



# **China optional assessment guidance: session 2023–24**

## **Information and guidance for centres**

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# Scope

**The approaches suggested in this document are optional.**

The experience of recent years has resulted in the development of some alternative approaches to delivery and assessment. The opportunity to explore different approaches has led to lots of good practice across centres and this is something to foster.

This guidance document aims to support practitioners in centres to consider ways to reduce assessment. It also complements the group award and unit specifications.

# Combining assessment

To help reduce assessment in SQA Advanced Qualifications centres have the flexibility to combine assessments.

The following sections outline the most effective ways for candidates to generate evidence of competence and for assessors to judge that evidence against unit standards. It is necessary to generate evidence that demonstrates that candidates have met all the outcomes of all units.

As with all SQA qualifications, it is not necessary to assess each outcome separately. We encourage a combined approach that allows evidence to be gathered for a range of outcomes or evidence requirements within a unit or across multiple units. There are several advantages of this approach:

- ◆ The assessment is more meaningful to candidates.
- ◆ It takes less time.
- ◆ It gives assurances of overall competence.
- ◆ It avoids over-assessment and improves motivation.
- ◆ It facilitates flexible approaches to verification.
- ◆ It benefits candidates.

Combined assessment can arise from identifying similar assessment requirements within and across units, removing duplication. For example, it may be possible to identify an overarching task or a single coherent activity that gathers evidence for a range of outcomes within a unit or across multiple units.

In many Advanced Diploma frameworks, there are opportunities to generate evidence through a single task that may satisfy requirements across multiple units. For example, producing a newsletter could provide evidence to meet the requirements of an IT Applications Software unit and a Communication unit.

There are some points to note:

- ◆ When you are developing an assessment across units, ensure that the content of the units is sufficiently related to make the assessment coherent and meaningful to candidates.
- ◆ Some assessment methods lend themselves more easily to combining outcomes and units than others. Try to choose the more obvious opportunities to combine assessments and those that make the biggest impact in terms of reducing assessment. Trying to combine more complex evidence requirements may be counterproductive and introduce unnecessary barriers.
- ◆ When combining assessments, ensure that the assessment task is of the same level of demand for the candidate as the original individual assessment requirement.

You should use your own experience, expertise, and qualification and subject knowledge to identify the most obvious opportunities to combine assessment, avoiding any risk to the

standard of the qualification. If there is any doubt, you should seek further expert guidance and support.

The activities of a combined assessment should be included in an assessment plan and cross-referenced back to the outcomes (the course mapping). This helps to ensure that all outcomes of all the units are achieved.

If you develop a combined assessment approach, assessors must also consider how to deal with any need for candidate remediation and re-assessment. This should be in line with the centre's policy for remediation and re-assessment.

You can find further information on [prior verification](#) of assessments on SQA's website.

## Course mapping

The starting point is for the course team to carry out (or re-visit) a mapping exercise to collectively review outcomes and all the associated assessment activities across all the units of study. This is key to identifying:

- ◆ potentially compatible outcomes and evidence requirements, and opportunities to combine assessment
- ◆ any potential to adjust or reduce the evidence required
- ◆ any considerations around established assessment requirements

Useful information is often available in group award specifications.

Once you have carried out the mapping exercise, you may wish to use the 'assessment planning tool' in [Appendix 1](#). This is designed to support you when considering the options available and the processes to follow.

While you may carry out this process at centre level, we encourage you to take opportunities for collaborative working and sharing best practice through established or new subject networks.

You must ensure that robust internal quality assurance processes are in place to support, advise and guide; you must also ensure that appropriate protocols are followed to maintain the standards, integrity and credibility of qualifications. We require centres to demonstrate that all assessors and internal verifiers have a common understanding of the standards required; there should also be evidence of how you have checked the assessment instruments for validity (currency and fitness for purpose).

The result should be a carefully considered and cohesive assessment plan that is agreed and supported by the whole course team and endorsed by the centre.

## Approaches to external verification

You can find out [information and request support](#) in the early stages of the development of combined assessment approaches.

Discussion around the course mapping and agreed approaches to assessment relative to outcomes, evidence and assessment requirements is an important element of verification activity. You must retain evidence of your assessment judgements, as you may be asked for this during external verification activity.

You can find information on relating to verification on the [Quality Assurance](#) section of the website. You can also contact [china.verification@sqa.org.uk](mailto:china.verification@sqa.org.uk).

# Graded units

You should assess graded units as outlined in the unit specifications. You may find it useful to refer to the graded unit [guidance](#) on SQA's website.

# Resulting and certification

When assessment is complete, and decisions finalised and endorsed by the course team, if appropriate, you must submit candidates' results to SQA through the normal resulting channels.

Certification is carried out by SQA in line with normal arrangements.



# **Academic appeals**

Centres should follow their established academic appeals process for any candidate who feels that the assessment outcome does not accurately reflect their achievement.

# Appendix 1: assessment planning tool

