

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

External Verification Arrangements

© **Coachwise** Ltd, 2010

This document is copyright under the Berne Convention. All rights are reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be addressed to **1st4sport Qualifications**.



Developing and awarding qualifications for the active learning and leisure industry

1st4sport Qualifications
Coachwise Ltd
Chelsea Close
Off Amberley Road
Armley
Leeds LS12 4HP

Tel: 0113-290 7610

Fax: 0113-231 9606

Website: www.1st4sportqualifications.com

Email: enquiries@1st4sportqualifications.com

The QCA-recognised awarding body 1st4sport Qualifications is a brand of Coachwise Ltd, the trading arm of the National Coaching Foundation (known as sports coach UK), the UK-registered charity leading the development of coaches and the coaching system in the UK. Any proceeds go directly back to sports coach UK to help them develop and advance sport in the UK.

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

Contents		Page
1	Verification roles and responsibilities	1
2	Verification Aim	3
2.1	External Verifier Code of Practice	3
2.2	External Verifier Code of Conduct	5
3	Verification Objectives	
4	Verification Reports	

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

1 Verification roles and responsibilities

External verification is an integral part of our quality assurance arrangements. Our external verifiers (EVs) are the key mechanism in the establishment and monitoring of recognised centre status facilitating compliance with statutory regulation, our quality standards and the expectations of our qualification partners.

EVs are required to visit centres and/or conduct desk-based reviews to monitor and report recognised centre compliance with our requirements and qualification specification criteria (developed in accordance with our quality standards and appropriate legislation). As external verification is the key mechanism in the monitoring of recognised centre activity; we have a number of verification roles and responsibilities in place to ensure compliance is effectively maintained and risk is managed.

Role	Responsibilities
With regards to the management and monitoring of recognised centre activity:	
The Recognised Centre External Verifier (RCEV):	is allocated to the recognised centre upon completion of the recognition and approval process per centre to manage and monitor centre systems and is responsible for <ul style="list-style-type: none">the conduct of an initial visit to the centre making recommendations on the recognition status.the conduct of a systems visit annually¹ to monitor ongoing compliance and recognition status.
The External Verifier (EV):	is allocated per qualification the recognised centre is approved to deliver ² upon completion of the qualification approval process and is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the conduct of a direct claims status visit/review at the first course/candidate cohort after the recognised centre has been approved to deliver a particular qualification.the verification of course/candidate cohorts at a ratio of 1:4/1:50 respectively via delivery/assessment site visits or desk-based reviews.¹
Probationary External Verifier (PEV):	is responsible for undertaking training and completing two shadowing visits with another more accomplished EV prior to being recruited as an EV.

¹ EVs may be requested to conduct visits more frequently at the request of the QMT as a result of the risk based approach to monitoring, refer to our *Risk Management Arrangements* for further information.

² The recognised centre may be allocated a number of external verifiers if they are approved to deliver a range of qualifications as the criteria per qualification may be significantly different and may require technical expertise.

To further support the quality management of the delivery of our qualifications we ensure external verifiers are supported by the recruitment and management of senior, experienced external verifiers to manage and monitor external verification activity.

Role	Responsibilities
With regards to the management and monitoring of EV activity:	
The Lead External Verifier (LEV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is responsible for managing a group of Regional External Verifiers (REVs) or Coordinating External Verifiers (CEVs)
The Regional External Verifier (REV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is responsible for managing EVs for a specific qualification/suite of qualifications in a particular region
The Coordinating External Verifier (CEV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is responsible for managing a group of EVs nationwide for a specific qualification/suite of qualifications

We encourage all of our EVs to adopt a facilitative approach when managing and monitoring the recognised centres allocated to them. We expect that they take every opportunity to clarify issues, update centre personnel on changes to our requirements and qualification criteria and encourage the sharing of best practice. Recognised centres and related personnel are asked to look to their EV(s) for support and as the first point of contact for information.

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

2 Verification Aim

Our verification aim is to ensure external verifiers are effectively trained and deployed to manage and monitor recognised centre activity against the 1st4sport recognised centre requirements and appropriate qualification specification criteria which are developed to encompass appropriate statutory regulation and partner expectation.

To achieve our verification aim we have explicit recruitment, induction and performance management procedures in place to ensure standards are maintained (refer to our *External Verifier Recruitment and Management Arrangements*). In deploying our EVs we expect that they comply with our established *External Verifier Code of Conduct*.

2.1 External Verifier Code of Practice

2.1.1 External Verifier Responsibility to Recognised Centres

External verifiers are required to undertake the following activities to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to recognised centres. These include:

- the provision of information and advice related to our quality standards and established procedures, regulator and partner expectations
- the provision of advice on our recognised centre requirements, achieving and maintaining recognition and approval status
- the provision of advice on the interpretation of qualification-specification criteria, links to national occupational standards and key or functional skills (where required)
- conducting training with recognised centres on *Athena*
- conducting advisory visits to applicant or recognised centres providing information across the scope of our awarding function
- monitoring of allocated centre statuses, profiles, policies and procedures via *Athena* to ensure compliance
- monitoring of centre performance via the conduct of visits and desk based reviews in accordance with our *Quality Assurance Arrangements* and *Risk Management Arrangements* to ensure the quality and consistency of centre quality management systems, qualification delivery, assessment, internal verification and moderation activities
- agreeing an appropriate visit or review dates with relevant centre personnel ensuring the key objectives are submitted via the planning mechanism contained within the verification reports on *Athena* a minimum of ten days in advance
- effective reporting on the outcomes of verification activities via the established mechanisms contained on *Athena*
- establishing centre action plans via *Athena* ensuring a clear rationale with appropriate justification to address non compliance and to treat risk
- continuous review of allocated centres' recognition and approval statuses ensuring corrective actions are addressed via *Athena* to ensure compliance and reduce risk
- the provision of to advice to centres related to continuous development and quality improvement
- commending centres on areas of best practice, promoting aspects of these to other centres to adopt, where appropriate.

2.1.2 External Verifier Responsibility to the 1st4sport

External verifiers are required to undertake specific activities to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to 1st4sport. These include:

- maintenance of a personal *Profile* and *Annual Performance Profile* via *Athena* ensuring currency of information
- monitoring of recognised centre and qualification specific allocations via *Athena* to ensure validity and consistency of our data
- maintaining occupational competence, undertaking continued professional development activities to credibly fulfil the verification role
- attending a minimum of one training/update event during the year
- contributing to our continuous review of *External Verification Arrangements*, sharing knowledge of best practice and participating in standardisation activities
- reporting accurately on recognised centre activity in accordance with our *Quality Assurance Arrangements* and *Risk Management Arrangements* via the established mechanisms contained on *Athena*
- reporting accurately on recognised centre compliance against our *Recognised Centre Requirements* and qualification specification criteria establishing action plans and making recommendations to treat risk monitoring outcomes of corrective actions via *Athena*
- reporting on allocated centres' recognition and approval statuses effectively managing compliance with corrective actions via *Athena* to ensure compliance and reduce risk
- monitoring reasonable adjustment and special consideration outcomes granted via *Athena* to ensure equality and quality standards are maintained
- providing information on allegations or appeals via *Athena* where requested
- the conduct of investigations (where required) in line with our procedures, the regulator and partner expectation and under the instructions of the 1st4sport Quality Management Team (QMT).

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

2.2 External Verifier Code of Conduct

In establishing our deployment arrangements, we expect our EVs to comply with the stated Code of Conduct, to reduce any risk of unethical or unlawful behaviour, direct or indirect, and/or personal or financial interest. We expect certain standards of behaviour at all times in the workplace and while conducting business on our behalf. Our EVs are required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The professional manner in which our EVs are required to conduct themselves includes:

- using appropriate language, ensuring conduct and appearance are appropriate to the operating environment at all times
- making objective decisions and judgements based on specific facts and providing related evidence for justification
- commenting only on issues within the scope of the external verification role and not outside that remit
- maintaining the confidentiality of accessible information, providing objective, valid and clear information, to enable accurate disclosure of reports
- promoting our commitment to equality and diversity, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practices
- building effective working relationships and maintaining communication with the recognised centre personnel
- avoiding personal and professional conflicts of interest, acting with honesty and integrity
- maintaining an environment free of harassment and abuse, whether physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or bullying
- promoting ethical practices and sharing knowledge to facilitate continuous improvement
- behaving in a professional manner and accepting responsibility for personal actions
- complying with applicable rules and regulations of national and local authorities, and any related corporate policy established by the regulatory bodies or qualification partners
- respecting centre personnel, candidates and any relevant third party member, acting in good faith, responsibly and without misrepresenting or subordinating their judgements
- controlling and ensuring appropriate use of all our resources
- reporting any conduct considered to be a non-compliance with the law or violation of our *Equality and Diversity Statement* and/or of any provision of the published ethical behaviour policy, including any transaction or relationship expected to result in a conflict.

3 Verification Objectives

External Verifiers manage and monitor recognised centre activity via the conduct of visits or desk-based reviews reporting on compliance with our requirements and qualification specification criteria. The number of visits/reviews required is dependent upon our verification objectives developed in accordance with our *Strategic Direction 2009-2014*.

The verification objectives support a risk-based approach to monitoring. Therefore, if a recognised centre complies totally with our requirements, less monitoring may be completed. If, however, a centre does not comply, our Quality Management Team will review the situation and may instruct the appropriate EV to monitor more frequently to facilitate future compliance and to preserve the integrity of the awarding function. Refer to our *Risk Management Arrangements* for full details on our risk based approach to monitoring of recognised centre activity. In support of our verification objectives we have detailed explicit activities which our EVs undertake in the management and monitoring of recognised centre activity.

Verification Activities		Verification Objectives Our EVs are required to:
Verification of recognition status	<p>Centre recognition is only granted subsequent to a positive outcome of an initial visit to the applicant centre.</p> <p>The initial visit consists of a review of the applicant centres capacity and capability to comply with our recognised centre requirements. In applying for centre recognition, the applicant centre must have applied for approval to deliver a qualification. Therefore, the assigned external verifier will also review their capacity and capability to deliver the qualification.</p> <p>Upon receipt of a positive EV recommendation via the initial visit outcomes contained within the recognition and approval application form on Athena, the applicant centre will be recognised centre approved. The centre is then eligible to apply to deliver a range of our qualifications.</p> <p>Upon confirmation of recognition the EV who was assigned to conduct the initial visit is then allocated as the Recognised Centre EV (RCEV). They will also be allocated as the qualification approval EV. This ensures the EV-recognised centre relationship is already developed to facilitate <i>Verification of Direct Claims Status</i> of the first course/cohort and for future <i>Verification of Courses/Cohorts</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct an initial visit to an applicant centre

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

Verification Activities		Verification Objectives Our EVs are required to:
Verification of direct claims status	<p>Direct claims status is required to be verified during a visit or desk based review undertaken at the end of the first course/candidate cohort after the centre has been granted approval for the particular qualification.</p> <p>Direct claims status visits ensure a compliance check to confirm whether the candidates should be certificated. If the outcomes are successful, the centre will receive direct claims status for the particular qualification they have been granted qualification approval for. In the event that direct claims status is not granted as a result of a recommended Level two or above action plan, our QMT must be made aware of the situation to ensure increased monitoring until the risks have been treated and compliance maintained.</p> <p>A direct claims status visit must be completed at the first course/cohort of candidates to all centres having achieved qualification approval for one of our occupational qualifications. We also aspire to ensure that a direct claims status visit is also conducted at the first course/cohort of candidates to all centres who have been granted approval for one of our vocational qualifications. However, we recognise that time and resource constraints may prevent this and we accept desk based direct claims confirmation in these circumstances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> verify direct claims status at the end of the first course after a centre has gained qualification approval for a particular qualification
Verification of courses/cohorts	<p>Courses and candidate cohorts are required to be continually verified in line with external verifier sampling plans developed in line with our verification objectives. This ensures continued compliance and facilitates the sharing of best practice within and between centres. Ongoing monitoring of courses/candidate cohorts ensures risk is effectively managed across recognised centre activity.</p> <p><i>Verification of Courses/Cohorts</i> is conducted at a ratio of 1:4/1:50 respectively per qualification the recognised centre is approved to deliver. The external verifier may conduct desk based reviews intermittently to compliant centres to reduce the motoring burden. Centres that have been placed under sanction and classified as higher risk as a result of non-compliance will be subject to more frequent monitoring at the request of our QMT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> verify course/candidate cohorts at a ratio of 1:4/1:50 respectively
Verification of systems	<p>Our recognised centre EVs are required to undertake systems visits to active centres. Verification of systems is conducted once annually for compliant centres. It may be more frequent for those centres identified as higher risk as a result of non-compliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> verify recognised centre systems annually (active centre only)

4 Verification Reports

To facilitate external verification reporting on recognised centre activity, we have developed *Athena*, a web-based quality assurance system. *Athena* is designed to encompass a number of web-based forms which underpin our quality assurance arrangements. The following table identifies the *Form* and related processes that are relevant to our EVs when reporting on recognised centre activity:

Web based form contained on <i>Athena</i>	Form Section Titles	Completed by the:	Process
Advisory Visit	Visit details	External Verifier	This form will be created by the EV upon receipt of a request for the advisory visit to be made by the 1st4sport Quality Assurance Officer.
	Centre feedback	Recognised Centre	The EV will complete relevant components within the ' <i>Visit Details</i> ' submitting the form to the centre to enable them to plan accordingly. The centre should return the form by selecting the submit option to enable the EV to conduct the verification activity. The EV will complete the ' <i>Visit Details</i> ' in full before assigning to the QAO. The outcomes of the visit will be reviewed and the form returned to the centre to enable them to view the outcomes and provide feedback. The centre must complete ' <i>Centre Feedback</i> ' and resubmit. Upon receipt of the feedback the form will then be closed by the QAO.

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

Web based form contained on <i>Athena</i>	Form Section Titles	Completed by the:	Process
<i>Recognition and Approval Application</i>	Recognition Arrangements	Applicant Centre	This form is for organisations applying for recognition and approval. The applicant should create the form and complete the <i>Recognition and Qualification Approval Arrangements</i> and select submit. The form may be returned to request further details. If so, the applicant should respond to the public comments in <i>Recognition and Qualification Approval Arrangements</i> and resubmit the form.
	Qualification Approval Arrangements	Applicant Centre	
	Verification Details	External Verifier	Upon agreement of the <i>Recognition and Qualification Approval Arrangements</i> the form is assigned to an EV to conduct an initial visit. The EV will complete the <i>Visit Details</i> assigning the form to the centre to enable them to plan accordingly. The centre must re-submit the form for the EV to complete <i>Visit Findings</i> and <i>Visit Outcomes</i> before re-assigning to the 1st4sport Quality Assurance Officer (QAO).
	Verification Findings	External Verifier	
	Verification outcomes	Recognised Centre External Verifier	
			After review, the form is closed and the centre will receive an automated e-mail confirming the outcomes. The centre must then review their profile on <i>Athena</i> to obtain their Centre Code (internal reference).

Web based form contained on <i>Athena</i>	Form Section Titles	Completed by the:	Process
Verification of direct claim status	Verification Details	External Verifier	The EV allocated to a centre for a particular qualification will create this form at the end of the first course/cohort of candidates completing ' <i>Verification Details</i> '. The EV must then select submit to send the form to centre to enable them to plan accordingly.
	Monitoring of Compliance	External Verifier	
	Assessment Sampling	External Verifier	The centre should return the form by selecting the submit option. This will enable the EV to verify and complete the ' <i>Monitoring of Compliance</i> ', ' <i>Assessment Sampling</i> ' and ' <i>Visit Outcomes</i> ' before assigning it to the 1st4sport Quality Assurance Officer (QAO).
	Verification Outcomes	External Verifier	The outcomes of the visit will be reviewed and the form returned to the centre to enable them to view the outcomes and provide feedback. The centre must complete the ' <i>Centre Feedback</i> ' section and resubmit. Upon receipt of the feedback the form will then be closed by the QAO.
	Centre Feedback	Recognised Centre	Any actions attached to this form will remain open after the form is closed to enable the centre to respond to ensure future compliance.

1st4sport Qualifications

the awarding body for active learning and leisure

Web based form contained on <i>Athena</i>	Form Section Titles	Completed by the:	Process
Verification of Courses/Cohorts	Verification Details	External Verifier	EVs allocated to centres for particular qualifications will create this form completing ' <i>Verification Details</i> ' selecting submit to send to the centre to enable them to plan accordingly.
	Monitoring of compliance	External Verifier	The centre should return the form by selecting submit to enable the EV to verify and complete the ' <i>Monitoring of Compliance</i> ', ' <i>Assessment Sampling</i> ' and ' <i>Visit Outcomes</i> '.
	Assessment sampling	External Verifier	If no actions or a level 1 action plan is recommended the EV must submit the outcomes directly to the centre. The centre must complete the ' <i>centre feedback</i> ' and resubmit to enable the EV to close the form.
	Verification Outcomes	External Verifier	If level 2 actions are recommended the EV will assign the form to the 1st4sport Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) to confirm the actions and outcomes, returning the form to the centre. The centre must then complete the ' <i>Centre Feedback</i> ' and resubmit the form to enable the QAO to close the form.
	Centre Feedback	Recognised Centre	Any actions attached to this form will remain open after the form is closed to enable the centre to respond to ensure future compliance.

Web based form contained on <i>Athena</i>	Form Section Titles	Completed by the:	Process
Verification of systems	Verification Details	External Verifier	The Recognised Centre External Verifier (RCEV) will create this form completing the ' <i>Verification Details</i> ' selecting submit to send the form to centre to enable them to plan accordingly.
	Monitoring of Compliance	External Verifier	The centre should return the form by selecting submit to enable the EV to verify and complete the ' <i>Monitoring of Compliance</i> ', and ' <i>Visit Outcomes</i> '.
	Verification Outcomes	External Verifier	If no actions or a level 1 action plan is recommended the EV must submit the form directly to the centre. The centre must complete the ' <i>Centre Feedback</i> ' and resubmit to enable the EV to close the form.
	Centre Feedback	Recognised Centre	<p>If level 2 actions are recommended the EV will assign the form to the 1st4sport Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) who will confirm the actions and outcomes returning the form to the centre. The centre must then complete the '<i>Centre Feedback</i>' and resubmit the form to enable the QAO to close the form.</p> <p>Any actions attached to this form will remain open after the form is closed to enable the centre to respond to ensure future compliance.</p>