

Guidance for Equality Standard Assessors (EQSAs)

UK Equality Standard

Resource Pack



The Equality Standard
A Framework for Sport



equalityinsport.org

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1. Introduction

The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport (the Standard) was launched by the UK sports councils in November 2004 to help address the inequalities that exist within the sports sector. It is a framework to guide sports organisations, including: governing bodies of sport, county sports partnerships (CSPs), sports councils and national sports organisations towards achieving equality. A more detailed introduction to the standard can be found in the “process and guidance for sports organisations” document.

This guide is primarily aimed at equality standard assessors (EQSAs). It is part of an overall suite of guidance material containing four other documents:

- Process and guidance for sports organisations;
- Designated support lead (DSL) process and guidance;
- Equality Standard requirements and assessment forms;
- Glossary of terms.

2. The role of the equality standard assessor (EQSA)

The role of the EQSA is to conduct an independent evaluation of a sports organisations application for a level of the Standard. This involves evaluating the assessment form and three pieces of supporting evidence submitted by the organisation and prepare written feedback and a decision. Information about the three pieces of supporting evidence for each level of the Standard can be found in the “requirements and forms” document.

The EQSA will only receive the assessment form from the organisation when all essential evidence for that level is available and the designated support lead (DSL) agrees that the applicant is in a position to

submit. By approving the assessment form, the DSL is not recommending that the organisation should achieve the level of the Standard, simply that they are ready to be independently evaluated.

2.1

Contacting the applicant organisation

Once the EQSA has reviewed the assessment form and relevant evidence, the following actions are required by the EQSA:

Foundation level

Optional telephone conversation only if further clarification is required by the EQSA. This is to ensure that if any questions arise which leave the EQSA with any doubt concerning the final decision the EQSA can contact the equality lead of the organisation for further clarification.

Preliminary level

Mandatory telephone conversation to discuss action plan and review process, with the equality lead for the organisation.

Intermediate and Advanced levels

A mandatory visit to the organisation with a view to meeting the relevant individuals from across the organisation as determined by the EQSA, this may include the following: equality lead, board chair or chief executive. The purpose of the visit is to verify whether equality is embedded in the organisation.

These actions can be summarised as follows:

LEVEL	OUTCOME
Foundation	Review report and optional phone call
Preliminary	Review report and mandatory telephone call
Intermediate	Review report, telephone call and mandatory site visit
Advanced	Review report, telephone call and mandatory site visit

It will not usually be necessary for the EQSA to contact the DSL for Foundation or Preliminary levels, but they have that option if they think it will assist in clarifying any points. For Intermediate and Advanced levels, it is recommended that the EQSA makes contact with the DSL, and possibly their sports council, to agree whether the DSL should accompany them on their visit to the organisation.

2.2

EQSA feedback

Having reviewed the assessment form, supporting evidence and contacted the organisation (optional for Foundation level), the EQSA should evaluate and summarise the evidence that the organisation has submitted and include sufficient detail on the assessment form to support their decision.

The EQSA must objectively and consistently interpret and judge the evidence submitted, using the assessment criteria (which can be found in the “requirements and forms” document). The evidence listed in the requirements tables are a guide and it is not prescriptive. Suitable alternatives can be presented if they meet the outcomes and must be judged on their merits. The EQSA should expect some explanatory comments from the organisation or DSL if alternative evidence is submitted.

For each submission the EQSA will reach one of the following two decisions:

- The criteria are met – the relevant level of the Standard is achieved;
- The criteria are not met – the organisation continues to work towards the relevant level of the Standard. In this case specific guidance will be provided in the feedback from the EQSA.

The EQSA must include on the assessment form:

- Detail of the (a) strengths and (b) areas for development within the evidence submitted;
- A decision, along with a justification, as to whether the organisation has successfully met the appropriate level of the Standard;
- If the decision is “continues to work towards the level”, specific guidance as to what is required prior to the organisation resubmitting;
- Note of any good practice that is worth sharing with others;
- Recommendations as to what will be required from the organisation in order to progress to the next level of the Standard.

Identified areas of development will not prevent the applicant from achieving the level of the Standard, they are simply advisory points that, if accepted, will help the organisation become more equitable.

Examples of good practice are things that, in the EQSAs view, are worth sharing with other organisations to help them progress through the Standard or to operate more effectively in terms of equality. The sports councils will collate and publicise these.

2.3

After assessment

Once the EQSA has carried out their independent evaluation and completed the assessment form, they should return it to their sports council. The sports council will inform the organisation and DSL of the EQSAs decision.

If the decision is “continues to work towards the level”, the sports council will liaise with the organisation and possibly the DSL to ensure that the EQSAs specific guidance is followed. It is possible, although unlikely, that the

sports council may seek clarification from the EQSA about this guidance. It will be up to the sports council as to whether they ask the EQSA to evaluate the resubmitted assessment form once all outstanding work has been carried out.

2.4

Confidentiality

All data and information about the organisation that the EQSA has access to is owned by the organisation and should be treated confidentially for the sole purpose of achieving a level of the Standard.

Organisations will have their own data protection policies which EQSAs are required to adhere to when handling sensitive data.

3. Employment and contractual information

3.1

Contract and allocation of time

EQSAs may be required to sign a contract with the sports council they are working for, terms and conditions will be agreed on a local basis. Fees, charges, and so forth will be agreed with the employing/contracting sports council.

3.2

Travel expenses

Mileage and travel fares can be claimed at the rate of the employing sports council. Travel fares and mileage rates should be agreed in advance.

3.3

EQSA pool

Each sports council will identify and maintain a pool of qualified EQSAs and ensure that the EQSAs are delivering quality services according to their contract. This will be monitored by regular needs analysis. Each sports council will carry out

recruitment and set up contracts according to their in house processes and standards.

EQSAs are expected to have experience, skills and qualifications to carry out the role effectively. Minimum requirements will be set by the sports council.

3.4

Skills and experience

EQSAs are expected to access ongoing opportunities to receive training and information on equalities work and legislation in their area. It is assumed that EQSAs will maintain an appropriate level of knowledge to carry out their roles.

3.5

Induction

Via the Sports Councils Equality Group (SCEG), Sports councils will provide a training and induction programme to suit their needs. This could include; formal training for new EQSAs, refresher training for individuals previously involved in the Standard, shadowing an existing EQSA, etc.

3.6

Ongoing training

EQSAs are required to attend annual group sessions to receive further training and updates on new legislation, new policy/procedures, and contribute to ongoing review of the Standard. These sessions will be delivered by each sports council with agreed content by SCEG.

3.7

Complaints

Any complaints, either from or about, an EQSA will be dealt with by the relevant sports council in line with their complaints policy.

4. Further information

4.

Further information

Readers of this guidance should also read the other four documents in this guidance suite, in order that they understand the full application and assessment process.

The latest information regarding the Standard can always be found on the Equality in Sport website www.equalityinsport.org

