

Case Study

Research: assessment validity & reliability



Challenge

AlphaPlus led a major research project in partnership with City and Guilds, and NCFE, two leading UK vocational awarding organisations (AOs) with large portfolios of qualifications regulated by Ofqual, to research issues relating to the validity of vocational qualifications and answer the following questions:

- How do AOs currently justify the validity of their vocational qualifications (VQs)?
- What evidence to justify the validity of their VQs could AOs reasonably be expected to provide in future to produce a comprehensive and robust validity argument?

Solution

The investigative work concentrated on case studies of validity work around each of four VQs; the focus was to investigate validity processes and show how a VQ validity report might look.

A key frame of reference for the project was Ofqual's argument-based framework for validating assessments. Our research found that, although there was often strong evidence for the validity of a qualification's purpose, evidence on the validity of the assessments themselves was less readily

available. Despite this, all four case study qualifications (and their assessments) were perceived by stakeholders to have high validity.

The final report, published on the [Ofqual website](#), made recommendations on additional evidence which vocational AOs could reasonably be expected to produce in future to support an assessment of their qualifications' validity.

Our results are now a key reference document for all vocational AOs responding to Ofqual's new regulatory requirements for qualification validity.

We also curated and wrote research summaries for Ofqual's 2 year reliability compendium of research covering:

1. Generating evidence on the reliability of results from a selection of national qualifications, exams and other assessments in England through empirical studies.
2. Interpreting and communicating evidence on reliability.
3. Investigating public perceptions of reliability and developing regulatory policy on reliability.



We help make educational assessments better

AlphaPlus is an education service business that specialises in **standards, assessment and certification**. We help our clients design, develop, deploy and evaluate **qualifications** and their **underpinning assessments**.

Our work spans the public and private sectors, schools, colleges, vocational and professional learning.

www.alphaplus.co.uk

[Read more of our case studies here](#)

Our role

- Producing four case studies of validity work
- Writing research summaries of Ofqual's reliability compendium of research
- Our work is now a key Ofqual reference document

<https://tinyurl.com/y7rmbafw>

We make educational assessments better