PADDLE SCOTLAND

# *Quality Assurance & Standardisation Procedures*

November 2025

This document outlines Paddle Scotland's Quality Assurance and Standardisation processes in relation to delivery of all Paddle UK Awarding Body qualifications and awards.

*Where referring to Paddle UK Awarding Body this document will use the terminology of "Awarding Body".


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This policy will be revised as and when necessary / needed in response to updates from Awarding Body, customer and learner feedback or its effectiveness when used in practice. It is also scheduled for review annually in line with Paddle Scotland Policy Review arrangements and Awarding Body requirements.

## Aim and Purpose

Our Quality Assurance and Standardisation aims to ensure that:

- Candidates receive an appropriate standard of training and assessment;
- Providers make accurate and effective assessment decisions;
- Providers delivery aligns with the Awarding Body Educational Philosophy;
- Providers operate within Awarding Body and Paddle Scotland requirements;
- Assessment is fair and consistent, using the Awarding Body standards;
- Internal Verification sampling is robust and effectively implemented;
- Internal Verification processes are reviewed to support continuous improvement.

To achieve this, we:

1. Deliver Provider training;
2. Utilise Internal Verification to ensure assessment standards are being met;
3. Verify Providers personal paddling and rescue competence;
4. Utilise Quality Assurance to ensure provider delivery meets required standards;
5. Have effective policies and procedures that underpin delivery and administration;
6. Use suitably qualified, trained and experienced staff to deliver.

## Definitions

This section provides definitions for the key roles used throughout this document to ensure a clear and consistent understanding

**Candidate**: The person who is undertaking the Awarding body training or assessment course.

**Provider**: A generic term for a person who is delivering the Awarding Body training or assessment course. Includes both Tutors and Assessors.

**Tutor**: A person who is specifically delivering a Awarding Body training course.

**Assessor**: A person who is assessing a Awarding Body qualification.

**Internal Verifier**: A person who is appointed by Paddle Scotland to ensure that assessment decisions made by Assessors are consistent, fair, accurate, and meet national standards for qualifications. They also verify the quality of training and assessment course delivery and decisions to ensure they consistently meet the required standards.

## *Part 1: Provider Training*

We support our team of Providers who deliver Awarding Body Qualifications and Awards through a range of suitable training. This includes for example;

1. Online moderation events, webinars or hot topic events;
2. Face-to-face training, standardisation and community events;
3. New Provider Induction and orientation activities;
4. Role sign-off for aspirant Providers moving to a full role;
5. Online specific eLearning standardisation course;
6. 1:1 activities to support individual needs;
7. Direct Provider correspondence.

The core content of these training activities will typically include:

- Elements of mock (or real) assessment to support understanding of the assessment requirements and promote standardisation across the workforce;
- Activities that support Providers with the delivery of Awarding Body courses, ensuring that these courses meet Awarding Body and Paddle Scotland requirements.

All Providers are required to attend moderation in order to maintain their role. Paddle Scotland Tutor, Assessor, Provider Moderation Requirements provides full details of the specific role requirements.

# Part 2: Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions

Internal Verification is the process of checking that a candidate's performance meets the award requirements and that Assessors are making accurate assessment decisions. Paddle Scotland assigns an Internal Verifier to review candidate evidence and ensure Assessors consistently meet award standards.

The following mechanisms may be used:

- Desk-based sampling of candidates assessment work, venue use and administration;
- Verification of assessment decisions through Internal Verification field visits;
- Verification of assessment decisions utilising video footage obtained during assessment.

## Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy outlines the process for selecting candidate performances and Assessors for verification; the volume of sampling and style of sampling.

Sampling may involve both announced and unannounced field visits or desk-based activity, with planned and random selection of assessment decisions. Assessment tasks may be sampled in full or in discrete elements.

At the start of each annual cycle, sampling priorities are identified to inform the verification schedule. This considers higher risk scenarios and aims to provide balanced coverage of assessment activities. The priorities will include:

- The estimated number of candidates' work to be sampled;
- The ratio of field/video to desk-based verification;
- Specific tasks or activities to be sampled.

To support the planning of Internal Verification, we target areas of higher risk, for example;

- Disciplines and environments not sampled within the previous 3-year cycle;
- Any new disciplines, environments or qualifications;
- Assessment tasks not sampled within the previous 3-year cycle;
- Assessment tasks that have been recently updated;
- Areas of the syllabus where inconsistencies are known;

- Assessors:
    - whose decisions have not been sampled in the past 3-year cycle;
    - who are overdue standardisation training;
    - who were least (and most) active during the previous year;
    - who do not hold a recognised assessing qualification (or APL).

In addition we will:

- Focus on all assessment tasks to provide a holistic overview, unless specific areas of focus have been identified;
- Sample work from candidates of varying age, gender, ethnicity and disability;
- Review and monitor complaints, appeals, fail/success patterns, malpractice, matters of Provider non-compliance, and outcomes of previous Internal Verification or sampling to inform future sampling;
- Avoid verifying the same Assessor repeatedly if assessment decisions are accurate and they are deemed low risk.

In some cases it may be necessary for the Delivery Centre Manager to insist that an Assessor has a field visit on their next course, or to increase the amount of sampling applied to a specific Assessor. This is likely if they have not had a field visit and haven't attended required standardisation activity; or where a specific concern has been identified.

See Appendix 1: Paddle Scotland Internal Verification Sampling Plan (2025/2026) for detail and further information regarding individual provider Risk Rating.

## Internal Verification Field Visits

Assessors are normally given at least two weeks' notice prior to a field visit. This communication will identify the focus of the visit and share a copy of the report form to be used. All Assessors should be aware that unannounced visits may also occur, these will be notified 24-48 hours ahead.

Field visits provide an opportunity for;

1. Internal Verification of assessment decisions;
2. Standardisation training;
3. Support;
4. Collection of video evidence;

5. Quality Assurance.

**Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions**: During a field visit it is normal for the Internal Verifier to select a sample of candidates' assessment activity. Typically, dual assessments, observation of Assessor questioning/discussion with the candidate, and discussion with candidates is used to support the Internal Verification process.

**Standardisation Training**: Standardisation is inherent in the process of the Internal Verification of assessment decisions. Field visits usually provide an excellent opportunity for the Assessor and Internal Verifier to discuss assessment standards and the qualification requirements.

**Support**: The visit is an opportunity for the Assessor to identify any aspects of assessment that they would like support with, and to influence the selection of assessment methods/tasks and specific candidates.

**Collection of Video Evidence**: Paddle Scotland is required to submit video footage of candidates' performance to the Awarding Body as part of the external verification process. Candidates consent to this at the point of registration. Field visits provide an opportunity for this to be collected.

**Quality Assurance**: Ensuring that the assessment is delivered in accordance with the wider Awarding Body and Paddle Scotland requirements.

It is important that the Internal Verifier is introduced to all staff, candidates and others involved in the assessment. Field visits should be seen as supportive aiming to aid the development of Assessors. Internal Verifiers will, at all times, remain mindful of their effect on the candidates and do their utmost to avoid any negative impact.

Internal Verification field visits are undertaken by an Internal Verification Officer with occupational competence based on the sample identified for verification.

## Capture of Video Footage

During the Internal Verification process, Internal Verifiers and/or Assessors may be required to capture video footage. This is normally for;

1. The purposes of standardisation - Video footage may be used for the purpose of verification and standardisation. In these instances it will be viewed by Paddle Scotland and/or Awarding Body Verifiers. Candidates will be named.

2. The purpose of Assessor training - Video footage may be used for the purposes of Assessor training and standardisation. In these instances it will be viewed by

Assessors during Paddle Scotland delivered training. Candidates will not be named.

Candidates give consent for this at the point of registration. For candidates under 18, the young person's parent/guardian will also have granted their consent.

Assessors may be asked to collect video footage of candidate's performance to submit for Internal Verification purposes. A clear brief will be provided regarding expectations.

## Evaluating Performance

The main aim of Quality Assurance and Standardisation is to support Assessors to ensure the quality, consistency and fairness of assessment decisions. As part of this process the Internal Verifier will confirm if practice met the required standards and identify any 'required actions'.

If 'required actions' are identified these will be clearly defined within the Internal Verification report and must be agreed by the Paddle Scotland Delivery Centre Manager. It is the intention that 'required actions' are viewed as reasonable and fair by the Provider, having the objective of supporting best practice. It is also important that there is consistency with 'required actions' throughout Internal Verification and Quality Assurance sampling.

In cases where the Internal Verification process uncovers that an Assessor has breached the conditions of their Provider Service Agreement these will be dealt with separately by the Paddle Scotland Delivery Centre Manager.

## General Guidance for Internal Verifiers

Internal Verification practice should follow these general principles;

- All actions should be in keeping with the Paddle UK Educational Philosophy;
- The candidate is the focus of our Internal Verification. Any actions taken should not adversely affect the candidate, unless essential to safeguard the integrity of the assessment or the safety of those involved
- If the Internal Verifier needs to 'step in' to support the Assessor, this should be done sensitively and the Internal Verifier should 'step out' at the earliest opportunity;
- The Internal Verifier needs to be prepared (and competent) to go where the assessment goes and be in a position to observe and interact with the Assessor throughout the visit;

- The assessment must be cancelled if the Internal Verifier feels the integrity of the assessment is at risk and they are not in a position to complete the assessment safely or without disadvantage to the candidate.

## Reporting and Recording Processes

The Internal Verifier must record their written feedback to the Assessor on the relevant Internal Verification report form and return this to the Assessor within 7 working days of the Assessor's submission of candidate results (or within 7-days of the conclusion of Awarding Body verification if completed). The Assessor should be given the opportunity to comment on the report; any comments are then recorded or amendments made if appropriate. Records of Internal Verification are stored securely by Paddle Scotland and are kept for no more than 4-years.

If the course has been identified for Awarding Body external verification, certification will be delayed until this has been completed. In these cases it is imperative that the Assessor and Paddle Scotland Internal Verification are prompt in completing the end of course administration in order to minimise delays to candidate certification.

## External Verification

BCAB conducts sampling of candidates' work for all regulated qualifications. The main purpose of Awarding Body sampling is for Awarding Body to ensure national standards are being adhered to in producing valid and reliable qualifications, as well as identifying good practice whilst supporting Delivery Centres and their Assessors in making valid, reliable and accurate assessment decisions.

Awarding Body will sample a proportion of the assessment decisions that Paddle Scotland have internally verified. This will be in the form of field visits or video footage. For example:

- Video footage requested by Paddle Scotland and collected by the Assessor,
- Video footage collected by an Internal Verifier during an Internal Verification visit,
- Awarding Body during a visit to a course you (the Assessor) are running.

Awarding Body may wish to come and visit you and observe course delivery. The purpose of these visits is to gain access to an assessment and carry out a Quality Assurance review and, if applicable, a sample of assessment decisions made. These visits may be short-notice (48 hours' notice) or longer.

Awarding Body may also attend Paddle Scotland Orientation or Moderation events. The purpose of these visits is for Quality Assurance and/or standardisation.

## Appeals

Providers have the right to appeal any 'required actions' identified from standardisation activities. Given the supportive intent of the process, it is anticipated that in most situations 'required actions' are established through collaboration with the Provider and grounds for appeal are considered an unusual situation. If, however, agreement cannot be reached, a formal appeal can be made to the Delivery Centre Manager within 14-days from when the actions were communicated in writing.

The Delivery Centre Manager is the designated person to deal with an appeal, although may appoint another suitable party to handle the appeal to avoid conflicts of interest. If the Provider still disagrees with the outcome they are able to appeal to the Awarding Body.

Appeals are dealt with in line with the principles and timelines outlined in the Provider Service Agreement Appeal Process.

## Equality and Diversity

All Paddle Scotland employees, Internal Verifiers, Providers and other associates are required to adhere to the principle that no candidate must, at any time, be discriminated against on the grounds of their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, social class, political or religious beliefs and affiliations or any other factors which are irrelevant to assessment.

In conducting assessments and reaching assessment decisions, Assessors and Internal Verifiers will have to ensure that it is only the candidates' skills, knowledge, understanding and competence that have a bearing on their assessment results. Assessment should not be influenced by any other factors. No candidate must be either discriminated against or given an unfair advantage.

## Safeguarding

Paddle Scotland Internal Verifiers are not considered to be regulated work roles, contact with children and vulnerable adults is incidental, therefore Internal Verifiers are not required to be members of the PVG scheme.

Paddle Scotland Internal Verifiers are required to have completed the Sport Scotland Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport Training (CWPS) as a minimum.

## Review Process

The Paddle Scotland Quality Improvement Plan outlines our approach to quality improvement, particularly in relation to the responsibilities for delivery of Awarding Body regulated qualifications.

## The Quality Assurance of Training Course Delivery

Paddle Scotland is piloting Quality Assurance of training course delivery during 2025/2026.

This may include delivery of regulated or non-regulated Awarding Body qualifications or awards (Coach Training, Performance Coach Training, Safety Training, Personal Performance Awards, Support Modules).

During the year we aim to visit a few courses with the aim of developing the systems and processes. The process will be reviewed throughout the year to assess its effectiveness and inform future practice.

# *Part 3: Policies and Procedures*

The following policies and guidance documents underpin the delivery and administration of Awarding Body qualifications and awards:

- Accredited Prior Learning & Recognised Prior Learning Guidance
- Appeals Policy
- Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy
- Complaints
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy (in relation to Awarding Body Qualifications and Awards)
- Data Retention Policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy in relation to Qualification Assessment
- Malpractice and Maladministration
- HR Handbook (inc. Health and Safety Policy)

- Provider Service Agreement
- Provider Terms and Conditions
- Quality Assurance and Standardisation Procedures
- Quality Improvement Plan
- Recruitment and Training of Workforce
- Registration and Certification Guidance for Candidates
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment Policy

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed as part of ongoing improvement efforts and updated as needed in response to feedback from customers, learners, and staff, policy or process changes, any issues or allegations, or their effectiveness when used in practice. Key policies also undergo a formal review and Equality Impact Assessment every three years.

All policies and procedures are reviewed and evaluated regularly by the Delivery Centre staff team and are approved by the Delivery Centre Responsible Officer.

# *Part 4: Team Roles*

## Team Structure

Provider Training, Internal Verification and Quality Assurance activities are delivered by a suitably qualified, trained and experienced workforce. This team is responsible for planning, managing, delivering, implementing and reviewing the following:

- Provider training activities
- Internal Verification
- Quality Assurance activities

Current roles are as follows;

- Noush Duffy, Delivery Centre Manager (reports to CEO);
- Lara Cooper, Lead Internal Verifier (reports to Delivery Centre Manager);
- Adam Burns, Internal Verifier (reports to Delivery Centre Manager).

## National Trainers

Provider training may be outsourced to subject matter experts. A team of National Trainers is typically recruited and deployed for this purpose.

## Staff Competence and Continuous Improvement

This workforce is appropriately sized, qualified and experienced and undertakes relevant annual training as per Awarding Body requirements. Any new members of staff joining the team undertake appropriate induction and training. Internal standardisation meetings take place to discuss protocol, reports, consistency of verification, Provider performance and quality improvement plans.

Paddle Scotland staff engage in continued professional development, training and reviews to enable them to fulfill their duties with due diligence.

## Conflicts of Interest

Given the close-knit nature of the paddlesport community in Scotland, professional and personal conflicts of interest are recognised as both possible and, at times, unavoidable. When such conflicts arise, they are declared and managed in accordance with the following two policies:

1. Paddle Scotland Conflict of Interest Policy: This policy applies to all Paddle Scotland staff, contractors, Directors, Committee members, National Trainers, Internal Verifiers, and Providers when working directly on behalf of Paddle Scotland. Key elements include an annual declaration of interests relevant to each individual's role and maintenance of an up-to-date register of declared interests.

2. Paddle Scotland Conflict of Interest Policy (In relation to Awarding Body Qualifications and Awards): This specific policy provides guidance for all Assessors, Internal Verifiers, and administrators of Awarding Body qualifications. It outlines the procedures to follow when a potential conflict arises—for example, when assessing or verifying an individual with whom the individual has a personal or professional connection.

# *Appendix 1: Paddle Scotland Internal Verification Sampling Plan*

The sampling plan outlines the process for selecting candidate performances and Assessors for verification, the volume of sampling and style of sampling.

The outcome of our annual Awarding Body audit (June 2025) influences how many candidates we sample within our Internal Verification process. Paddle Scotland has an overall Awarding Body Risk Rating of 'Medium Risk', with 'Low Risk' and 'standard control' sampling requirements applied to all qualifications.

### Stand Up Paddleboard Instructor
### Paddlesport Instructor

From 1st July 2025 - 30th June 2026 we are committed to internally verify:

- 5 candidates (2 assessment activities) if our total number of candidates is 100 or less;
- 10 candidates (2 assessment activities) if our total number of candidates is 101 - 249;
- 20 candidates (2 assessment activities) if our total number of candidates is 250+

The selected assessment tasks may be internally verified in their entirety or partially.

At least 50% of Internal Verification will be field or video based, with no more than 50% being desk-based.

Field verification visits will take place during different times of the programme and sample activities taking place. Including for example, personal skills, rescue skills and/or professional standards. No specific areas of focus have been identified. Quality Assurance of course delivery will also take place.

Desk based verification will focus on admin matters, candidate registration, venues, environmental conditions, Learner Development Pack, personal skills and rescue skills assessment. Submission of video evidence may be requested to verify candidate performance in assessment.

In both field and desk based verification the Assessors pre-course information will be reviewed to ensure that it covers all essential elements.

## Coach Award

From 1st July 2025 - 30th June 2026 we are committed to internally verify:

- 5 candidates (2 assessment activities) if our total number of candidates is 100 or less;
- 10 candidates (2 assessment activities) if our total number of candidates is 101 - 249;
- 20 candidates (2 assessment activities) if our total number of candidates is 250+

The selected assessment tasks may be internally verified in their entirety or partially.

At least 50% of Internal Verification will be field or video based, with no more than 50% being desk-based.

Field verification visits will cover a range of coaching, personal skills, or rescue skills. No specific areas of focus have been identified. Quality Assurance of delivery will also take place.

Desk based verification will focus on admin matters, venues, environmental conditions utilised for the assessment, and/or the Assessment Discussion Task. Submission of video evidence may be requested to verify candidate performance in assessment.

In both field and desk based verification the Assessors pre-course information will be reviewed to ensure that it covers all essential elements.

## Performance Coach

From 1st July 2025 - 30th June 2026 we are committed to internally verify 1 in three candidates, i.e.:

- 1 candidate if our total number of candidates is 3 or less;
- 2 candidates if our total number of candidates is 4 - 6;
- 3 candidates if our total number of candidates is 7 - 9.

The selected assessment tasks may be internally verified in their entirety or partially.

At least 50% of Internal Verification will be field or video based, with no more than 50% being desk-based.

Field verification visits will cover a range of coaching, personal skills, or rescue skills. No specific areas of focus have been identified. Quality Assurance of delivery will also take place.

Desk based verification will focus on admin matters, venues, environmental conditions utilised for the assessment, and/or the Coaching Philosophy Task. Submission of video evidence may be requested to verify candidate performance in assessment.

### Awarding Body External Verification

Awarding Body will externally verify 5% of our sample size (i.e. 5% of 20 if the total number of candidates is 250+). This is increased to 100% for Performance Coach.

### Leadership Award Assessment

Paddle Scotland is piloting Internal Verification of assessment for Leadership Awards for the first time during 2025/2026. As a starting point we aim to internally verify 3% of all candidates.

The selected assessment tasks may be internally verified in their entirety or partially.

Field verification visits will cover a range of leadership, personal skills, or rescue skills. No specific areas of focus have been identified. Quality Assurance of delivery will also take place.

Desk based verification will focus on admin matters, venues, environmental conditions utilised for the assessment. Submission of video evidence may be requested to verify candidate performance in assessment.

In both field and desk based verification the Assessors pre-course information will be reviewed to ensure that it covers all essential elements.

The process will be reviewed throughout the year to assess its effectiveness, and inform future practice.

## Specific Risk Rating

Risk Rating ensures that each individual Provider and each qualification has an appropriate amount of Internal Verification. The following principles are applied when reviewing an individual's Risk Rating:

### Paddlesport Instructor

| | |
|---|---|
| Very High Priority | Provider never had an IV visit on a regulated qualification assessment. |
| High Priority | Provider who assessed more than 20 candidates last year (and didn't have a PSI or SUPI IV visit last year)<br>Provider who has never had a PSI IV visit<br>Provider with skills verification overdue<br>National Trainer (who has not had a recent IV field visit) |
| Medium Priority | Provider whose last PSI IV field visit was before 1st July 2022 |
| Low Priority | Provider whose last PSI IV visit was after 1st July 2022 |

### SUP Instructor

| | |
|---|---|
| Very High Priority | Provider never had an IV visit on a regulated qualification assessment. |
| High Priority | Provider who has never had a SUPI IV visit |
| Medium Priority | Provider whose last SUPI IV field visit was before 1st July 2022 |
| Low Priority | Provider whose last SUPI IV visit was after 1st July 2022 |

### Coach Award

| | |
|---|---|
| Very High Priority | Provider never had an IV visit on a regulated qualification assessment. |
| High Priority | Disciplines that have never been verified: Freestyle, WWR, Open Water Canoe, Surf Kayak, Surf Kayak (AW), Sea Kayak (AW).<br>Provider who has never had a Coach IV visit<br>National Trainer (who has not had recent IV field visit) |
| Medium Priority | Disciplines where last verification was before 1st July 2022: OW Canoe (AW), WW Canoe (AW), Slalom, WWK Coach (AW)<br>Provider whose last Coach IV field visit was before 1st July 2022 |
| Low Priority | Disciplines where last verification was after 1st July 2022<br>Provider whose last Coach IV field visit was after 1st July 2022 |

### Leadership and Raft Guide Award

| | |
|---|---|
| High Priority | Paddlesport Leader, Paddlesport Touring Leader, SUP Coastal, SUP Tidal and SUP Sheltered Water Assessment Candidates |
| Medium Priority | White Water Canoe, SUP and Kayak Assessment Candidates |

| | |
|---|---|
| Low Priority | All other disciplines |

Note that any Provider will be categorised as high priority (or ‘very high’) if there are issues of non-compliance, investigations relating to malpractice, maladministration, appeals or complaints initiated. Courses where Conflict of Interest have been identified may also be considered for Internal Verification.