

Guidance on Internal Standardisation

Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3

The internal standardisation process can add significantly to the effectiveness and reliability of the overall assessment system. CCEA will require evidence of internal standardisation processes when schools are required to submit pupils' work for moderation.

What is Internal Standardisation?

The system of statutory assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills within the Northern Ireland Curriculum is based on teacher assessment and so it is important that teachers should have a common and agreed understanding of the performance and achievement of pupils working at particular levels. These levels are detailed within the Levels of Progression and this common understanding is achieved largely through the process of internal standardisation.

Internal standardisation is a collaborative process by which teachers within a school consider work produced by their own pupils and, using pre-determined criteria, reach a common agreement on standards as being typical of work at a particular level. It promotes:

- a common understanding of standards;
- a common understanding of approaches to assessment in that all teachers engaged in making judgments are working in comparable ways to the agreed set of criteria and standards;
- an agreed application of standards when assessing pupil work.

Prior to carrying out the process of internal standardisation, it is likely that many teachers will have participated in agreement trials organised by ELB and CCEA personnel. These agreement trials enable teachers to have a common understanding of the attainment of pupils. The process of agreement trialling is taken a stage further through internal standardisation.

Having undertaken such initial agreement trials, the school will wish to establish its own **process** of internal standardisation.

Value of Internal Standardisation to Schools

There are good reasons for initiating a process for internal standardisation.

- All teachers gain a common agreement and understanding of standards of work through the collective discussion of standards and progression across the school.
- Information is gained for more effective curriculum planning, learning and teaching.
- The process may assist schools with the selection of appropriate materials for inclusion in the school's quality assurance portfolios.

Organisation of Internal Standardisation

The following recommendations may prove helpful when schools undertake the process of internal standardisation. Schools with no previously established method may wish to use all or some of the following advice.

Those schools which have already developed their own internal standardisation procedures may wish to consider the following guidance and adapt their procedures as appropriate.

Process of Internal Standardisation

In the initial stages, the Principal, Senior Management Team and/or the person responsible for co-ordinating assessment in the school should consider the following aspects of the internal standardisation process and who should undertake them. Small schools may wish to undertake this process in cluster groups.

Points for Consideration

It is recommended that all teachers who are required to assess and report on the Cross-Curricular Skills with reference to Levels of Progression (i.e. Years 3-7 at Primary and relevant teachers of Years 8-10 at Post-primary) should be involved in the internal standardisation process. Consideration should be given to developing a whole school approach to internal standardisation to ensure an understanding of standards and consistency of assessment.

It is advisable to focus on **one** aspect at a time throughout the school, for example, Writing, and not to attempt too much on one occasion. It is likely that internal standardisation will be an on-going process and it is advisable that only one aspect of the Cross-Curricular Skill should be the focus of the meeting on any one occasion.

For any single internal standardisation session the following questions should be considered:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who should be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- year groups?- Key Stage groups?- KS3 departments?- staff from special units as appropriate?- whole school?- cluster groups? (for small schools)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What timescales should operate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- duration of the meetings?- frequency of meetings?- number of meetings?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How should participants be grouped?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- pairs?- horizontal groups? (for example, within one year group)- vertical groups? (for example, combining different year groups or Key Stages)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What should be the focus of the meeting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- which Cross-Curricular Skill?- which aspect of the Cross-Curricular Skill?- which levels?

Preparation in Advance of the Meeting

Before the internal standardisation meeting is due to take place, it is important to make certain preparations.

- Ensure that all of those involved are aware of the focus of the meeting.
- Staff should be given sufficient time to select appropriate pieces of work for consideration at the meeting, if using their own samples of work.
- Some samples of work to be considered may also be provided for the staff from, for example, the CCEA exemplification database.
- Work should be collated and/or photocopied to ensure sufficient copies are available for those participating. Alternatively, to avoid photocopying, work may be passed around during the meeting. Some schools may find it more convenient to produce an electronic copy of the piece of work and display it to the whole group using the technologies available.
- Decide how the comments of each group are to be collated/considered.
- Ensure that copies of the Levels of Progression and other supporting materials are available for reference. (For each of the Cross-Curricular Skills you may wish to make available copies of the 'Expansion of the Levels of Progression' documentation. This guidance helps to identify characteristics within the various levels which might assist teachers in reaching agreement on standards in their school).

During the Meeting

This process acknowledges the professional contribution of each teacher.

- Distribute copies of the pieces of work to be considered and any other relevant materials to agreed groupings. The pieces of work may be annotated prior to the meeting (by the teacher providing them) in order to provide additional contextual information. Alternatively the pieces may be annotated at the meeting to reflect aspects of the discussion and decisions made about the pieces.
- You are advised to focus on only one aspect on any one occasion, for example, Writing or Using Mathematics in the context of one or more of the aspects of Knowledge and Understanding.
- The context in which each piece of work was completed should also be available to teachers.
- Working in groups, teachers should discuss each piece of work in relation to the Levels of Progression and assign a level to each.

Identification of progress within a level

For the purposes of identifying progress over time and to make comparisons between different pieces of work, it may be helpful to decide where a piece of work sits within a level. This may be done using a framework which best suits the school, for example, identifying

pieces as being '2.1, 2.2 or 2.3;' or whatever other scale the school may choose to use. This is not a statutory requirement and schools will not be asked to report to CCEA or parents in this way at the end of each key stage.

Feedback within the Meeting

It is important that this session is organised to enable all teachers to contribute their views.

The form that this process takes will depend largely on the number of staff involved. In smaller schools there may be just one group, while in larger schools there may be several groups.

All groups working together should:

- Progress to discussion of the provisional level which each group has already assigned to each piece of work.
- Seek to arrive at an overall consensus about the level.
- Come to a consensus for each piece of work and record the decisions for internal reference purposes, for example to create a 'school Communication portfolio' for reference using the pieces agreed at internal standardisation.

Follow up to Internal Standardisation

Consider the implications for further internal standardisation meetings:

- Is it necessary to re-visit this aspect/skill at a subsequent meeting?
- Is it appropriate to address a different aspect/skill next time?
- What has been learnt about levels of work that could inform future planning?
- If only a small group within a large staff was involved in the internal standardisation meeting, how should the operation and outcomes of this process be disseminated to the other members of staff?