



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales

National external verification programme

Frequently asked questions

1. Why has the Welsh Government introduced the programme of external verification?

Teacher assessment is the key means of monitoring learners' progress in Wales. Research evidence tells us that Wales has all the features of a successful assessment system; however feedback from key stakeholders shows a need to improve confidence in the quality, consistency and reliability of assessments.

2. Did the Welsh Government consult on the introduction of the programme of external verification?

From December 2014 to March 2015, the Welsh Government consulted on a range of proposals to improve the reliability and consistency of teacher assessment, including the introduction of an external verification programme.

The published [Summary of responses](#) shows that most of the respondents supported the introduction of an external verification programme.

3. Who undertakes external verification?

The contract to undertake the external verification of teacher assessment was tendered in April 2015. The Partnership, consisting of the four regional consortia and CDSM Interactive Solutions Ltd was awarded the contract.

The Partnership manages the recruitment of verifiers, based on a nationally agreed job description. Recruitment is from serving headteachers, heads of department and, where required, consortia officers with subject expertise.

4. Which subjects have been selected for external verification?

The subject focus in 2015 was on mathematics and science. In 2016 the focus will be on English, Welsh and Welsh second language.

5. Will dual medium schools be required to provide learner profiles for both Welsh and Welsh second language for external verification?

No. Schools teaching the programmes of study for Welsh and Welsh second language will be required to provide profiles for only one subject.

6. What is the information gathered in the process of verification used for and is it shared with other agencies?

The external verification programme is designed to improve the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessment through high-quality feedback to all key stakeholders.

External verification will assess how accurately the teacher assessment/moderation processes are working and help to identify training needs for schools and clusters.

The information on individual schools gathered as part of external verification is confidential to the programme and is not reported to the local authority, regional consortia or the Welsh Government.

7. What feedback can schools expect from the external verification programme?

As in 2015, the Partnership will provide feedback to schools, local authorities and regional consortia in the form of a summary report highlighting the key findings. The report is not school-specific but national and it outlines general findings. The Partnership will distribute this report to all schools, with the programme team distributing copies to the main headteacher, teacher and support staff unions. Training has been arranged for all schools in their region, to make them aware of the lessons learnt.

8. How will schools be selected to take part in the programme of external verification?

Schools are selected to participate by way of random and targeted sampling. Schools in the targeted and random samples are verified in the same way and their status is not disclosed to verifiers, but used by the central programme team for comparison purposes.

In 2016 the process will include cluster group visits.

9. What proportion of schools and cluster groups will be included in the external verification programme in 2015/16?

- Schools – 10% sample of all schools in Wales, balanced regionally, linguistically and by phase.
- Clusters – 20% sample of all clusters in Wales.

10. When will external verification visits take place?

External verification visits will take place in the summer term 2016. Clusters will be verified in April/May. Schools will be visited in June.

11. When will I know if my school has been selected?

Schools will be informed if they have been selected to take part in the external verification programme by the end of the spring term 2016, by receiving a verification visit notification. Schools will be informed which learners have been selected in the verification visit notification. Verifiers will then contact the selected schools to arrange a suitable date to visit.

12. What information will schools be required to provide?

Schools will be asked to provide the learner profiles submitted to cluster moderation (see questions 13–16 below).

In addition, schools will be asked to make available the day-to-day work of up to three randomly selected learners (see questions 16–17 below).

13. What does a learner profile look like?

A learner profile should be as straightforward as the learners' book or books which show evidence of the characteristics of levels and relevant attainment target(s). Other work which would give the complete picture of a learner's standards might include a theme/topic book, audio visual recordings or reading records.

The commentary on the learner profile sent to be moderated by the cluster will make clear how, on balance, the best fit judgement has been reached and why it is not at the level above or below if it is borderline. The commentary needs to be on a separate form, which allows for more detail and makes it easier in terms of verification. Schools will be given an example of a completed commentary. The commentary will signpost where the evidence of achievement at a particular level can be seen in the exercise book or other original material produced in the year.

14. How much evidence is needed to make a learner profile?

There is no set requirement regarding the amount of evidence that is needed to make up a learner profile. Profiles should contain sufficient evidence that demonstrates a learner's understanding and independent use of skills across a range of contexts.

15. Do audio visual recordings, reading records and commentaries need to be kept?

The evidence a school has used to award a best fit judgement for any child through internal standardisation/moderation processes should be available in the school. There is no requirement for school to retain anything additional for external verification, beyond the normal work that learners would undertake.

16. Will a learner profile need to be created for the additional learners selected as part of verification?

No, there will be no requirement to create a learner profile. Verifiers will seek evidence to support best fit judgements through the work available in the books of these learners along with any other relevant tasks undertaken which in the teacher's professional opinion contribute to the overall judgement.

17. What evidence does the definition of 'other tasks undertaken' include and does the record of these tasks need to be collected/kept specially for the verification purposes?

Evidence required to justify the level should be available within a learner's normal day-to-day work, including any tasks that the school has set to enable them to make a best fit judgement.

External verification of clusters is based on learner profiles. Learner profiles are required for the work selected for cluster moderation and the annotation required for these is not set by the verification process.

For additional randomly selected learners, their work, together with the teacher comments made as part of the regular marking of the work, should support the best fit judgement.

18. What happens if the verifier does not agree with the level awarded to the learner profiles provided?

An appeal process has been developed as part of the external verification process. All selected schools will be provided with full details of this process as standard.

19. What support is available to schools?

Exemplification materials produced previously are available by clicking on the 'Guidance' tab in the 'Key Stages 2–4' section on Learning Wales:

learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/key-stages-2-4?lang=en

These materials for cluster profiles in the core subjects remain relevant.

Additional exemplification materials are currently being produced to support teacher assessment. Together the materials are intended as a help for practitioners when making a best fit judgement – they will add to the previously produced resource.

20. Is there the new legislation governing cluster moderation?

Yes, new legislation came into force on the 1 September 2015 that requires all schools to participate in cluster group moderation at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3. The new legislation places additional duties on headteachers. It is explained in more detail on the Learning Wales website at:

learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/141030-statutory-assessment-arrangements-en-v2.pdf

21. Will this new legislation on cluster moderation apply to special schools?

No. Special schools maintained by local authorities in Wales are exempt from the requirement to participate in cluster group moderation. However, headteachers from special schools, or their representatives, are welcome to participate and attend cluster groups meetings if they so wish.