

**For the attention of the** teachers, trainers and coordinators of the Assessment and Quality Assurance qualifications.

**November 2014**

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Qualifications	Assessment and Quality assurance Qualifications
Level	3 & 4
Number	6317 and 6318

**This news article contains important information about:**

- 6317 Amendments to the qualification handbook
- Questions of the month

### **6317-42 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice Unit 403**

There has been an amendment to the guidance in the qualification handbook for 6317 TAQA qualifications. It relates to 6317-42 unit 403 – ‘Plan, allocate and monitor work in own area of responsibility’. Version 4, pages 82-83 of the qualification handbook have been amended. Please see the link to the handbook below.

[http://cdn.cityandguilds.com/ProductDocuments/Learning/Training\\_and\\_Development/6317/Centre\\_documents/6317\\_L3\\_L4\\_Qualification\\_handbook\\_v1-4.pdf](http://cdn.cityandguilds.com/ProductDocuments/Learning/Training_and_Development/6317/Centre_documents/6317_L3_L4_Qualification_handbook_v1-4.pdf)



## 6317 Questions of the month!

**Q.1 Can an IQA carry out an observation assessment on a TAQA candidate if they have already sampled the candidate's file? My view is that it is not advisable but I am aware that in some cases observations can be expensive and time consuming so it might be cheaper if the IQA did the observation. If the candidate has already been sampled on a different unit and not planned to be sampled on the observation would it be acceptable - though presumably not good practice?**

**A.**This should always be discouraged. It should only be the named assessors who carry out assessments.

If the person is named as the IQA for the candidate and they have already engaged in the role then they should really only carry out that role. Things can get very muddled if team members swap roles mid-stream. For example if there were an appeal or complaint it could get very complicated.

Also observations should not be done in isolation so whoever carried it out would need to know and support the candidate while completing an assessment plan, taking the assessment decision, giving feedback and maintaining the assessment records. However if they carried out this full assessor role before during and after the observation their objectivity as the IQA would be compromised.

Anyway - this unit/LO/observation would then HAVE to form part of the IQA sample (done by a different IQA who would also have to be on the official TAQA team) due to the increased risk caused by the change of staffing/role.

These are the reasons why City & Guilds always discourages centres from swapping staffing on qualifications. Hopefully it also indicates how it can create more work and take more time than it saves.

**Q.2 We have just had a visit from our QC and for the first time she has given us a sanction because she says that we do not carry out sufficient observations on TAQA Unit 302. Our centre carries out one observation for Unit 302. What we do is:**

- *We work with the TAQA candidate assessor following induction and review and assess the planning and preparation (observe the candidate assessor working, but not with a learner, though named learners are allocated to each candidate assessor).*
- *We arrange to observe an assessment, briefing/performance and feedback on site which might be at any location in the UK.*
- *The candidate assessor will have already collated one set of evidence of performance of having worked with another learner.*
- *The TAQA assessor completes an observation report /checklist and summary comment at the observation*
- *The TAQA assessor assesses the product evidence of the candidate assessor working with their other learner*



*We think this is sufficient and meets what the guidance says. Are we right - or is the QC right? Should we be carrying out a second observation for Unit 302?*

**A.** You do indeed need to carry out two live observations for Unit 302 so your QC is absolutely correct. City & Guilds has always kept to the LLUK requirement that all TAQA assessor candidates must be observed working with two different learners - i.e. they have to be observed twice. (Though it is fine - even good practise - for both observations to take place in the same location and on the same day.) AC 2.1 says that candidates must provide two observations showing two assessments of two learners (4 assessments in total). You seem to be saying that in your sector there would never be two learners on one site with whom the assessor could be observed working. So the TAQA assessor and candidate assessor would have to travel to another site in order for the second observation to be completed. Is there a possibility of the candidate assessor being observed on the site (where the first observation is taking place) but assessing another member of staff undertaking some CPD learning? It would have to be criteria based learning and subject to IQA sampling but this is a possible option.

However it is also important that you consider the purpose of the two observations - they are not a bureaucratic rule - rather an opportunity to make an accurate judgement of competence based on sufficient evidence. As you know assessments of competence in a work environment rely heavily on watching people carry out practical tasks, questioning them to check their thinking based on what has been observed and checking what they've done - i.e. their products of work.

When centres deliver Unit 302 City & Guilds needs to check and be confident that observations of candidate assessors are carried out effectively and while some things can be demonstrated without watching the candidate e.g. we may be able to check whether an assessment was planned by looking at printouts of email exchanges. Some things *have* to be observed directly, for example - whether the learner carries out the appropriate legal/safety checks when assessing a candidate; the interpersonal skills the candidate assessor uses with the learner they are assessing – whether their explanations are clear, whether they can answer learner questions; or the way that the candidate assessor uses the space whilst assessing (if they are assessing a customer service person for example – where and how do they stand to make sure they can hear what is being said, but still make sure they are not in the way etc, etc.). A major consideration here is that by being present the TAQA assessor can step in and stop any poor/malpractice in the assessment before it becomes an issue.

In terms of the process of making sure that somebody can carry out effective assessments – two observations is not overwhelmingly onerous. It's unfortunate that it is difficult for you to arrange the observations in a single visit, but a range of centres and professions do have this challenge and find inventive ways of overcoming it.

***Q.3 In one of our specialist departments there are only two occupationally qualified members of staff. One is a qualified IQA the other is working towards their assessor award and needs countersigning. Is it OK for the IQA of the qualification to also be the countersigner? It seems to me that there is a conflict of interest - what do you think?***

**A.** You are right - there is a conflict of interest because the person who countersigns is the person who actually takes the assessment decision. So they cannot have taken the assessment decision and then be the person who quality assures it - IQAs can never quality assure their own assessments. In this situation you will need to identify and possibly buy in another suitably qualified and experienced IQA. Whoever ultimately does the IQA must meet



the requirements (which can be found in the Qualification Handbook) to internally quality assure the qualification and be a legitimate, approved member of the qualification team. So you would need to send in a CU form to have the new IQA added to your centre team and your QC would need to see their CV etc. If all is in order then - yes - they can carry out the IQA sample after the assessment and countersigning has been done. Also it is good practice for the countersigner (the original IQA) to act as a mentor to support and guide the assessor candidate.

