

A. PURPOSE

This module provides instructions for validating Benefits Timeliness and Quality (BTQ) nonmonetary determinations and lower authority appeals quality samples. These samples can be validated for any quarter that falls within the validation year. They must be validated every three years, unless the size of the universe from which the sample is drawn is not within $\pm 2\%$ of the ETA 9052 or the ETA 9054L benchmark counts. In such case, the validation must be repeated the following year.

A properly selected sample is: (a) of the correct size, (b) randomly selected, and (c) drawn from the correct universe. The validator must check the size and randomness of the sample as soon as the sample is drawn because the quality review can only proceed for a randomly drawn sample of the correct size. If the sample is not of the correct size or is not random, a new sample must be selected, as many times as needed, until the draw is random and of the right size. The universe should be checked as soon as the report counts are available.

B. SAMPLE SIZE

Sample sizes are set based on the volume of nonmonetary determinations and lower authority appeals decisions reported in the preceding calendar year.

Sample sizes for nonmonetary determinations are based on total counts reported on the ETA 9052 report, and are of size 100 (50 separations and 50 non-separations) for states that reported 100,000 or more nonmonetary determinations and 60 (30 separations and 30 non-separations) for states that reported less than 100,000. However, the sample size for nonmonetary determinations may be increased in any given quarter to make up for cases discarded in the previous quarter. For example, if the assigned sample size is 100, and in the previous quarter 2 non-separation cases could not be reviewed because the case material was not found, the sample size for the quarter must be equal to 102: 50 separations and 52 non-separations.

Sample sizes for lower authority appeals decisions are based on total counts reported on the ETA 9054L report, and are of size 40 for states that reported 40,000 or more appeals and 20 for states that reported less than 40,000.

If a sample is determined to have an incorrect sample size, it must be drawn again with the correct size before the quality review can proceed.

C. SAMPLE SELECTION

Different methods can be used to select the quality samples. For example, states can use balanced systematic selection (as described in Handbook 301, Appendix A, pp. A-4 to A-6), systematic random sampling, or use a utility that randomizes the file.

In *systematic random sampling*, a starting point is selected at random from the sampling universe, and thereafter observations are selected at regular intervals. The size of the population is divided by the desired size of the sample and rounded to the nearest integer to get the sample interval i , which is then used to select every i^{th} observation from a file containing all records in the universe. For example, if a sample of 30 cases is wanted from a universe of 300 records, then the sample interval is $300 \div 30 = 10$, and every 10th observation is selected. To determine the starting point--i.e., the first case to be selected--the validator multiplies a random number between 0 and 1 (supplied by the National Office or generated by a random number generator utility) by the sample interval, and rounds it to the closest integer. In the previous example, if the random number is 0.2354, then $0.2354 \times 10 = 2.354 \approx 2$, so the observations selected are 2, 12, 22, etc.

To validate that the sample selection was random when *systematic random sampling* is used, the validator needs to check that the sample interval and the starting point were calculated correctly, and that the observations were selected accordingly.

When a sampling utility is used, usually the sample frame is randomized and the first x observations are selected, where x is the desired size of the sample (in the previous example, the first 30 observations). This method is somewhat more difficult to validate because it could involve reviewing the sample against the source file, or reviewing the utility specifications.

If the sample selection procedure is random, the sample can proceed to the quality review. Otherwise, the sampling procedure must be fixed and the sample redrawn until it is randomly selected.

D. SAMPLE UNIVERSE

The number of observations in the sample universe for nonmonetary determinations must be equal to the sum of all total counts in the ETA 9052 for the reporting quarter being validated. Before these numbers are compared, Populations 5 should pass report validation to make sure that the reported counts

are accurate. If the number of observations in the universe is within $\pm 2\%$ of the reported counts, then the sample universe passes validation, and results are valid for three years. Otherwise, the state needs to revalidate the sample the following year.

The number of observations in the sample universe for lower authority appeals must be equal to the sum of all total counts in the ETA 9054L for the reporting quarter being validated. Before these numbers are compared, Populations 8 should pass report validation to make sure that the reported counts are accurate. If the number of observations in the universe is within $\pm 2\%$ of the reported counts, then universe passes validation, and results are valid for three years. Otherwise, the state needs to revalidate the sample the following year.

If ETA 9052 or ETA 9054L reported counts are not available when the quality samples are drawn, comparing the sampling universe with the reported counts can be performed later to ensure that the validation process does not delay the quality review process.

E. SAMPLE VALIDATION

To validate the quality samples, the validator must complete the following steps:

Step 1: Select reporting period

- Obtain a copy of the quality sample for the reporting period you want to validate and for the previous quarter. Verify that all transactions in the universe are for the indicated reporting period and that the reporting period to be validated falls within April 1st of the previous year and March 31st of the current year.

Step 2: Validate the sample size

- Check that the sample size is in accordance with the number of transactions reported in the previous year. For nonmonetary determinations the sample size should be 100 (50 separations and 50 non-separations, plus the make-up cases, if any) for states that reported 100,000 or more nonmonetary determinations and 60 (30 separations and 30 non-separations, plus make-up cases) for states that reported less than 100,000 nonmonetary determinations. For lower authority appeals, the sample size should be 40 for states that reported 40,000 or more appeals and 20 for less than 40,000.

- If the sample size is not correct, the sample fails validation. Do not proceed any further. The sample needs to be redrawn and validated again until it is of the correct size.

Step 3: Validate that the sample selection was random

Determine which method was used to select the sample.

If balanced systematic selection was used, verify that all steps were followed as described in Handbook 301, Appendix A, pp. A-4 to A-6.

If systematic random sampling was used, then:

- Obtain a copy of the sample universe.
- Check that the sample interval used to select the sample is equal to the number of cases in the universe divided by the sample size.

$$\text{interval} = \frac{\text{universe size}}{\text{sample size}}$$

Remember that for nonmonetary determinations, the sample size must include additional cases for any cases that were discarded in the previous quarter.

- Check that the starting point (first case selected) is equal to the random start number supplied by the National Office multiplied by the sample interval, rounded to the nearest integer.

$$\text{starting point} = \text{Round}(\text{random number} \times \text{sample interval})$$

- Check that the proper subsequent cases were selected. For example, if the random start was 10 and the interval was every 40th case, check that 50, 90, 130, and so on were selected.

If a sampling utility was used, then:

- If the sample was drawn from a randomized file, determine how the file was randomized and print out the file to check that it was not ordered by date, local office number, or other nonrandom means. Compare this order with the way the file was ordered prior to randomization to ensure that the file was randomly reordered.

- Check that the first n cases were selected where n equals the sample size.

If it is determined that the sample was not randomly selected, the sample fails the validation. Do not proceed any further. The sample needs to be redrawn and validated again until it is randomly selected.

Step 4: Validate the sample universe

This step should be performed when the ETA 9052 or the ETA 9054L counts are available.

- For nonmonetary determinations, check that the total number of determinations in the sample universe is equal to or within $\pm 2\%$ of the sum of all the total counts reported on the ETA 9052 for the quarter being validated. This should be validated after Population 5 passes report validation.
- For lower authority appeals, check that the total number of appeals in the sample universe is equal to or within $\pm 2\%$ of the sum of all the total counts reported on the ETA 9054L for the quarter being validated. This should be validated after Population 8 passes report validation.

The sample should not include appeals decisions representing withdrawals, dismissals, and no-shows (i.e., appeals decided but for which no hearing materials were available to review). If the universe was built by excluding such non-reviewable appeals, then it should be smaller than the count reported on the ETA 9054L reports. To compare this universe with the 9054L count, add in the number of excluded appeals as in the example below. If the sum of the two groups is within 2% of the count reported on the ETA 9054L report for the quarter, then the universe passes validation. Alternatively, the sample cases may be drawn from a universe that includes all appeals, in which a flag distinguishes the reviewable from non-reviewable appeals. In such a case compare the size of the universe file directly with the 9054L count.

This is an example of adjustments made to enable a proper comparison of the two universes:

Lower Authority Appeals Quality Sample (Benefits Population 8)

Step	Validation Item	Appeals	Pass/Fail
1	Reporting period (Year:Quarter)	2009:1	PASS
2	Sample size	20	PASS
	Universe:		
	(a) Number of records in universe	2,298*	
	(b) ETA 9054L Counts	2,268	
	(c) Difference: (a) - (b)	30	
3	(d) % Difference: [(c) ÷ (b)] x 100	1.32%	PASS
4	Random sampling method	Interval	PASS
		Score:	PASS
<i>Problems/Comments:</i> The sample was drawn from the Appeals database. The totals are consistent with the reports that are run from the data warehouse			

*Universe File	1,665
Withdrawn Cases	124
Dismissed Cases	477
<u>Program type U8</u>	<u>32</u>
Universe Total	2,298

If the universe fails the validation, the sample has to be validated again by the next validation year. Otherwise, it must be validated again in three years.

F. RESULTS

The software does not include a screen for forwarding the results of the quality reviews to the National Office. These should be documented in a Microsoft Word® file using the format below and sent via email to the National Office to dvrpts@uis.doleta.gov. The template can be downloaded from the DV website at <http://www.ows.doleta.gov/dv/>. You can document any validation problems in the Problems/Comments field.

Templates for Reporting Results of Validations of Quality Sampling Reviews

STATE:

VY:

Nonmonetary Determinations Quality Sample (Benefits Population 5)

Step	Validation Item	Separations	Pass/Fail	Non-Separations	Pass/Fail
1	Reporting period (Year:Quarter)				
2	Sample size				
	Universe:				
	(a) Number of records in universe				
	(b) ETA 9052 Counts				
	(c) Difference: (a) - (b)				
3	(d) % Difference: [(c) ÷ (b)] x 100				
4	Random sampling method				
					Score:
<i>Problems/Comments:</i>					

Lower Authority Appeals Quality Sample (Benefits Population 8)

Step	Validation Item	Appeals	Pass/Fail
1	Reporting period (Year:Quarter)		
2	Sample size		
	Universe:		
	(a) Number of records in universe		
	(b) ETA 9054L Counts		
	(c) Difference: (a) - (b)		
3	(d) % Difference: [(c) ÷ (b)] x 100		
4	Random sampling method		
			Score:
<i>Problems/Comments:</i>			

Example:

STATE: ST

Validation Year: 2009

Nonmonetary Determinations Quality Sample (Benefits Population 5)

Step	Validation Item	Separations	Pass/Fail	Non-Separations	Pass/Fail
1	Reporting period (Year:Quarter)	2009:2	PASS	2009:2	PASS
2	Sample size	50	PASS	50	PASS
	Universe:				
	(a) Number of records in universe	5,629		1,236	
	(b) ETA 9052 Counts	5,520		1,235	
	(c) Difference: (a) - (b)	109		1	
3	(d) % Difference: [(c) ÷ (b)] x 100	1.97%	PASS	0.08%	PASS
4	Random sampling method	Utility	PASS	Utility	PASS
				Score:	PASS
<i>Problems/Comments:</i>					

Where:

Step	Passing Criteria
1	Is the reporting period within the validation year? Are all transactions included in the universe within the indicated reporting period?
2	Is the sample size proportional to the volume of transactions of the previous year? In the case of non-moneteraries, does it include make-up cases to compensate for cases that couldn't be reviewed in the previous quarter?
3	Is the difference 2% or less?
4	Was the sample randomly selected?
Score	If all steps passed, then the score is "PASS"; otherwise, "FAIL".