and open learning centres |
| A good range of teaching and learning resources are available (e.g. up-to-date text books, access to computers, ILT). For distance learning centres, materials are available for distribution to learners together with extensive lists of suggested resources. Systems are in place to facilitate the distribution | Comprehensive library of resources including relevant textbooks; access to computers and ILT; equipment to support the delivery of teaching and learning |
| Administration

There is an appointed person trained to deal with learner registrations through the ATHE Portal

Learners are registered within 28 days of joining their programme

There is an appointed person or clear procedure for supplying list of learners for verification and liaising with ATHE and the appointed External Verifier

Arrangements are in place for the secure storage of assessment outcomes/results including electronic and or hard copy back up procedures

Arrangements are in place to obtain ULNs and learner records and authority to access student records | Suitable administrator appointed and trained

Registration procedures; knowledge of ATHE policy

Assessment Policy; secure storage facilities

Evidence of access to the Learner Register |

ATHE Policies

ATHE has a number of policies and procedures to ensure the organisation delivers its mission and in so doing -

- complies with the Ofqual Conditions of Recognition, Qualifications Wales and those set down by other regulators and external agencies
- meets the objectives set out in the ATHE strategic plan
- operates in a fair and transparent manner
- complies with current legislation
- upholds a high quality standard

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy

ATHE aims to facilitate open access to ATHE qualifications for learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration in assessments. Reasonable adjustments and special considerations must not compromise the standards for the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding being measured.

Complaints Procedure

The aim of this procedure is to ensure a consistent, open approach to addressing complaints, in a manner facilitating conciliation and a timely resolution.

Enquiries and Appeals Policy

The enquiries and appeals policy is intended to ensure that any enquiries or appeals received by ATHE are dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively.

Equality and Diversity Policy

This policy covers the principles of diversity and equality for anybody developing and using ATHE products and services including ATHE staff, centres and learners.

Data Protection Policy

This policy is to ensure ATHE complies with current data protection legislation in its dealings with centres, learners and other parties.

Fee Structures

The different Fee Structures outlines the registration/verification fees for all our qualifications as well as other services ATHE provides. The fee structure may vary dependent on which country the centre is based in.

Invoicing Policy

The Invoice Policy sets out how ATHE will ensure invoices are issued in a timely manner and provide a breakdown of any fees charged.

Replacement Certificate Procedure

This procedure gives instruction to learners and centres on what steps to take in the event of a lost/damaged/misspelt certificate.

Qualification Withdrawal Policy

This policy specifies the process ATHE will undertake in the event of a qualification withdrawal to best protect the interest of learners and centres.

Maladministration and Malpractice Policy

This policy is aimed at students and centres who are involved with ATHE or use ATHE products and services. It outlines what constitutes maladministration and malpractice and how any reported cases will be handled.

Customer Service Statement

This document contains our commitment to achieve high standards of customer service. Full copies of all of our policies are available on our website.

Contact Details

General queries

If your query cannot be answered by any of the contacts below, then please contact us on:
Tel: 01603 730030
Email: info@athe.co.uk

Marketing/business development

If you would like to discuss a business development opportunity or require some marketing material, please contact us using the details below.
Email: marketing@athe.co.uk

Qualification development

All ATHE qualifications are developed with centres, learners and employers in mind. If you have views on the existing qualifications or ideas for a new qualification then contact us using the details below.
Email: qualifications@athe.co.uk

Finance

If you would like to discuss an invoice you have received or the ATHE fee structure, then please contact us on the details below.
Email: finance@athe.co.uk

Delivery and assessment queries

If you have a query regarding qualification content, ATHE qualification assurance procedures or require support in the delivery and assessment of our qualifications, please contact us using the details below.
Email: academic@athe.co.uk

ATHE Portal queries

If you require guidance using the online portal or would like help using its features, contact us on the details below.
Email: portal@athe.co.uk

Address:

ATHE Ltd

Clarence House

6 Clarence Road

Norwich

NR1 1HH

Practitioners Guidance

Introduction

The purpose of this section of the Handbook is to provide information and guidance, which will support practitioners in delivering, assessing and quality assuring ATHE qualifications and improving the quality of their work. With regard to teaching and learning, the guidance in this section is aimed at helping learners to increase their knowledge, develop their skills, improve their understanding and are successful. This section is also designed to help practitioners further develop the planning of learning and make accurate assessment decisions. Finally, this section includes information on appropriate quality systems to ensure that all of these improvements are taking place and there are better outcomes for learners.

Recruitment and Induction

ATHE's policy on learner recruitment to qualifications is that:

- they should be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- they should be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- there should be equal opportunities for all those wishing to access the qualifications

This means that centres must recruit learners with integrity. Centres must also apply their reasonable adjustments policies to learners where appropriate, so that the needs of individual learners are identified and met from the outset. All applicants need full information about the programmes of study and advice and guidance to help them make decisions about the most appropriate qualification. This will ensure any queries are resolved.

The centre must make a judgment about the applicant's potential to benefit from and complete the selected qualification. ATHE has produced entry criteria for each qualification. These can be found in the specifications and are the norm for the level and type of qualification to which they apply. The criteria should be read in conjunction with any centre devised entry criteria. The entry criteria which are used by centres will be checked by EVs at monitoring visits. Where entry criteria do not cover a specific applicant, the centre may consult ATHE if there is a learner with particular entry profile.

In addition, agencies such as UK Visas and Immigration Department (UKVI) require adult students to have acceptable English language ability before they can apply to become an adult student under Tier 4 (General) of the points-based system. Centres must therefore ensure that the applicant is competent in the English language at a minimum of CEFR level B1 for a RQF qualification at levels 3-5 a minimum of CEFR level B2 for a RQF qualification at level 6 or above. Where centres have prospective learners where English is not their first language but a Tier 4 visa is not required, centres should still assess whether the learner's have an appropriate level of English language ability to succeed on the programme of learning. This should be done either through an external assessment, such as IELTS or equivalent or via an appropriate internal test. This testing should be done before enrolment at the centre takes place.

ATHE expects that all learners will participate in an induction programme, which will enable them to embark on their programme of study with confidence. The content and structure of induction programmes is the responsibility of centres. However, centres must ensure that the learners have a clear understanding of the structure of the programme of study, the standards that must be achieved, how they will obtain feedback on their progress and how they will be assessed. ATHE has provided support materials for learner induction programmes and centres should refer

to and use these as appropriate. It is important for learners to understand the centre's key policies which have direct implications for learning and assessment. In particular, learners must understand the centre's policy on malpractice and how this will be enforced.

Learners Transferred from other ATHE Centres

In accordance with the RPL policy ATHE seeks to avoid duplication of learning and assessment. Learners who have been externally certificated for qualifications on the RQF can transfer the credits they have achieved. Learners who have transferred from another ATHE centre and hold certification for ATHE units do not need to repeat these units. The centre needs to ensure that the certification is valid and if the learner meets the other entry requirements he/she may embark on their programme of study at the new centre and be registered with ATHE in the normal way.

Where the learner has completed or partially completed an assignment which has or has not been assessed and has or has not been internally verified, the work should be re-assessed at the receiving centre.

The centre should have processes in place to ensure the authenticity of this work. This will include signed learner declarations of authenticity, use of plagiarism software and where appropriate the centre may wish to use a viva or other processes to ensure the work being presented belongs to the learner. If the centre has any concerns it should contact ATHE for additional guidance.

Curriculum Planning

In their initial visit to centres, ATHE External Verifiers will check how the centre is planning the curriculum. This will cover the order of the delivery of specific units across the period of study, so that learning is consequential and facilitates understanding and achievement. External Verifiers will also wish to know about the mode of study. This may be through classroom based activities, activities in the work place, open or distance learning or a blend of learning routes. Whatever combination is chosen, centres must ensure that learners have access to the appropriate resources to help them achieve.

What resources are needed for delivery of ATHE qualifications?

ATHE provides examples and sample assignments for units. Centres should check ATHE's Qualification Guidance page before issuing assignments to learners as they are updated periodically. Centres may wish to devise their own assignments in order to meet the specific needs of their learners. If so, ATHE **must check** that these centre devised assignments are fit for purpose. Learners who are studying by an open/ distance learning route will require particular levels of support and resources to ensure that appropriate learning and progress is taking place.

It is essential that staff delivering the programmes are appropriately qualified and/or suitably experienced to deliver specific units and qualifications. It is also essential that staff understand the nature of the qualifications they are delivering and the implications this has for delivery and assessment.

Management of the course provision is important and experience has shown that this is most effective when an individual member of staff has responsibility for the delivery of a particular programme of study. Where student numbers are small this person may have the responsibility for more than one programme. The specific job role for members of staff in this position will vary from one centre to another. However, typically they will have a planning and a quality assurance

responsibility and may lead on internal verification. Details about quality assurance, assessment and internal verification are covered in detail in later sections of this guide.

There also needs to be physical resources in place to facilitate the teaching and learning and support assessment. The physical resources need to be proportionate to the number of learners following specific qualification routes.

What other things do I need to consider in planning the qualification?

In planning programmes of study it is important for centres to consider carefully the overall aims of the qualification being delivered, as well as individual units. The specifications lead to the development of knowledge, understanding and skills. It is therefore important for centres to ensure that in the delivery of the learning a direct link is made between theory and practice, so that knowledge is applied. This in turn will facilitate the development of skills and understanding. Learners' personal experiences must be utilised in the learning process.

The ATHE qualifications consist of mandatory core units and optional or specialist units. The focus for the qualification comes from some of the core units and also from some optional and specialist units. Centres must ensure they adhere to the required combinations of specialist units as defined in the specifications.

ATHE definition of Total Qualification Time (TQT), Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and Credit

Values for Total Qualification Time, Guided Learning Hours and Credit, are calculated by considering the different activities that a Learner would typically complete to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of a qualification.

The needs of individual learners and the differing teaching styles used mean there will be variation in the actual time taken to complete a qualification.

Values for Total Qualification Time, Guided Learning Hours and Credit are estimates.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The term Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is an estimate of the amount of time, on average, that a tutor, trainer, workshop facilitator etc., will work with a learner, to enable the learner to complete the learning outcomes of a unit to the appropriate standard.

GLH are intended to provide guidance for centres on the amount of time required to deliver the programme and support learners. GLH are made up of activities completed by the learner under direct instruction or supervision of a tutor/teacher, lecturer, supervisor, trainer etc. whether through actual attendance or via electronic means, the activity must be in real time.

Some examples of activities that can contribute to Guided Learning Hours include:

• Supervised induction sessions

• Learner feedback with a teacher in real time

• Supervised independent learning

- Classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher

- Work-based learning supervised by a teacher

- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teacher in real time

- E-learning supervised by a teacher in real time

- All forms of assessment that take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including where the assessment is competence-based and may be turned into a learning opportunity.

Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is a guide to the amount of time a learner would take, on average, to complete the different activities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of a whole qualification.

TQT includes all the activities described under guided learning hours (GLH) plus all the additional learning.

Additional learning will take place away from the classroom and this will not be under direct supervision of a tutor/teacher, lecturer, supervisor, trainer etc. The activities will vary depending on the qualifications, their level and the nature of the learning.

Some examples of activities that can contribute to Total Qualification Time, include:

- Preparation for classes

- Independent and unsupervised research/learning

- Unsupervised work on assignments

- Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience

- Unsupervised e-learning

- Unsupervised e- assessment

- Unsupervised e-assessment

- Unsupervised coursework

- Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar

- Unsupervised work-based learning

- Any other form of learning, education or training, not under the direct supervision of a tutor/teacher, lecturer, supervisor, trainer.

Credit

The credit value specifies the number of credits that will be awarded to a learner who has achieved the learning outcomes of a unit at the specified standard.

Each credit represents 10 hours of learning time and equates to 10 hours of total qualification time. Therefore, one 15 credit unit represents 150 hours of total qualification time. Learning time is a notional measure which indicates the amount of time a learner at the level of the unit is expected to take, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria.

Learning time includes all the activities described under guided learning hours and additional learning.   The credit value of the unit will remain constant in all contexts regardless of the assessment method or the mode of delivery. Learners will only be awarded credits for the successful completion of whole units.

The Regulated Qualifications Framework

All ATHE qualifications sit on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), the RQF is the national credit transfer system for qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Qualifications range in difficulty from Entry level to level 8.

The table below gives examples of the RQF level descriptors which show what level of knowledge and understanding, application and action and autonomy and accountability learners should be able to demonstrate relevant to the level of qualification they are studying. It is important to take these into account when teaching and assessing learners.

RQF Level	Ofqual Level Descriptors	Example ATHE Qualifications	Example general Qualifications
3	Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories; access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements, selecting from a considerable choice of procedures in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and direct own activities, with some responsibility for the output of others.	ATHE Level 3 Diploma in Law	A Levels
4	Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.	ATHE Level 4 Diploma in Management	
5	Generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level, with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.	ATHE Level 5 Diploma in Management for Health and Social Care	Higher National Diploma
6	Critically, review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; accept accountability for determining and achieving group and/or personal outcomes.	ATHE Level 6 Diploma in Healthcare Management	Bachelors Degree
7	Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical and professional activity; accepting accountability for all related decision making including use of supervision.	ATHE Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management	Masters Degree
8	Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry, demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers and accepting full accountability of outcomes	N/A	Doctorate

Qualification Level Descriptors

The Level Descriptors provide a general shared understanding of learning and achievement at each level and are concerned with the outcomes of learning, not the process of learning or the method of assessment.

Each level descriptor is divided into the following sections:

- Knowledge
- Skills

In the tables over the following pages, the level descriptors for each level of ATHE qualification are listed.

Level 3 Level Descriptors

Expectations for assessment at level 3

In each learning outcome for each unit the learner must demonstrate the following:

Knowledge	• Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. • Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. • Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work. • Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.
Skills	• Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.

Level 4 level descriptors

Expectations for assessment at level 4

In each learning outcome for each unit the learner must demonstrate the following:

Knowledge	• Has practical, theoretical or technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine. • Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. • Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work. • Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.
Skills	• Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined. • Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

Level 5 level descriptors

Expectations for assessment at level 5

In each learning outcome for each unit the learner must demonstrate the following:

Knowledge	• Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts. • Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas. • Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work. • Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.
Skills	• Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly defined, complex problems. • Use relevant research or development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results.

Level 6 level descriptors

Expectations for assessment at level 6

In each learning outcome for each unit the learner must demonstrate the following:

Knowledge	• Has advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors. • Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them. Can critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas.
Skills	• Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors. • Use and, where appropriate, design relevant research and development to inform actions. • Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.

Level 7 level descriptors

Expectations for assessment at level 7

In each learning outcome for each unit the learner must demonstrate the following:

Knowledge	• Reformulates and uses practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors. • Critically analyses, interprets and evaluates complex information, concepts and theories to produce modified conceptions. • Understands the wider contexts in which the area of study or work is located. • Understands current developments in the area of study or work. • Understands different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the area of study or work.
Skills	• Use specialised skills to conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve many interacting factors. • Determine and use appropriate methodologies and approaches • Design and undertake research, development or strategic activities to inform or produce change in the area of work or study. • Critically evaluate actions, methods and results and their short- and long-term implications.

Assessing Learners

Learning is a change in skill, attitude, knowledge and understanding and measuring these changes are the steps in the assessment process. Assessment is the judgement of evidence presented by the learner, which shows that learning has taken place. In other words, it is an act of measurement and it confirms that a learning outcome has been achieved and the standards determined by the assessment criteria have been met.

When should assessment take place?
Pre course/beginning of the course

Diagnostic assessment takes place either before the course begins or at the first session. This can serve a number of purposes:

- to help decide whether the unit/qualification at a particular level is suitable for the learners' needs
- to help decide if the learner should provide additional evidence to meet the standards for higher grades, where they are part of the qualification specification
- to encourage learners to identify their own needs and discover if the proposed learning is right for them
- to help tutors identify individual learning and thinking styles

During the course – formative assessment

Assessment can be used during learning to give feedback and support the learner's progress. It will also inform both the learner and tutor/lecturer of any action that needs to take place.

Formative assessment will allow:

- tutors to judge what knowledge/skills and understanding a learner has acquired
- tutors to plan the next steps, including working towards higher grades as appropriate
- tutors to give appropriate feedback to a learner
- tutors to encourage and motivate a learner
- a learner to identify what has been learnt, what they need to learn and what they need to do to improve

Summative assessment

Summative assessment normally takes place towards the end of the learning programme or section of a learning programme. This type of assessment measures the extent of learning that has taken place at the end of that phase of the learning experience. It enables a judgement to be made about whether the learner has achieved all of the learning outcomes and met the assessment criteria within a unit.

Who can assess?

There are a number of categories of people who could be involved in assessing individuals' learning in a centre. These are likely to include assessors and internal verifiers, but they may also be supported by people from businesses who are experts in their particular field. ATHE requires evidence that staff carrying out formal assessment have qualifications and/or experience commensurate with the level of the qualification being assessed.

What is the key to making valid assessment decisions?

Tutors need to be very clear about how to assess learner work. All ATHE units are written in terms of learning outcomes which must be achieved for learners to succeed. The learning outcomes state what the learner will be expected to know, or do, or understand. Assessment criteria are the standards which a learner must meet in order for the learning outcomes to be achieved.

One task in an assignment may assess several learning outcomes at once and provide learners with opportunities to meet a range of assessment criteria. In addition, an assignment may cover more than one unit. When qualifications are graded there may be additional tasks for learners to complete which will be at a higher level.

It is important that learners are clear about how they can meet the standards. This will include learners knowing what is required by the command verbs stated in each of the assessment criteria. It is essential that all this information is shared with learners verbally and visually (hand-outs, flipcharts etc.).

ATHE assignments reinforce this information, as they relate to the learning outcomes and the separate tasks in the assignment state the specific criteria they refer to. This is reinforced by the cover sheet for assignments, which assessors can use to record their judgements and provide feedback to learners. This document is available on the Qualification Guidance section of the ATHE portal and definitions of the command verbs can be found on page 46 of this document and also in the Learner Handbook.

Where units are graded the learners must demonstrate that they have achieved **all** the criteria set for the merit and distinction grades. Where work for the pass standard is marginal, assessors can take account of any extension work completed by the learners. If a learner resubmits work in order to meet any of the standards set, a pass, merit or distinction grade can be awarded. The judgements are based on the resubmitted work and where the assessor judges that the standards have been met, the appropriate grade should be given.

Assessment should be:

- open and transparent
- authentic
- reliable, consistent and rigorous
- relevant to the target group
- inclusive

Formal assessment is structured, usually takes place in clearly stated conditions, and is usually used for summative assessment. Forms of non-paper based formal assessment may include:

- practical activity
- structured discussion
- questions and answers
- presentation

Paper based formal assessment is normally in the form of assignments which may include:

- case studies
- projects
- dissertation

- reports
- reflective journal
- diaries or logs
- timed assignments under controlled conditions

Learners may build up a portfolio of evidence. ATHE assignments are vocationally relevant and are normally set in a vocational context. It is entirely appropriate for learners to research and complete assignments in the work place.

Assessment of ATHE provision should involve:

- the rigorous application of assessment criteria at the appropriate level for the qualification to show that learning outcomes have been achieved and the award of any higher grades is valid.
- a documented process of standardisation to ensure consistency across learners, assessors, sites and units to meet standards.
- feedback to learners which is specific, and directly linked to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This allows the learner to understand where they have been successful and what they need to do to improve. This might lead to an action plan for improvement

Assessment practice must have processes in place to ensure that the evidence for assessment is the learners' own work. Staff involved in assessment should at all times be aware of the necessity of confirming the authenticity of learners' work. This has become more important with the advent, and increasing use, of information technology such as, word processing, the Internet, Intranets, and CDs, all of which have contributed to the risk of plagiarism and copying.

While it is almost impossible to eliminate all opportunities for plagiarism and other forms of malpractice such as copying, collusion, ghost writing etc., it is possible to take steps to reduce the risks of it occurring. Therefore**:**

- All centres should have a malpractice policy including a plagiarism statement. All learners should be made aware of this, and its meaning and consequences made clear. ATHE has produced some guidelines to help centres review their malpractice policies and these are available on the Qualifications Guidance webpage.
- A statement confirming authenticity of the work should be included with the learner's file or portfolio.
- Centres should use software to check for plagiarism in learner work and a copy of the plagiarism report must be attached to learner work at external verification.
- Whenever possible draft copies of work should be retained. Apart from giving an indication of authenticity, the practice should be encouraged as it provides evidence of development and planning of a larger piece of work.
- A learner's work, or passages within a piece of work, that are substantially different in level, tone or vocabulary from previous samples of similar work should be queried.
- Learners should at an early stage be introduced to an acceptable standard system of referencing, so that external sources can be properly attributed.
- The learners name and ATHE Learner ID should be on every page of learner work produced.

Centres must comply with the ATHE policy on Malpractice and failure to do so may mean that certification will be blocked for all or some learners.

What does validity of evidence mean?

Assessment strategies must correlate with the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria. Valid assessment enables the results to be used with confidence.

What does sufficiency/fitness for purpose mean?

The assessment strategy must be appropriate and relevant to the target group of learners and the context in which the learning takes place. The assessment must be appropriate to the credit value and level and provide sufficient evidence so that an accurate assessment judgement can be made.

What does fairness mean?

Assessment must be free from gender, ethnic or other types of discrimination. There should be a balance of approaches to assessment.

Assessment should be manageable for:

- learners,
- lecturers, assessors
- administrators
- the centre/college
- the awarding bodies

This is in terms of time, cost, resources etc.

Assessment in a language other than English

ATHE qualifications are predominately assessed in the English language. However, where there is an evidenced need for an alternative language to be used, ATHE will consider this on a case by case basis. Centres should refer to the ATHE Policy on Assessment in a Language other than English and contact ATHE as detailed in the policy.

How do I document assessment decisions?

Evidence of achievement must be mapped against specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria including any criteria which relate to merit and distinction grades. Learners cannot be awarded credit for partial achievement of a unit. This evidence must be made available to the ATHE external verifier to confirm the award of credit for the learner/group of learners.

The following are examples of acceptable forms of evidence that are straightforward to cross - reference to assessment criteria within units:

- portfolios
- assignments
- written examinations
- time constrained internally assessed work
- reflective diary
- projects
- research
- dissertations

The following are examples of acceptable forms of evidence that will have to be accompanied by signed tutor observation or witness statements to ensure that adequate evidence exists to confirm that individual learners took part in the activity and achieved the assessment criteria:

- questions and answers
- talks and presentations
- role play
- group work

Learners taking part in these types of activity as part of the assessment process must keep any preparatory notes/plans etc. which will make the assessment decisions more reliable and transparent. Evidence should ALWAYS be clearly cross referenced to relevant assessment criteria. Taped or videoed evidence must have an introduction identifying the unit and learning outcome/assessment criterion for which it is providing evidence. Both the tutor and individual learners should be identified by name. An example of a form which can be used by assessors who are assessing oral work is available on the ATHE website.

When dealing with oral evidence it is essential that tutors keep an on-going record of achievement of all learners in the group. If individual assessment/achievement records are lost this will be the only proof of achievement. The internal verifier within a centre should sample this form of evidencing by attending the assessment.

It is important for tutors/course co-ordinators to remember that in certain circumstances assessments can be adjusted to take into account the needs of individual learners e.g. descriptions can be given orally where learners have difficulty with committing work to paper or extensions to deadlines may be given when a learner has an illness which is certificated by a doctor. (See: 'ATHE Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy').

Before submitting learners for certification it is very important for centres to ensure that all information about assessment decisions is accurate and ready for scrutiny by an external verifier. Further information about this will be found in this guide in the section on Quality Assurance Processes. An example of a tracking grid which records learners' achievements across the qualification is attached in the sample forms at the end of the manual and it is also available on the ATHE website.

How do I design an assignment brief?

An assignment brief is the document issued to learners at the start of the assessment process for any given unit(s). The creation of assignment briefs which are fit for purpose is essential if learners are to be given every opportunity to succeed.

There is no prescribed layout or format for the brief, but it is recommended that it contains the following information:

- title and level of the qualification
- title and number of unit(s) under assessment
- title/reference of the assignment
- date the assignment is set
- submission date

The brief should include the following sections:

- opportunity for the assessor to place the assignment within a context; perhaps referring to prior teaching and learning, where the project fits into the overall programme, etc.
- this is also an opportunity to state which learning outcomes and assessment criteria the activities and assessment address
- extension activities in order to provide learners with opportunities to achieve higher grades.

Tasks and preparation

- a description of specific activities the learners will undertake in order to produce assessment evidence to address the assessment criteria targeted by the assignment and ensure that learning outcomes can be achieved.
- tasks must be clear, relevant, current and realistic.
- wherever possible there should be variety in the tasks set
- the design of the brief should make reference to the criteria and learning outcomes which individual tasks address, including providing opportunities for any extension work needed for merit and distinction grades.

Forms of evidence

A clear statement of what the learner is expected to produce as evidence, and how that evidence will be assessed.

Other information may include:

- resources
- reference materials

Guidance for centres on work placements for full time learners studying ATHE Qualifications

Underpinning principles

ATHE regards work placements as a valuable aspect of learning. They enable learners on full time learning programmes to gain a greater understanding of how an organisation operates in practice and they provide opportunities for learners to observe how individual roles function and how groups of people operate in the workplace. Furthermore, placements enable learners to develop skills, gain confidence and apply theoretical learning from the classroom in a real environment.

In order to be effective and to be an integral part of learning, a work placement in ATHE qualifications must have the following characteristics:

- the learner must be appropriately prepared for the placement
- the centre has responsibility for the learner throughout the period of the work placement
- the placement provider must be clear about their responsibilities with regard to the learner and the centre's expectations of them
- each learner must have a tutor who supports them while he/she is on placement and develops and challenges their thinking and understanding
- the individual needs of the learner must be taken into account in organising the work placement
- the placement must be directly linked to a unit or parts of units and generate evidence which enables the learner to meet the learning outcomes at the standards set by the assessment criteria for that unit or units
- the placement must therefore provide information and evidence which is assessed
- the placement is a part of the learning on a course of study and should be managed accordingly. Centres should ensure that the balance of work placement and classroom based activity is appropriate. Centres must take into account any rules with regard to work placements set by their regulatory authorities and strictly adhere to them

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure the points listed above are characteristic of the work placements it provides. The information in this document and the attachments are designed to support centres with embedding work placements into teaching and learning and to enable evidence from the placements to be used in the assessment process. This document should be used as a guide only and it is expected that centres will wish to build on the information supplied here.

Sample assignments for use with work placements

ATHE has provided examples of sample assignments directly related to placements and to specific units and these are available for centres to use. They can be accessed from the list of sample assignments via the portal. The centre must ensure that the nature of the specific placements undertaken by learners enables them to complete the assignment, provide sufficient evidence and achieve the learning outcomes at the required standards.

Mapping assessment criteria to work placements

ATHE has considered the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the units of the Healthcare Management qualifications and identified where evidence can be gathered from work placements to help meet the standards. This mapping exercise clearly shows that evidence for some assessment criteria **cannot** be gathered in the work place, whereas other assessment criteria are suited to this approach. Indeed, learners may find it very useful to gather evidence

from their placement, particularly where the assessment criteria refer to an organisation as in unit 7.1 Organisational Behaviour. Here in order to help achieve LO2 learners must 'Analyse the culture and structure of one organisation and evaluate how they impact on its effectiveness'. Evidence for use in assignments may be gathered from a range of activities and the list below provides some examples but it is not exhaustive.

- **observing** how an organisation functions in general, the interaction between individuals, clients or other stakeholders, or individual(s) in work roles, or a team
- **reading** documents such as structure charts, reports, policies, agendas or minutes of meetings or the various types of communication used in the organisation
- **meeting** with individual staff or stakeholders to gather specific information or engage in discussion on topics which are relevant to set tasks or the assignment. Learners may wish to record these meetings electronically, on paper or by audio so information is not lost
- **distributing** questionnaires or surveys to relevant individuals in order to gather a range of views on specific questions
- **reviewing** work that you have personally carried out in the work placement

Success in gathering evidence for learning outcomes and assessment criteria will inevitably depend on the nature of the specific work placement the learner is undertaking.

Sample forms and documentation to support learners undertaking work placements

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

ILPs are a useful tool to support learning in general and particularly to help embed a work placement into the learners' overall learning experience. ILPs can be structured in different ways but in essence this is a record of existing levels of achievement, the student's learning needs and the action required to address these needs. Producing a personal skills audit before the work placement begins is a particularly good way for the learner to identify what he/she does well and where improvements are required. Development of particular skills can then be targeted through the work placement or from other parts of the learning experience on the programme of study as appropriate. The ILP can therefore accompany the learner throughout their period of study. A sample form for the skills audit and subsequent action plan are attached.

Frequently these documents are included in an ILP file which may also contain other information related to progression. This information may include a statement about the intended career goal, a CV, copies of certificates or qualifications obtained, a record of the initial interview before starting the current programme of study or copies of other meetings with the placement provider or tutor.

As the learner progresses through their course of study the ILP must be updated. The learner should audit their skill development at different stages in the learning and create further action plans to ensure continued progress.

Observation forms

When making assessment decisions on evidence the learner has gathered from the work placement, assessors may wish to use evidence obtained through observation. ATHE has prepared a sample observation form which is available on the ATHE website. You will note from this example that the observer is the assessor so he/she is experienced in assessment and/or trained and is therefore able to take the assessment judgements. The observation form may be used to support assignment briefs submitted by the learner.

Witness Testimony

Assessors may also wish to use witness testimony to support their assessment decisions. In this case the assessor gathers evidence from a witness who has observed the learner undertaking certain tasks, has held meetings with the learner or has read documentation completed by them. The witness is **not** making assessment decisions but the information he/she provides may be invaluable in helping the assessor to confirm that standards have been achieved. The sample form attached must be completed in full, so that the assessor has sufficient information to support their assessment decisions. This additional information should be submitted with the assessment judgments for use in internal and external verification.

Quality Assurance Processes

ATHE recognised centres must have quality assurance processes in place, which assure the quality of the learner experience. These processes are a requirement of inspection agencies. They will also assure the consistent and valid award of ATHE qualifications. This means that the centre will normally have:

- internal verification of assessment decisions
- internal verification of any centre devised assignments
- internal standardisation processes as appropriate
- review of evidence of unit and qualification achievement
- sampling processes including a sampling plan
- information gathered from learners regarding views on their experience at the centre
- annual centre review processes which are based on current, specific evidence and information and lead to action plans. These processes are integral to the operation of centres and provide accurate judgements about good practice and areas for development
- action plans are detailed and delivered to the standards required. Managers and staff respond quickly to corrective action

Information from all of these processes will be used in external verification.

What is internal verification?

- internal verification is a system of quality checks which ensure that assessment decisions are accurate and that assessment procedures are inclusive and enable participation, consistency and fairness
- there must be a record of all internal verification which is retained
- internal verification is a check that the standards set by ATHE are being delivered

Who is responsible for internal verification?

The role of the internal verifier is to:

- ensure that assessment is consistent, fair and transparent and does not unintentionally discriminate against any learner
- ensure that assessors are aware of the different ways unit achievement can be assessed, for example one assignment may cover more than one unit, to avoid over assessing learners
- ensure that tutors/assessors receive on-going advice and support, for example in designing assessment activities that cover the assessment criteria and constructive feedback on their assessment decisions
- prepare a sampling plan
- regularly sample assessment activities, methods and records to monitor consistency of assessment decisions as specified by qualification documentation
- monitor candidates' achievement records and centre documentation to ensure that they are completed in accordance with requirements
- ensure that learners understand assessment requirements and are given opportunities to achieve against the assessment criteria
- ensure that learners' work is organised and presented in a manner that enables effective verification to take place
- disseminate good practice in assessment across the centre
- ensure equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices are upheld in the assessment process

- ensure that evidence of learner achievement is mapped to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- ensure that recommendations for the award of credit are valid, reliable and consistent
- Internal Verification arrangements must include as a minimum:
- an identified individual responsible who is the named internal verifier for a set of assessment decisions
- clear and documented roles and responsibilities for all those involved
- a forum for discussion of borderline cases at all grades and good practice in assessment
- sampling of assessed work
- standardisation of assessed work
- full and clear records and action plans
- regular evaluation of the process

Two or more of the roles carried out within centres can be undertaken by the same person. However, internal verifiers who are also acting as assessors cannot internally verify their own assessments.

Lead internal verifiers from centres will be required to attend ATHE standardisation events annually.

Internal verification and all assessment records must be held in the centre for a minimum of 4 years following the date of certification.

What happens during the external verification of learner work?

One of main tasks which an external verifier undertakes is to check that all assessors are assessing to the same standards. The internal assessment outcomes reached for all ATHE qualifications are therefore subject to an independent assessment review by an ATHE external verifier. In completing this task their role is to:

- ensure that ATHE qualifications are delivered in accordance with regulatory requirements
- externally verify the standards of achievement of learners at unit level
- ensure that there is regional, national and international consistency in the way assessment criteria are applied
- resolve issues relating to borderline achievement
- monitor the learners' experience of the programme
- provide an on-going source of objective and impartial advice to centres
- support the continuous improvement of the quality and fitness for purpose of ATHE accredited provision

This means that the external verifier will want to:

- sample the assessed work of different learners. The sample will cover the assessment judgements of every assessor across any graded judgements which have been made. The sample will also cover every unit which has been assessed and take into account the nature of the tasks which learners have been set. The exact sample will be determined by the external verifier and he/she will start with a minimum sample size of 10 learners plus 10% of the remaining cohort. Where a centre is offering more than one qualification, this minimum size will apply to each qualification. The sample will also include internally verified learner work. The process is designed to be rigorous but at the same time positive and supportive, and is intended to highlight areas of good practice as well as identify any areas of concern.

- ensure that all supporting internal documentation is completed and up to date. This will include records relating to assessment for learners both formative and summative. These records should show the decisions made including any resubmissions of work and/or any cases where special considerations have taken place.
- ensure records are complete for the internal verification processes used at the centre including any standardisation activities.
- see and take account of plagiarism reports for each piece of learner work sampled and for other work where appropriate.
- check the authentication arrangements that have been made for any learners using alternative routes to certification for example RPL or credit transfer.

In some circumstances, particularly in centres which provide distance learning and have different start and completion dates for learners, there may not be a sufficient number of learners to warrant a full external verification. In these cases:

- where there is only one learner the EV will sample a minimum of 50% of the units and all of the assessors. Only the learner work section of the EV report will be completed.
- where there are two learners the EV will complete the normal sampling procedure. Only the learner work section of the EV report will be completed.

Where there are large numbers of learners taking more than one qualification and/or there have been concerns with assessment at earlier visits, the external verification may take more than one day or be undertaken by more than one external verifier.

The outcomes of the external verification process will be to:

1. confirm that internal assessment meets UK national standards and allow certification.
   or
2. make recommendations to further strengthen the quality of assessment outcomes and IV processes before full certification is released. Certification or unit certification may be awarded for some learners where work sampled has met the required standards.
   or
3. provide feedback and state the actions needed to improve the quality of assessment outcomes and IV processes before full certification is released. Some unit certification may be awarded for learners, where actual work sampled has met the required standards.
   or
4. provide evidence and make recommendations about the centre's ability to continue to be approved to deliver the ATHE qualifications in question, without a significant change in practice. No learner certification can take place.

The centre will receive initial feedback at the end of the verification. This will be followed by a detailed report explaining why EV decisions have been taken and any action that is required by the centre to improve existing practice.

Where outcomes 2 or 3 above has happened and there is at least 50% achievement of sampled work, centres may request further sampling to take place. This further sampling is to give learners the opportunity to achieve more units and where appropriate a full qualification. The additional sample will cover all learners (up to 20 learners, then a further 10% of the remaining learners), all assessors and all units. An additional report will be produced for the additional sample and based on the judgements of the external verifier certificates will be released. Centres must request the further sample through the Centre Support Team at ATHE and not through the external verifier.

ATHE reserves the right to withdraw either a qualification or centre approval when there is evidence to show that there is an irreversible breakdown in a centre's ability either to assure the quality of its programme delivery or its assessment standards.

All ATHE external verifiers will have gone through a rigorous selection and induction process. They will subsequently have participated in regular training activities and will be proficient in ATHE systems and procedures. All will have had experience as practitioners in fields relevant to their responsibilities and as a result will have experienced many similar successes and problems that are possibly encountered within the provision they are now reviewing. ATHE external verifiers come from a variety of professional backgrounds. However, what is common is their commitment to implementing ATHE's quality assurance strategy to a consistent standard and providing support which meets the needs of individual centres. They will have no connection with the centre being reviewed.

It is **not** part of the external verifier's responsibility to assess work but to confirm the decisions made by internal verifiers and assessors at a centre.

Where provision has been reviewed previously, it is important that centres check that they have read the last external verifier's report and are familiar with the contents, both positive and negative. Centres will also need to ensure that any action required as a result of the last external verification visit has been acted upon.

Remote Completion of External Verification

On occasions EVs may need to work remotely from the centre as a visit is not possible or unnecessary. For example, where there is verification of learner work for a very small number of learners or where the work is a resubmission for one or two units. Remote work may also be required due to the location of the centre. All remote verifications will be agreed through the Centre Support team at ATHE and the decision will be based on strict criteria.

In all these cases the standards and processes used for the verification will be the same as those used for any other visit. If the normal information and documentation is not available and the standards are compromised the verification will not proceed.

When working remotely the report will have already been checked by the Head of Quality and Assessment or a Regional Standards Manager and submitted in the normal way. As the Centre has not received initial feedback it can seek clarification on the decisions which have been made. The Centre should send any communications about the report and the judgements to ben.jones@athe.co.uk. This process will not allow the Centre to amend the judgements. However, in some cases additional information may be provided which was available at the time of the verification but due to circumstances was not presented. In this case the EV might decide to make amendments to the report. Any changes to the report will be discussed and agreed with the Head of Quality and Assessment. The ATHE decisions are final.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

ATHE seeks to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment. This can be achieved by offering learners the opportunity to transfer credit i.e. recognise previously accredited achievement from within the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) to count towards another qualification. Alternatively learning or achievement that has not been certificated or accredited could be assessed and validated as part of the RPL process and then count towards the qualification.

Learners may claim RPL against a whole unit or several units. It is not possible to award part units, but where the RPL evidence does not fully meet the needs of a complete unit, the missing information may be provided via the same assessment processes that are undertaken by a taught group of learners.

Where centres wish to use RPL they are required to have a robust policy in place and to develop processes to support learners, assessors and internal verifiers to use RPL effectively. The centre must retain evidence for successful claims, as it does for all other assessment decisions. This will be checked as part of the external verification processes. There is an ATHE Policy on RPL which is available on the website. This policy describes the RPL process in detail and there are forms for centres to use.

Where a centre does not have a robust internal policy enabling valid RPL decisions to take place, ATHE will inform the centre that assessment judgements using RPL cannot be made. This decision make take place at the health check process or at other EV visits. Where a centre is graded in the lower half (weak amber or red) at external verification of learner work or at a Monitoring and Development visit due to issues with assessment, the centre will also be informed that RPL cannot be used. This restriction will apply until such time that assessment and supporting QA processes meet the required standards.

Not all ATHE qualifications are suitable for RPL for example where learners are new to the learning specified in the unit and/or where assessment includes a requirement for an observation of skill development. Where RPL is not allowed this is stated in the specification.

Command verbs used in units and assignments

Some verbs are more commonly used in assessment criteria for units at particular levels. This document provides an illustrative list of verbs used in ATHE assessment criteria. The explanations for the verbs given in the tables over the following pages provide alternative words or phrases that help to clarify the verb used in the assessment criteria at each level.

Assessors and Internal Verifiers should use these explanations to consider whether learners have met the correct standards when assessing learners and internally verifying assessment decisions.

Verbs	Explanation
Agree	Have the same opinion about something; concur
Analyse	Break the subject or complex situations into separate parts and examine each part in detail; identify the main issues and show how the main ideas are related to practice and why they are important; reference to current research or theory may support the analysis
Apply	Explain how existing knowledge, practices, standards etc. can be linked to new or different situations Use information to determine outcomes/conclusions/recommendations
Appraise	Assess the value or quality
Assess	Use available information to make a judgement
Calculate	Determine or ascertain by mathematical methods
Carry out	Implement; do; execute
Close	Bring to an end
Collaborate	Work jointly with
Collate	Collect and present information arranged in sequence or logical order which is suitable for purpose
Communicate	Convey or exchange spoken or written information
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail looking at similarities and differences
Compare and contrast	Examine the subjects in detail, identify similarities and differences, consider these from different perspectives
Conduct	Carry out
Consider	Ponder, contemplate or study in order to make a decision
Construct	Form by bringing together various elements
Convey	Communicate (information)
Create	Bring something into existence
Critically assess	Use available information to make a judgement; produce a convincing argument for a judgement
Critically evaluate	This is a development of evaluate. Examine strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences; consider the evidence and discuss the validity of evidence from opposing views; produce a convincing argument to support the conclusion or judgement.

Critically review	Look back over the topic or activity, analysing the positive and negative aspects
Define	State or show clearly and accurately
Demonstrate	Clearly show by giving proof or evidence; give a practical exhibition and explanation
Describe	Provide an extended range of detailed factual information about the topic or item in a logical way
Design	Decide on the look and function of something by making a detailed visual or written document of it
Determine	Ascertain or establish exactly by research or calculation
Develop	Identify, build and extend a topic, plan or idea
Devise	Plan or invent (a complex procedure, system or mechanism) by careful thought
Differentiate between	Discuss identified differences between more than one entity, item, product, object or activity
Discuss	Give a detailed account including a range of views or opinions which includes contrasting perspectives
Distinguish between	Discuss identified differences between more than one item, product, object or activity
Document	Record something in written, photographic or other form
Draw conclusions	Arrive at judgements or opinions by reasoning
Establish	Set up; show something to be true by determining the facts
Evaluate	Examine strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences; judge the evidence from the different perspectives and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgment; apply current research or theories to support the evaluation when applicable
Examine	Inspect (something) thoroughly in order to determine its nature or condition
Explain	Make something clear to someone by describing or revealing relevant information in more detail
Explore	Investigate or examine a range of issues from different perspectives
Formulate	Draw together; put together in a logical way; express in systematic terms or concepts
Identify	Ascertain the origin, nature, or definitive characteristics of
Illustrate	Explain or make something clear by using examples, charts, graphics etc.
Interpret	Explain the meaning of something
Investigate	Carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the facts
Justify	Give a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for actions and/or decisions

Lead	Be responsible for taking people, organisation or a piece of work in a direction
Make recommendations	Use conclusions to suggest ways forward; revisit and judge the merit of; endorse a proposal or course of action; advocate in favour of
Manage	Be in charge of; control or direct people/resources
Match	Correspond or cause to correspond (something with something else)
Measure	Assess the importance, effect or value of something
Monitor	Maintain regular surveillance
Negotiate	Discuss with a view to finding an agreed settlement
Outline	Identify accurately and describe clearly – the main points
Plan	Decide on something and make arrangements for it in advance; design or make a plan of something
Prepare	Make something or someone ready for use
Present	Show for others to scrutinise or consider; formally deliver (e.g. in verbal, written or graphical format)
Produce	Make, create or form something
Propose	Put forward (a plan or suggestion) for consideration by others
Provide	Identify and give relevant and detailed information in relation to the subject
Recommend/ Make recommendations	Use conclusions to suggest ways forward; revisit and judge the merit of; endorse a proposal or course of action; advocate in favour of
Record	Set down in writing or some other permanent form for later reference
Reflect	Consult with oneself or others, recognising implications of current practice with a view to changing future practice
Reflect critically	Learners should consider their actions, experiences or learning and the implications of these in order to suggest significant developments for future action, learning or practice, producing a convincing argument to support the conclusion or judgement
Report (on)	Give a spoken or written account of something that has been observed, heard, done or investigated
Request	Politely or formally ask for
Research	Conduct a detailed study of a subject to discover new information or reach a new understanding
Review	Revisit and consider the merit of analysing the positive and negative aspects
Select	Make informed choices
Self-analyse	Examine methodically in detail to explain and interpret oneself and one's actions
Set up	Establish; place something in position
Specify	Identify clearly and definitely

Suggest	Put forward for consideration
Summarise	Give the main ideas or facts in a concise way
Synthesise	Combine into a coherent whole
Translate	Convert
Validate	Demonstrate or support the truth, accuracy or value of something

Glossary of Terms

Assessment

The process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner's work meets the learning outcomes at the standards set by the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.

Assessment Board

The purpose of an Assessment Board is to examine in detail the assessment judgements that have been made for a particular qualification and to agree recommendations for the awards to be made to students.

Assessment Criteria

The specific standards that learners need to meet in order to achieve success in a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.

Assignment

A task or number of tasks that must be completed by a learner to evidence that he/she has achieved the learning outcomes and met the assessment criteria of a unit.

Awarding Organisation

An organisation that is regulated to design, deliver and award qualifications.

Centre Recognition

When a centre (usually a college) is recognised to deliver qualifications to the awarding organisations standards.

Conflicts of Interest

When an individual or organisation has personal, professional or financial interested which may cause them to deviate them from their professional obligations.

Credit Value

Each unit has a credit value which tells you how many credits are awarded when a unit is completed. The credit value also gives an indication of how long it will normally take you to complete a unit or qualification. One credit will usually take you 10 hours of learning.

External Verification

External verification is a process carried out by approved External Verifiers. External verification will involve checking that a centre (college) is working to the required standards, sampling assessment and learner evidence of achievement, ensuring rigorous processes are in place for

the assessment, tracking and recording of individual learner achievements in accordance with ATHE requirements and recommending the certification of learners.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The time that a lecturer, tutor or facilitator spends with a learner(s) providing lectures or guidance in order to deliver the aims of the unit specification.

Total Qualification Time (TQT)

TQT is an estimate of the length of time it would take a learner to complete a qualification. This includes guided learning hours.

Indicative Content

An indication of content which should be included when teaching a unit or qualification.

Internal Verification

A process by which assessment practices and decisions are sampled and evaluated and findings are acted upon to ensure standardisation, consistency and fairness in assessment.

Learning Outcome

A statement of what a learner can be expected to know, understand or do as a result of a process of learning.

Maladministration

This is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the centre of a learner not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications and as set out in the relevant legislation.

Malpractice

This refers to any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates

RQF Level

This is an indication of the relative demand, complexity and/or depth of a qualification on the Regulated Qualifications Framework. The RQF has equivalencies to other international frameworks such as the National Framework of Qualifications in Ireland.

Qualification

This is a record of achievement that is awarded to a learner after they have undertaken a course of study and have been assessed against a specified set of criteria.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is the process undertaken by an individual or group to ensure quality standards are met in the planning, delivery and assessment of qualifications.

Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Recognition of Prior Learning

A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

Rules of Combination

This is a description of the credit accumulation requirements for the achievement of a named qualification.

Sampling Procedures

Procedure in which a sample of assessed learner work is chosen to verify the assessment decisions made. Sampling will be undertaken by an External Verifier of assessed and internally verified work or by an internal verifier on assessed work.

Special Considerations

Special Consideration is an adjustment to the outcome of an assessment for a learner who was prepared for assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary injury, illness, or adverse circumstances that have arisen at or near to the time of an assessment.

Standardisation

Standardisation is a process which aims to achieve accuracy and consistency in making decisions about assessment, so a learner would receive the same assessment decision, regardless of centre, assessor, Internal Verifier (IV), type of evidence produced, type of programme delivery, location or date.

Unit

This is a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria with a title, credit value and level.