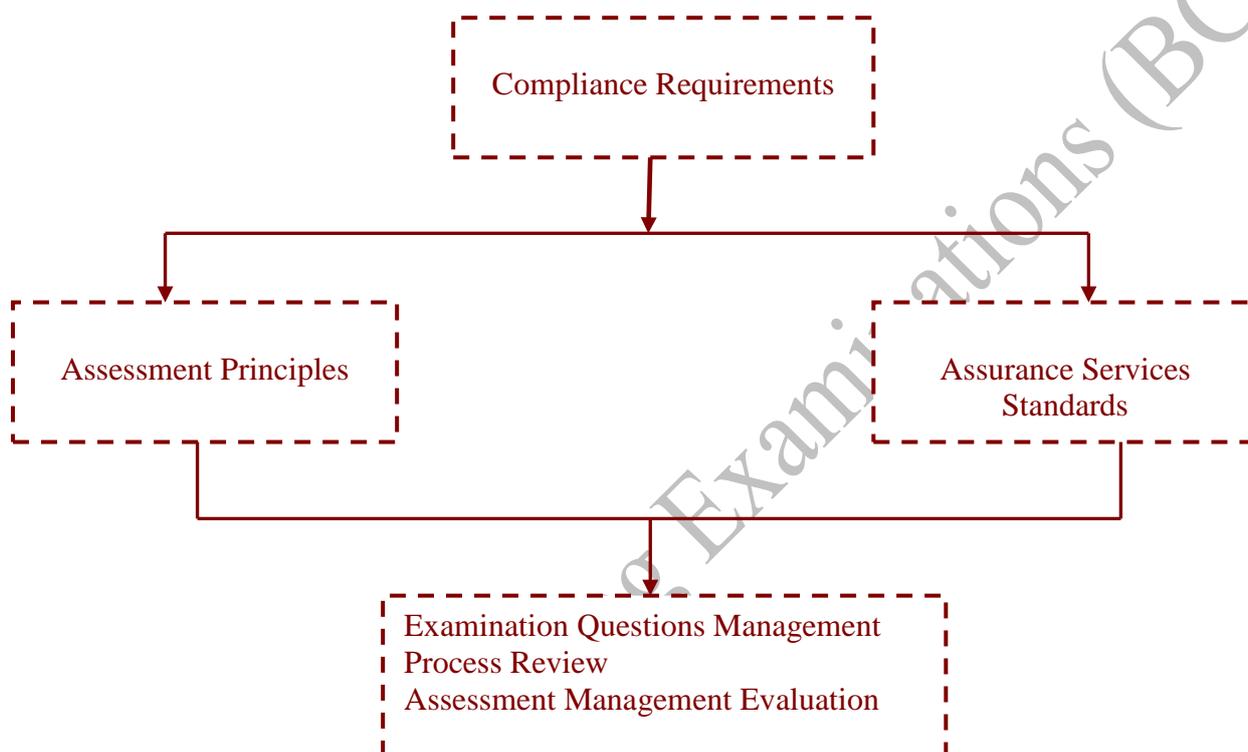




BCE Assessment Management Principles

Assessment Management Framework



Introduction

This document outlines some of the principles underpinning the construction of examination papers, other test instruments; compliance with the general conditions of Recognition and Regulatory arrangements for the Credit Framework.

Validity - refers to the accuracy with which an examination paper measures what it is intended to measure. The examination paper and marking scheme must also reflect the aims, objectives and content of the specification and ensuring that the intended skills are being measured.

Reliability - refers to the consistency of the results produced by the assessment.

Bias - the presence of some assessment characteristics that result in different levels of performance by candidates of the same level of achievement, from different groups, such as ethnic or gender.

Inclusiveness and Equity – BCE Examinations should reflect an inclusive view of society and a respect for diversity. This requires assessment to contain an appropriate balance in

relation to such matters as gender, religion, culture, or socio-economic factors and to have all members of society treated with respect.

Discrimination - refers to the extent to which an individual test item, or an assessment as a whole, effectively distinguishes between candidates of different underlying levels of achievement. BCE examinations must provide opportunities for candidates across the achievement range to show what they know, understand and can do.

Accessibility - the accessibility of an examination refers to the extent to which all candidates are facilitated in demonstrating their achievements, in the context of the need to preserve the integrity, fairness and standards of the assessment. Exam Setters and Revisers/Scrutinisers must review all assessment material with a view to eliminating inappropriate barriers.

Constructing Assessment

In constructing assessment, there are three main components that must be considered: –

- *the assessment criteria*
- *the examination paper itself*
- *the marking scheme*

Assessment Criteria

The purpose of the examination in a particular unit is to measure the extent to which each candidate has fulfilled the objectives of the officially approved specification, in order to provide a certified record of the candidate's level of achievement.

The key assessment principle of validity requires that the specification content be covered in a balanced and proportionate manner and that the types of competencies measured in the Examinations are those actually intended to be measured.

The assessment criteria is a means of ensuring that a particular examination satisfies the requirements of the relevant specification. The criterion is based on the relationship between the assessment objectives, the specification content (Intended Learning Outcomes) and the examination components (Assessment Criteria), as specified in the specification.

The completion of the assessment criteria during the examination design stage confirms that:

- the question paper satisfies qualification objectives;
- the questions set cover both the intended outcome and the assessment criteria;
- a balanced and proportionate coverage of unit content, skills and abilities is provided;

Examination Paper Itself - General Principles for Writing Questions

The principles underpinning the preparation of an examination paper in any unit are:

- maintenance of an appropriate relationship between the qualification, Credit Framework level and the specification, bearing in mind the constraints of the examination:
 - the questions should be relevant to the qualification;
 - every question or task must be unambiguously within the scope of the published specification;
 - the questions should be appropriately distributed over the specification content
 - the questions should reflect the specification assessment objectives with respect to the types of knowledge and skills required;.

- the questions should be of the appropriate Credit Framework level;
- use of clear and unambiguous language, appropriate to the discipline and to the stage of development of the candidates;
- avoidance of excessive questions;
- balanced allocation of marks to questions or parts thereof;
- adherence to rubrics and question formats that have been standardised by frequent usage in past papers;
- matching of the requirements of the questions to the time available;

[Also refer to Exam Setter, Reviser/Scrutiniser Reports – BAF006a/ BAF006b]

Marking Schemes

The mark scheme should always be considered at the time of formulating the examination question. Exam setters should first consider the response or information they are seeking, and only when this has been done should the question be asked. This approach ensures the validity of what can be addressed from the outset.

[also refer to Chapter 5 **The Designing of BCE Qualifications** and Chapter 6 **The Delivery BCE of Assessments** sections in the Accreditation Handbook].

BCE Examination Questions Management Process Review

Main Principles / Design Points	Response	Corrective Action
1. Are the needs of all candidate groups been considered?		
2. Are all assessment written in plain, clear and consistent language?		
3. Are all assessment free from jargon or bias?		
4. Does assessment content relevant to the target Credit Framework levels?		
5. Do assessment outcomes focus on the required knowledge, understanding and skills?		
6. Are assessment objectives clear?		
7. Are assessment methods reliable and valid?		
8. Are assessment methods fit for purpose?		
9. Are assessment requirements clearly expressed?		
10. Are assessment components reflected in the associated mark scheme?		
11. Have external factors been considered and any resulting assessment arrangements specified?		
12. Are required timings for tasks and coursework realistic?		
13. Has a viability assessment of both written and coursework been carried out?		
14. Has a subject/unit expert checked the assessment draft where necessary?		
15. Do assessment material reflect current working practice?		
16. Does the mark scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identifies how different responses are to be valued ▪ confirms that the intended assessment objectives are being assessed ▪ provides a uniform basis for the marking process ▪ outlines anticipated candidate responses ▪ indicates how discrimination between candidates is to be minimised ▪ ensures that marks allocated are commensurate with the intended difficulty of each question. ▪ facilitates the maintenance of standards from year to year ▪ acts as a companion document to the assessment grid 		

BCE Assessment Management Evaluation

To ensure BCE Assessment are *valid, reliable, comparable, manageable* and *minimise bias*, those responsible for setting BCE examinations meet before each assessment window, to analyse the weaknesses and risks of existing practices and processes. During the meeting, the Assessment Management Evaluation is divided into 4 phases; *planning, clarifying, confirming* and *improving* for the panel to evaluate all important factors.

Main Principles	Comment	Rating	Corrective Action
Planning Stage			
Assessment principles/opportunities devised to enable learners to demonstrate their learning against performance standard levels			
1. Describe roles/responsibilities of Exam Setters, Exam Revisers, Exam Scrutinisers and Examiners?			
2. Describe the differences between the Credit Framework Levels in BCE Qualifications?			
3. Describe the processes / procedures in setting assessment tasks?			
4. Describe the type of changes required to suit Reasonable Adjustment?			
5. What are risks associated with assessment design?			
Clarifying Stage			
Implementation of assessment standards/objectives?			
1. What is the aim of each specification between the levels?			
2. What are the assessment evaluation methods for different Credit Framework Levels in BCE qualifications?			
3. What creates/validates integrity in assessment?			
4. Describe the relevance of performance standards / objectives?			
5. What are reporting mechanisms of performance (methods of awarding marks)?			
Confirming Stage			
Applying assessment standards consistently to learners.			
1. What are the BCE policies related to assessment and the procedures in implementing them?			
2. What are the marking guidelines?			

3.	What can be done to minimise assessment risks?			
4.	Are exam time duration for different BCE assessment fair?			
5.	Are BCE exam question data banks current?			
6.	What are sources used in setting assessment? Are they used in a fair and consistent way?			
Improving Stage				
Assessment quality assurance and validation.				
1.	Are existing sampling methods meaningful?			
2.	Analyse assessment feedback from Centres, Chief Examinations Officers and External Verifiers. What lessons are to be learnt?			
3.	What can be done to improve clarity of assessment?			
4.	What can be done to create robust marking processes?			
5.	What can be done to improve BCE Standardisation process?			
6.	Are current delivery of question papers; centre storage of candidate scripts and conduct of examinations appropriate?			