
Internal Quality Assurance Policy

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5.2	10	Section 9.4, minor changes to allow for different types of BHS Approved Centres to deliver assessments.	15.04.2025
	16	Added medical information to the information required for a candidate under 18	
	17	Added accuracy and quality of feedback to IV activity	
	23	Update to PDQ IQA activities	

Please note: This document is uncontrolled once printed. Please check with the BHS Education Team for the most up to date version.

1. Introduction

The British Horse Society (BHS) is committed to making sure all its activities are conducted safely, fairly, transparently, objectively and free from bias. Ensuring a quality and professional service is provided. Arrangements for the effective application of internal quality assurance is integral to this.

The BHS is an Approved Centre for British Horse Society Qualifications (BHSQ), a regulated awarding organisation. As a result, we are regularly monitored according to their processes and quality assurance frameworks. An awarding organisation, or regulator, may wish to look at any aspect of our assessment process at any time. Therefore, the BHS may need to ask all those involved with assessment to provide information at any time.

This document aims to provide understanding of the processes that take place to ensure the BHS Education Team provide a quality service to all.

2. Scope and applicability

This policy applies to all areas of business delivered by the BHS Education Team, which include:

- Non-regulated qualifications awarded by the BHS. For example, Stage 1, Ride Leader, Coaching4All, BHSI and Fellowship qualifications
- Regulated qualifications delivered by the BHS Education Team and awarded by BHSQ. For example, Level 2 (Stage 2), Level 3 (Stage 3) and Level 4 (Stage 4) qualifications

This policy also applies to the regulated Personal Development qualifications, delivered by the Changing Lives Through Horses Team and awarded by BHSQ (Appendix 1).

This policy is for:

- Candidates
- Assessors
- Internal Quality Assurers
- BHS approved assessment centres and their workforce
- Trainers
- BHS employees
- Others, as relevant.

3. Purpose and objectives

This policy provides detailed information about how the BHS and the BHS Education and Changing Lives Through Horses Teams will assure the quality of its qualifications and assessments which they deliver. This policy will explain the multitude of interlinking policies and practices that are applied to ensure the service that BHS delivers is professional, safe and effective.

This document will:

- Define internal quality assurance.
- Explain the BHS's approach to managing internal quality assurance.
- Outline all stages of a user journey where quality assurance is implemented.
- Explain our responsibilities to ensure effective delivery that meets expectations of learners, the workforce, employers and our awarding organisation and its regulators.
- Explain the processes that take place to ensure a good quality learner experience with the BHS.

This policy signposts to other BHS and BHSQ policies, where relevant. Policies that relate to the delivery of BHS assessments are available on the [BHS website](#). If there is a policy or document not available that you would like to read, please contact the BHS Education Team. Some policies are internal only documents and may not be shared externally.

Some specific information, such as risk ratings or sampling strategy are not included in this document as this can change at any time.

4. Terms and definitions

Internal quality assurance is a large umbrella term concerned with monitoring the user journey throughout their time undertaking a qualification or course with the BHS. Internal quality assurance also includes monitoring the quality of delivery to ensure a smooth, enjoyable and customer friendly service.

Internal Verification (IV) is an internal quality assurance activity which monitors the assessment process and assessment decisions to ensure assessment is valid, authentic, sufficient, fair, reliable and consistent.

An **Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)** is contracted to the BHS to carry out internal quality assurance activities.

An **assessor** is contracted to the BHS to make assessment decisions at BHS assessments. A **Lead Assessor** is an Assessor with additional responsibilities to manage the delivery of the assessment day.

Approved assessment centre is any location where an assessment delivered by the BHS Education Team is taking place.

Learner is anyone training for a BHS assessment. During the assessment process the learner is referred to as a **candidate**.

Trainer is used to describe any professional supporting a learner to train for BHS/BHSQ qualifications and prepare for their assessment. This could be, but is not limited to, BHS Accredited Professionals or BHS Approved Riding School workforce.

British Horse Society Qualifications (BHSQ) is the awarding organisation for the British Horse Society. They are recognised and regulated by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in England, SQA

Accreditation in Scotland, Qualifications Wales (QW) and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland.

External quality assurance is conducted by BHSQ to monitor BHS delivery, ensuring compliance with statutory regulation. External quality assurance is conducted by an **External Quality Assurer (EQA)** who is contracted to BHSQ.

5. The BHS's approach to internal quality assurance

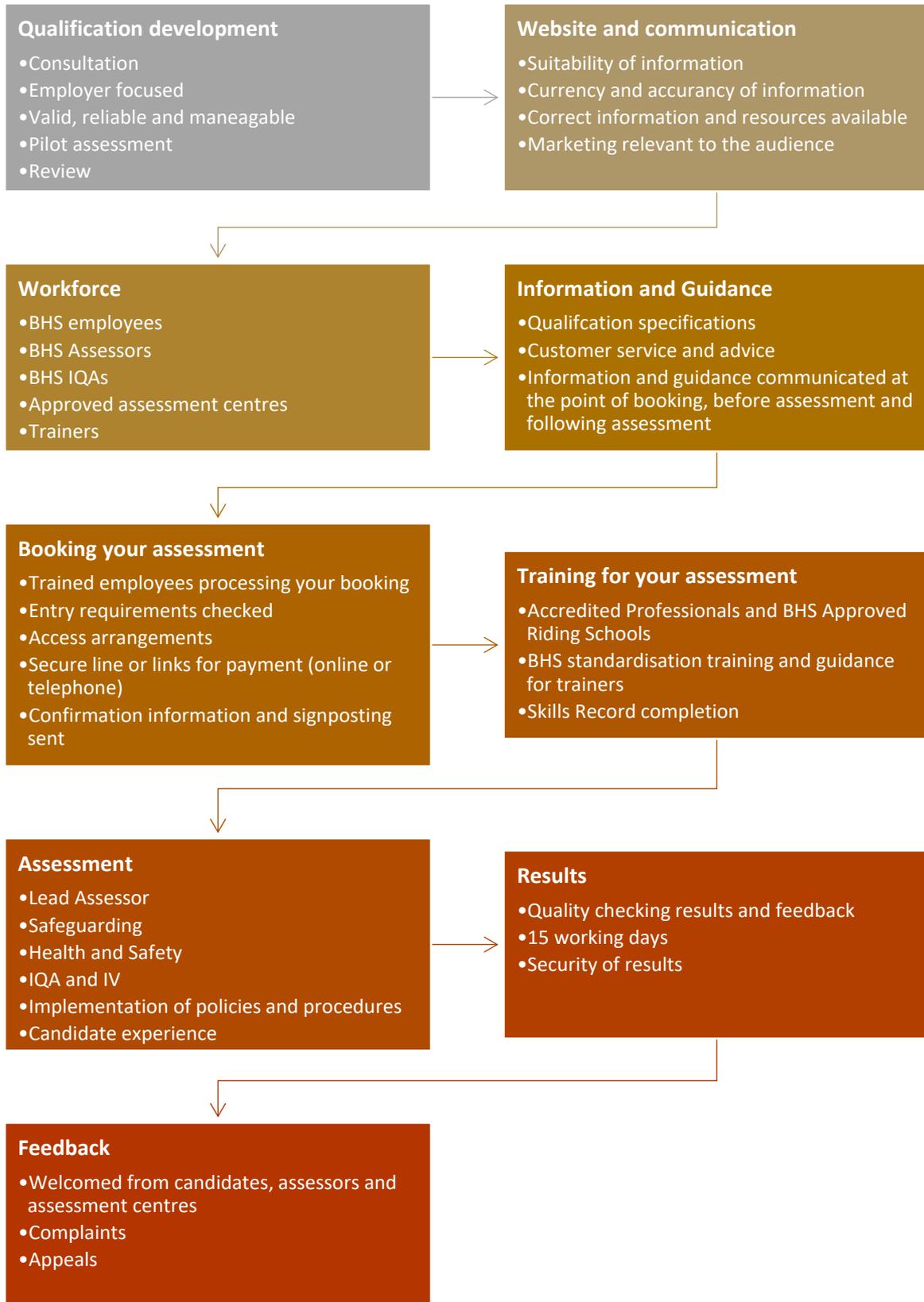
The BHS is committed to ensuring a safe and quality experience for all stakeholders in the delivery of BHS Education activities. We strive to provide an excellent service to our stakeholders to support the equine industry appropriately.

Internal quality assurance aims to maintain the consistency and accuracy of assessments and ensures continual development of our resources, working practices, processes and procedures. We implement a robust internal quality assurance plan to:

- Ensure candidates receive an excellent experience at all stages of their journey with us.
- Demonstrate that assessments are valid, authentic, reliable and sufficient to meet the specified outcomes.
- Promote standardisation within the assessment process.
- Encourage a fair and reliable assessment environment.
- Monitor the workforce, understand challenges and implement development where required.
- Meet and exceed the requirements placed upon the BHS by:
 - BHSQ and qualification regulators
 - Candidates
 - Approved assessment centres
 - Employers
 - Partner organisations
- Provide a continuous check on the consistency and quality of delivery.
- Keep accurate records and provide a clear audit trail.

6. Quality assurance timeline plan

This plan identifies the stages of quality assurance: Further information on each stage is provided from section 7.



7. Qualification development

The BHS Education Development Team follow the guidelines set out in the *BHSQ Qualification Development Policy* and *BHSQ Qualification Review Policy* for all regulated and non-regulated qualifications.

Qualification development is carefully planned to include consultation within the industry to ensure BHS and BHSQ qualifications are fit for purpose and support employment in the equine industry. This process underpins the aims of BHS and BHSQ qualifications; to support the industry to upskill and develop the workforce according to the skills, knowledge and understanding required for a current and sustainable workforce.

Qualification development will include consultation with industry and may include a pilot assessment or assessments, to ensure qualifications that are:

Valid – the assessment can provide evidence against all assessment criteria outlined in the specification.

Reliable – the qualification is consistent in its assessment and results.

Manageable – it can feasibly be assessed against the parameters (time, resources, facilities) and appropriate in demand on candidates as required in the qualification specification.

Once live, qualifications are then subject to review to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The timing of qualification review may be based on:

- Candidate uptake
- Candidate feedback and complaints
- Workforce feedback (BHS employee, assessor, IQA and assessment centre feedback)
- BHSQ EQA feedback
- Employer feedback
- Developments and updates in industry
- BHS decision
- Commercial considerations

The *BHSQ Qualification Development Policy* and *BHSQ Qualification Review Policy* are available to read on the [BHSQ website](#).

8. Website and communication

The BHS is required to provide information to a wide range of stakeholders including candidates, trainers and training providers, assessors, BHSQ, and regulators.

We regularly review our website to ensure it's suitable, current and correct for our customers. We also provide dedicated 'closed' areas of the website and other secure platforms to ensure correct communication, documents and resources are provided to the following groups for the delivery of BHS and BHSQ qualifications:

- Assessors and IQAs
- Approved assessment centres
- Trainers (BHS Accredited Professionals)

- BHSQ

We utilise direct and indirect forms of marketing to promote and build awareness of the BHS and our education offer. Campaigns are reviewed before launch to ensure accuracy and suitability for the audience. Examples of such are our social media channels, PR, content marketing such as our member's magazine *British Horse* or other equine publications (indirect), e-news, email communication and print or online adverts (direct).

9. BHS workforce recruitment and training

The Society is committed to recruiting the right individuals in the right roles with the right tools to be able to do their job effectively. The BHS provides training and guidance to ensure the workforce supporting the learner journey provides the highest quality experience.

9.1 BHS employees

Employees are selected based on their suitability for the role and recruitment is based on fair and equitable practice for recruitment, outlined in the *BHS's Recruitment and Selection Policy*.

BHS Education Team employees have an induction period which includes appropriate training to be able to carry out their role effectively. In addition to specific skills training, this induction also includes information on:

- BHS and BHS Education Team policies and procedures
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- GDPR
- BHS qualifications (professional and recreational)
- The role of BHSQ and regulators
- BHS assessments
- Qualification development and maintaining currency in the industry

Topics such as GDPR and BHS Education Team policies and procedures are revisited regularly when required to maintain currency.

The Society implements an objectives and performance feedback review cycle, which includes annual setting and six-monthly reviewing of objectives. Line managers also carry out regular one-to-one meetings in between the formal review periods to monitor performance and implement support as required. Regular informal and formal team meetings provide updates and training.

BHS employees are encouraged to observe assessment strategy, the application of policies and procedures and quality assurance in practice at assessments. This supports the employee's development and understanding of the impact of their work at assessments.

9.2 BHS assessors

The recruitment, training and deployment, roles and responsibilities of assessors and Lead Assessors is outlined in the *External Workforce Recruitment and Deployment Policy*.

The BHS assures currency of BHS assessors and quality of their delivery by annual Continuous Professional Development, regular standardisation training and support from IQAs as required. Standardisation training supports the validity, reliability and manageability of assessments; ensuring assessors are interpreting assessment criteria consistently and requiring the same level of achievement from candidates. Standardisation training may include (but not limited to):

- Standardisation / best practice
- Changes and updates in policies, procedures and processes
- Customer service
- Providing feedback to candidates
- Internal quality assurance strategy
- Internal quality assurance activity and actions
- External quality assurance activity and actions
- Feedback from candidates, assessors and assessment centres
- Development sessions

Standardisation training will be held every three years or when a need has been identified.

In addition to direct training, BHS assessors are issued with *Assessor Guidance* and *BHSQ Essential Guide to Assessment of BHSQ Qualifications*. Documents produced to support strong assessment practice.

BHS assessors must agree to ensure their first aid and safeguarding training remain up to date (as per the training provider guidance). They will also have the required Criminal Record check as per the guidelines set by the UK Nation or country of residence they live in. For example, in England and Wales this is a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which is renewed every three years. All BHS assessors agree to terms and conditions set out in the *BHS Education Contractor Agreement*.

Assessors will be sampled accordingly as outlined in the IQA sampling strategy (section 14.1). If internal quality assurance activity raises concerns against an assessor this will be picked up individually and an action plan implemented where necessary.

Key actions from standardisation training or sampling activities will be recorded and retained for future review, as required. Actions will also inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

9.3 BHS Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)

The role of the IQA is to monitor and evaluate how assessors, Approved assessment centres and the BHS Education Team deliver assessments in practice to highlight areas of development and/or good practice. All IQAs must have the necessary occupational experience, BHS assessor experience and minimum equine qualifications of BHSI or equivalent (where technical equestrian knowledge is required). It is desirable for IQAs to hold internal quality assurance or internal verifier qualifications.

In general, IQAs must:

- Have sufficient experience as a BHS assessor
- Have sufficient occupational expertise in the areas which they will be internally quality assuring to enable them to make valid judgements about assessment decisions
- Maintain their occupational competence in a way that can be demonstrated through a CPD record that relates to the equine industry
- Attend BHS IQA training, delivered by the BHS (a non-regulated course)

In addition to the mandatory assessor training, the BHS and, when necessary with support from BHSQ, will deliver initial training for IQAs with follow up sessions to update IQAs and ensure currency. Updates will be held every three years or when a need has been identified.

All BHS IQAs agree to terms and conditions set out in the *BHS Education Contractor Agreement*.

9.4 Approved assessment centres

All BHS Approved assessment centres are BHS Approved Centres and adhere to detailed assessment criteria set out in the relevant *BHS Approved Centre Criteria* guidance document. The BHS Approved Centre process is managed by the BHS Approved Centre Team. The BHS Education Team and Approved Centre Team have regular meetings to discuss issues, concerns and areas of good practice. If concerns are raised, the BHS Education Team may liaise with the BHS Business Support Managers to deliver an action plan for the centre.

To maintain high quality standards, safety, welfare (including horses) and candidate experience at BHS Assessments, all BHS Approved Riding Schools (within the UK and Ireland) will have, as a minimum (this list is not exhaustive):

- A current Local Authority License and current Liability/Employers Insurance
- Policies/plans implemented for; Health and Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding, emergency planning for staff, volunteers, clients and horses, accident reporting procedure
- Written risk assessments for; preventative fire risk assessment (with clearly visible and legible Fire Procedures in place), COSHH, working activities, generic activities within the centre
- A suitable experienced person with the knowledge and competence to ensure horse care and welfare needs are being met
- Healthcare records for horses, such as dentistry, veterinary, farrier are maintained
- A biosecurity plan
- An equine and human first aid kit
- Clean toilets with handwashing facilities
- A designated office or reception area to welcome and greet candidates
- Refreshments available
- A riding arena of minimum 20mx40m with a safely constructed perimeter fence
- Equipment and tack in good repair and safe to use with regular inspections recorded
- A centre protocol for accident/incident management. First Aid coverage, First Aid kits and an accident reporting procedure

- All required centre staff and volunteers have the required Criminal Record checks (in accordance with the guidelines for their country)
- There is at least one trained centre staff member appointed as the Centre Safeguarding Officer and the centre has implemented a Centre Safeguarding Policy.

The further approval and training of approved assessment centres is outlined in the *Assessment Centre Approval and Allocation Policy*.

The BHS Education Team further support Approved assessment centres with the delivery of assessments by providing:

- Assessment centre guidance document
- Assessor visits or calls to provide guidance on the smooth running of assessments, requirements etc
- Assessor reports after each assessment providing feedback for the centre with further guidance and support including action plans depending on actions raised
- Training videos to inform the workforce on the demands of the assessment delivery
- Video call coffee mornings as/when required to provide necessary updates or training
- Updates via the Approved Centre e-news.

There may be exceptions to the requirement of BHS Approved Riding School status, these will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. An example of this is for BHSI Horse Care and Welfare assessments. These assessments are held at establishments that may not be a licensed or BHS Approved Riding School. The type of horse required at these assessments may require outsourcing via centres that specialise in areas such as rehabilitation, competition or rescue. In all cases where Approved Riding School status is not required, the BHS Education Team will inspect the centre as part of the initial approved assessment centre process to ensure the level of care, welfare and safety is aligned to the usual requirements.

9.5 Trainers

To support candidates receiving quality training from appropriate trainers we recommend that candidates train with a BHS Accredited Professional Coach or BHS Approved Riding School. This ensures that the coach has qualifications, first aid, safeguarding, Criminal Record check (as per their country's guidance) and has necessary insurance in place. Coaches based outside of the UK and Ireland may have different requirements.

We also provide resources and training for BHS Accredited Professional Coaches or BHS Approved Riding Schools, such as:

- Practical standard setting days/events
- Training and information videos
- Skills Record guidance (for signing the Skills Record)
- Updates via e-news and closed Facebook groups

The BHS recommends trainers attend a practical standard setting event every three years.

Trainers who train learners for Stage 4 assessments must attend a compulsory Stage 4 Trainers induction call which goes through the process for signing off trainer endorsements and standard setting. A 'trainer guide' is also provided for trainers.

10. Assessment booking

Trained employees confirm assessment bookings. Prompts on booking forms enable consistent questioning ensuring the learner is directed to the appropriate guidance, qualification, assessment, assessment centre and so on. Learners are also referred to policies and procedures, with specific mention to assessment terms and conditions, access arrangements, skills record, how to train, privacy policy and cancellation period. If the learner is under 18 years old, contact details of a parent/carer is required, as well as emergency contact details for the assessment day.

At the point of booking, entry requirements are checked against the assessment requirements. Learners are advised appropriately at this point if they do not meet the entry criteria and how to meet this (for example, further qualifications, direct entry).

This process allows the necessary quality assurance checks to be made reducing the risk of learners being booked to assessments or registering for qualifications incorrectly. BHS Education Team employees also support the learner to understand how to prepare for their assessment and signpost to necessary information.

Booking confirmation and further signposting is then sent, as detailed below.

11. Information and guidance

The BHS provide information and guidance to the candidate upon registering for a qualification, approaching their assessment and following their assessment. Our communication plan is:

- Within one working day of booking an assessment/registering for a qualification the candidate receives an email with the following information and signposting (this email is also sent to the candidate's parent/carer if they are under 18):
 - Booking confirmation letter (confirming the date of assessment, assessment centre address and contact details, unit/s booked, name on certificate, BHS Education Team contact details, candidate number, Skills Record information, how to train)
 - [Booking terms and conditions](#)
 - Qualification specification
 - [Assessment information](#) (terms and conditions, dress guidance, skills record information, training for your assessment)
 - [Education policies](#)
 - [Applying for access arrangements](#)
 - Internal quality assurance statement
 - Signposting to funding opportunities
 - Any other information specific to the assessment they have booked

- Three weeks before the assessment date, the candidate is sent by email:
 - Good luck message
 - Start time of assessment and recommended arrival time
 - What to bring to your assessment
 - Expectations on arrival (sign in, check ID, emergency contacts, and so on)
- Within 15 working days after the assessment, the candidate is sent by email:
 - Provisional results
 - Provisional feedback from assessor
 - The process to confirm results
 - When to expect any certificates due
 - Opportunity to provide feedback on the assessment
- Within 28 days after the assessment, the candidate is sent by email:
 - Confirmation of assessment result
 - How we may share results with third parties
 - Signposting to further progression and development (next steps).

Trained employees are on hand to answer any queries via phone or email providing consistent messaging and directing the candidate/enquirer to the appropriate solution.

12. Training for assessment

Refer to section 9.5 for information on standardisation and training of trainers.

The BHS may deliver training, standardisation days or workshop type events. However regular practical training with a BHS Accredited Professional or within a BHS Approved Riding School is recommended.

The BHS have also produced training videos for the Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 assessments. The BHS have also recorded specific training videos on practical elements such as 'How to clean a bridle', 'How to put on a stable rug', 'How to take a horse's temperature', and so on. We also provide a BHS series of 'Complete Horsemanship' manuals available for each qualification from Stage 1 to Stage 4.

A compulsory element of training is completion of the Skills Record. It is an integral part of the assessment process. Compulsory sign offs may include:

Ready for assessment – a declaration for each unit signed by the trainer to confirm the learner is ready to be put forward for the assessment.

Coach endorsement (Stage 2 and 3 only) – an assessment against some practical skills which cannot be assessed on the assessment day.

Trainer endorsement (Stage 4 only) – an assessment against specific assessment criteria covering the breadth of the syllabus that cannot be assessed on the assessment day.

A Skills Record must be signed off by an Accredited Professional or coach within a BHS Approved Riding School. The coach will need to be qualified at least one level above the level they are signing off.

The trainer should, through professional discussion and practical assessment, make an initial assessment of the learner's skills and knowledge. The purpose of this is to:

- Ensure the learner is choosing the most appropriate qualification and level
- Identify whether the learner requires direct entry into higher level qualifications
- Identify whether the learner requires any additional support or reasonable adjustment during the training or assessment
- Identify the learning programme in order to sign-off the skills record so the learner can progress to the BHS assessment
- Suggest a timescale and timetable for training leading to assessment

Quality control of Skills Records

At Stage 2, Stage 3 and Stage 4 assessments (before the assessment begins) the assessor will check the 'ready for assessment', 'coach endorsement' and/or 'trainer endorsement' relevant for the unit/s booked. The assessor will record the name and membership number of the coach. If the skills record has not been completed the candidate will not be able to take the assessment. The Skills Records are sampled by the BHS Education Team according to the skills record sampling strategy. If it is found that the trainer is not eligible to sign the skills record necessary actions will be taken to inform the coach and, if necessary the candidate. The candidate may be asked to resubmit a completed skills record signed by an eligible trainer.

At Stage 4 assessments, the candidate will carry out a 'viva' to confirm knowledge and understanding of the learning outcomes covered via the trainer endorsement. The candidate may also be reassessed on any knowledge criteria following the assessment but prior to certification.

13. Quality assurance at assessments

Assessment preparation

Assessment dates are requested by the assessment centre. These are approved by the BHS Education Team based on demand, whether the centre is approved to host the assessment requested and based on any outstanding actions raised by previous assessments. Assessment dates are approved and listed for bookings with a minimum of 8-10 weeks' notice. On occasion assessment dates may be confirmed between 6-8 weeks' notice if the assessment centre has internal candidates or an established wait list.

The assessment team is allocated by the BHS Education Team. Risk rating of assessors, experience and any outstanding actions are reviewed before confirming assessors. An IQA may be selected.

A Lead Assessor will be assigned to each assessment. Their role is to manage the smooth running of the assessment, oversee customer service, maintain health and safety and support assessors when required.

Four weeks before the assessment, the BHS Education Team produce a draft timetable which is shared with the Lead Assessor and assessment centre. This timetable ensures the correct assessor to candidate ratio and appropriate timings to allow sufficient time for assessment. The Lead Assessor can liaise with the assessment centre and adapt the timetable if required.

At three weeks before the assessment (four weeks for international assessments), the assessment is closed for bookings. The candidate bookings are verified for the required pre-requisites. The assessment documentation is prepared and sent to the Lead Assessor and assessment centre via email. Assessment documents include:

- Candidate list
- Contact details for the assessment centre and assessor team
- Timetable
- Report to identify under 18s, and their emergency contact details

Access arrangements for candidates are emailed to the Lead Assessor upon receipt of the approved application. Additional paperwork such as observation sheets, accident report forms, risk assessment, emergency contact forms are sent to the Lead Assessor via post.

Three weeks before the assessment date, the remaining assessors (if applicable) are sent the candidate list and the timetable for the assessment.

The Lead Assessor is responsible for liaising with the other assessors in the team and the assessment centre before the assessment. At this point, if any conflicts of interest are declared the Lead Assessor should manage this appropriately following guidance set out in the *Conflict of Interest for BHS Education Policy*.

The assessment

The BHS aims to provide the best experience to candidates as possible. All aspects of assessment delivery are planned for, monitored and reviewed as detailed below. The assessment is managed by the BHS Education Team and their assessors.

The candidate will be assessed on the skills, knowledge and understanding by the assessor. Consistent and standardised methods of assessment will be applied which may include one or more of the following:

- Coach Endorsement
- Observation
- Professional discussion
- Oral questioning
- Presentation
- Viva
- Debate

The assessment method used is listed within the qualification specification.

Health, safety and safeguarding

The BHS has a commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing for candidates, assessors and all others involved in assessments, as underpinned in the *BHS Health and Safety Policy*.

The BHS fully accepts its legal and moral obligation under The Childrens Acts (1989) and (2004)* and safeguarding adult legislation* to provide a duty of care to protect all children and adults at risk and safeguard their welfare,

irrespective of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and socio-economic background.

*Nation specific safeguarding legislation and guidance is also adhered to.

As well as BHS specific policies *BHS Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy* and *BHS Safeguarding Adults Policy*, the BHS also fully adopts the British Equestrian Safeguarding Policies: *Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People)* and *Safeguarding Policy (Adults at Risk)*.

Further information can be found at the [British Horse Society](#) and [British Equestrian](#) websites.

At assessment, robust procedures are implemented:

- Assessments are only held at BHS Approved Centres, or suitable equivalent
- Risk assessments are checked and completed by the Lead Assessor. The risk assessment reflects specific requirements for children and adults at risk where applicable
- All assessors are current in first aid and safeguarding training
- All assessors have the required Criminal Record check as per the guidelines set by the UK Nation or country of residence they live in
- Candidate to follow the [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment](#) process if they (or a member of their support network) wishes to request any access arrangements for a BHS assessment, or want the BHS assessor/s to be informed of any additional support that may be required on the day
- Candidates are required to 'sign in' and 'sign out' of the assessment centre
- Emergency contact details are collected for candidates
- *Accidents at BHS Assessments Policy* followed in the unlikely event of an accident
- Accidents and near misses reported, reviewed and monitored
- Appropriate signage is in place to direct candidates to the welcome room and assessment areas
- Assessors are identified by a name badge
- All workforce (this includes assessors, IQAs and any other observers) are introduced before the assessment begins and a briefing is given informing candidates of the timetable of the day, what to expect and who to report to should they have a concern, and welcoming any questions from candidates.
- Candidates with access arrangements or reasonable adjustments are acknowledged and spoken to confirming the additional support in place for their assessment
- Online assessments are recorded
- Implementing internal quality assurance which looks at health and safety on IQA visits

In addition to the guidance and procedures set out above, we safeguard candidates under 18 during assessments by:

- Consent* from a parent or carer is given for the assessment booking and assessment information is also sent to the parent or carer following confirmation of booking
- Emergency contact details and medical information is required for candidates before the assessment day
- We recommend that candidates below the age of 18 years of age are accompanied by a responsible adult who remains at the assessment centre for the duration of the assessment
- The Lead Assessor is made aware who on the assessment is under 18

*Parent/guardian consent is not required for students taking an assessment at a college, school or other education provider where they are enrolled. Responsibility will defer to the education provider and the safeguarding measures they have in place for their own students.

Conflicts of Interest

The BHS has a process in place to ensure assessors do not assess where a conflict of interest has been identified, or where this is unavoidable, to mitigate any risk, to ensure consistency. The assessor team, this includes any Assessor Mentor present, will declare any conflicts of interest. These are managed by the Lead Assessor and reported to the BHS Education Team following guidance in the *Conflict of Interest Policy for BHS Education Activities*.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

The BHS has a process in place for learners to request support at their assessment. This is explained in the *Access to Fair Assessment, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy for BHS Assessments*.

Any access arrangement must be requested and approved by the BHS Education Team following the timelines in the policy. This ensures the BHS has suitable time to liaise with the required people to review, approve and implement any support.

14. Internal quality assurance process

Quality assurance activities ensure the assessment of the candidate at all stages is valid, authentic, current, reliable and sufficient. It upholds the integrity of the BHS qualification and assessment system. It also ensures the candidate receives a thorough and fair assessment with excellent customer service provided throughout. An IQA may observe and report on some, or all of the following:

Internal quality assurance – customer service, implementation of BHS Education policies, processes and procedures, health, safety and welfare of candidates and horses, safeguarding, facilities, timetabling, presentation of assessors, assessment centre welcome and signage, BHS guidance provided to assessment centres and assessors, BHS information and guidance provided to candidates.

Internal verification – accuracy of assessment, assessor judgments and decisions, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements, recording of assessment activity, accuracy and quality of feedback, effectiveness of assessment materials, assessment equipment, horses at the correct level, management of health, safety and welfare of candidates including safeguarding, Skills Record.

An IQA may also wish to talk to candidates to gather their opinions on their experience.

An IQA may be allocated remotely or retrospectively. The BHS can, at any time, deploy an IQA at planned notice, short notice or without notice. The BHS can, at any time, deploy an IQA to monitor an assessor or assessment centre without notice. This ensures candidate experience is safeguarded at all times.

An IQA may be at an assessment for a full timetable, or part day depending on the requirements of the sampling. For example if the IQA role is specific to sample internal verification only, the IQA may only be at the assessment for a specific time.

14.1 IQA sampling summary

IQAs are deployed at assessments based on an IQA sampling strategy. Internal quality assurance sampling can be random, planned or confirmatory to take account of changes in risk.

Random – a percentage picked out every year to sample at random

Planned – a pre-planned set amount, for example 10% of assessors, that is targeted to sample within a set time frame

Confirmatory – a specific activity based on risk rating (for example a new assessor or assessment centre) or when a complaint has been received.

Sampling is representative of all activities, is based on the 'CAMERA' model and provides evidence of sampling for audit and monitoring purposes. Summative sampling will occur as BHS assessments are summative assessments (end point assessment following a learning programme).

IQA strategy factors	Sampling may include
Candidates	Ethnicity, age, gender, access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, entry route, handling of complaints and appeals
Assessors	Experience, risk rating, feedback from EQA visits, ability across different levels, feedback to candidate, customer service, health and safety, safeguarding, implementation of policies and procedures, plus ability to focus on any identified problem areas when required. Lead Assessor ability to manage the assessment day, if applicable
Methods of assessment	Questioning, observation, demonstration, presentation, Skills Record
Evidence types	Confirmation that evidence is valid, authentic, current, sufficient, plus a focus on any identified problem areas/units when required
Records	All documentation relating to assessments (for example booking records, assessor reports, risk assessment), and assessment feedback to candidates
Assessment centres	Different assessment centres across levels and same assessment centre at different levels, risk rating, plus ability to focus on any identified problem areas when required

The IQA must provide constructive feedback to assessors and the BHS. Identifying areas of good practice, and any areas for improvement. An overall report including any recommended actions is provided in writing to the BHS Education Team. IQA reports are securely stored, and all internal quality assurance activity is fully auditable. BHSQ must be able to see all of the internal quality assurance activity undertaken by the BHS at any time.

The BHS will review all IQA reports and monitor trends. The BHS will review all actions raised and develop appropriate development plans where necessary. Actions will also inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

15. Quality assurance of assessment results

Robust processes are in place to ensure candidates receive the correct results with accurate feedback within a timely manner. Providing feedback is one of many topics covered in standard setting training and all assessors are issued with the *Essential Guide to assessment of BHSQ qualifications* which provides guidance and support for writing feedback.

Results are submitted to the BHS Education Team within three working days of the assessment. Results aim to be processed so candidates can receive provisional results within 15 working days of the assessment. Within this timeframe, the results undergo a quality assurance checking process to identify any concerns. Reasons for a concern may include:

- Assessment documentation/feedback sheets do not match. For example, there is an inconsistency or inconsistencies with the results received from the assessor/s and the feedback given; the results cannot be validated
- A pattern or trend with results flags an issue
- Assessment documentation is missing or incomplete
- IQA activity has flagged an issue
- There was a conflict of interest that was not managed, or not managed accordingly
- EQA activity has flagged an issue
- Accusations of cheating (for example, false identification)
- Malpractice or maladministration (whether suspected or confirmed)

A concern could be raised by:

- A BHS employee processing/checking/quality assuring the results
- The IQA team
- BHSQ
- An assessor or assessment centre employee
- A candidate
- A whistleblower

If a concern is identified the BHS Education Team will follow an appropriate course of action or investigation depending on the nature of the concern. The results will be held until confirmation of assessment result can be determined. To maintain good customer service, the candidates affected will be informed if this process may exceed our 15 working day commitment for sending provisional results.

Following the investigation, if the assessment result can be validated, then the results will be processed. Following the investigation, if the assessment result cannot be validated, the candidate/s affected must have their assessment result processed as 'void' and offered a reassessment, at no cost. BHSQ will be informed if the qualification is regulated.

Depending on the concern and outcome of the investigation, the BHS will comment on all actions raised and develop appropriate development plans where necessary. Actions will also inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

16. Feedback

The BHS welcomes feedback from candidates, the assessment centre and assessors. We are committed to making sure that all our communications and interactions with all who engage with us are of the highest possible standard. We listen to all views and feedback received so that we can continue to improve the Society and the services we offer. We welcome both positive and constructive feedback.

Where concerns are reported these are dealt with promptly by the BHS. This may be in direct consultation with the person or centre reported, or by initiating an internal quality assurance activity at future assessments in order to validate and/or action the concern.

The BHS Education Team have specific *Complaints Policy for Qualifications* and an *Appeals Policy for Qualifications* to follow should a complaint or appeal be decided as the appropriate course of action.

17. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The BHS Education Team are continually looking to improve the quality of service offered whenever opportunities arise. The information gathered from any quality assurance activity is used to inform and enhance quality. The BHS Education Team produce an annual QIP which is reviewed and discussed at fortnightly QIP meetings. A summary of this plan, actions raised and improvements made is reported quarterly to BHSQ. This ensures BHSQ have opportunities to review our QIP and feed into our internal quality assurance activities confirming that internal quality assurance is happening as it should. The BHS Education Team and BHSQ meet quarterly to discuss the QIP.

18. Accredited Professional Coach and Education Development (APCED) Advisory Group

The BHS Education Team receive advice and information from the APCED Advisory Group. Functions of the Advisory Group include:

- To advise on qualification review and development to meet industry needs
- To advise on the internal quality assurance of qualifications
- To advise on the strategy for the increase in uptake of BHS/BHSQ qualifications
- To provide industry insight on issues affecting the sector that could influence qualifications, training and employment
- To provide insight into Government legislation affecting education within the sector across England and devolved nations

Representatives from industry, academic institution, riding schools, and assessors are nominated for the voluntary roles.

The Internal Quality Assurance Process representative supports the IQA activity of the BHS. The IQA representative will meet quarterly with the cohort of IQAs to discuss:

- The IQA process – feedback, what’s working, and suggestions for improvement
- Assessment / assessor trends picked up during IQA visits – positives and strengths
- Assessment / assessor trends picked up during IQA visits – areas for improvement/development. Where could the BHS offer better support?

The Internal Quality Assurance Process representative will report to the BHS Education Team. Advice will be sought from APCED if required on the actions raised. Actions will also inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

The Internal Quality Assurance Process representative will also join with six-monthly QIP meetings and BHSQ meetings to be informed of IQA and EQA feedback.

19. Requirements for record keeping by the BHS

The BHS must maintain internal quality assurance records for audit and monitoring purposes. The BHS also log, review and action recommendations from BHSQ EQA reports. This includes, for each activity:

- IQA/EQA name
- Assessment date, assessment centre and assessment type
- Assessor/s at the centre
- The assessment activity sampled, observations recorded and comments
- Candidates sampled (candidate number or initials)
- Any recommended actions
- Outcome of those actions

These records will be kept for three years, after which they will be disposed of securely.

Records will be maintained securely. Please refer to the BHS Privacy Policy for further information.

Appendix 1: Personal Development Qualifications

This applies to the Personal Development qualifications:

- BHSQ Entry Level 3 Personal Development
- BHSQ Level 1 Personal Development
- BHSQ Level 2 Personal Development

The Personal Development (PD) qualifications are delivered by the BHS Changing Lives Through Horses (CLTH) Team as an optional qualification within the CLTH program.

The process for the method of delivery and assessment is detailed in the Personal Development Qualification Operational Handbook.

CLTH centres, coaches and Lead Coaches

PD qualifications are only delivered and assessed at CLTH Approved centres by CLTH coaches and Lead Coaches. CLTH coaches and Lead Coaches will also deliver the training towards these qualifications. CLTH coaches will all be standardised in the requirements of these qualifications. The following information is available from the CLTH Team:

- The criteria and process for BHS Approved Centres to become a CLTH Approved Centre
- The recruitment, training, roles and responsibilities of CLTH coaches, Lead Coaches, and PD qualifications assessors.

Candidate registration

Learners are registered for a PD qualification via their Lead CLTH Coach. The CLTH Lead Coach will review each participant on the CLTH program for their suitability for PD qualifications. If the Lead Coach recommends a PD qualification for a learner the Lead Coach will discuss this with the participant's commissioning partner (for example, the participant's school) and the participant's parent or carer. Collectively a decision on if a registration for a qualification will be made and at what level. This ensures the learner and their support network are fully informed and engaged throughout the decision making process and that the learner is registered for a qualification suitable for them with the most likely chance of achievement.

Information and guidance for the qualification is passed onto the learner's support network.

Assessors

The occupational expertise of assessors is one of the key factors underpinning valid and reliable assessment. The CLTH Lead Coach, or an alternative suitably qualified and trained person is the Assessor for the purpose of these qualifications and will have responsibility for making assessment decisions.

CLTH Lead Coaches are required to hold minimum qualifications of BHSQ Level 3 Groom (Stage 3) and BHSQ Level 2 Foundation Coaching Riders (or BHS equivalent).

Assessment process

The assessment process includes the following stages:

- Assessment planning
- Collecting and collating evidence
- Judging evidence
- Making assessment decisions
- Assessment recording
- Providing feedback
- Working with the Internal Verifier and External Verifier when required.

Assessment evidence and recording is collated in a portfolio.

Refer to the Personal Development Qualification Operational Handbook for further details on the assessment process.

Internal Quality Assurers

Internal quality assurers will be senior managers within the CLTH team who have attended IQA training with BHSQ and who may have a combination of appropriate BHS and teaching qualifications. As these qualifications are not equine specific, an equine qualification of BHSI or equivalent (as per IQAs for BHS/BHSQ equine qualifications) is not required. The CLTH internal quality assurers will meet each academic term to plan IQA activities and to review practise and policy to ensure a cohesive standardised approach.

Internal Quality Assurance Activities

IQA activity will include a combination of internal quality assurance and internal verification sampling.

- Internal verification of evidence portfolio submitted each school half term. Submission dates for portfolios to be issued to CLTH centres at the start of each academic year. CLTH centres submitting portfolios for the first time will have a 100% IQA sample rate. Subsequent portfolios will be sampled according to ongoing risk rating of assessors. Other centres will be sampled each half term according to ongoing risk rating of assessors.
- Written feedback will be provided to assessors on their submissions within 10 working days of the IV activity.
- Annual one-to-one professional discussion with active PDQ assessors with a quality assurance focus. This may lead to a follow on IQA site visit to CLTH centres actively registering candidates for professional discussion / observation of assessment activity if appropriate.
- Annual standardisation meetings with assessors (that may be virtual) to ensure validity, reliability and manageability of assessments as well as supporting assessors to interpret assessment criteria consistently.
- IQA and EQA records will be kept for 3 years to monitor any trends.

Action planning

- IQA activity will inform a 'plan, do, review' cycle for the administration and delivery of the qualification.

- Any actions identified in IQA activity will be followed up with centres by the CLTH managers and an action plan implemented to support any future submission from the centre.