A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the quality sample validation is to ensure that the samples drawn for the Benefits Timeliness and Quality (BTQ) review of nonmonetary determinations and appeals quality are (a) the correct size, and (b) randomly selected (c) from the correct populations. Sample sizes are set annually beginning with the first quarter of the calendar year, and are based on the volume of nonmonetary determinations and lower authority appeals decisions reported to the Department of Labor for the preceding calendar year. Sample sizes for nonmonetary determinations are based on counts reported on the ETA 9052 report; lower authority appeals decisions samples are based on counts reported on the ETA 9054 report.

Because of the way quarterly samples are set, the samples selected for nonmonetary determinations and lower authority appeals quality should be validated for the *first calendar quarter's* samples, at a minimum. Validation must occur *before* cases are assigned to the quality review staff to ensure that the sample is of the correct size and randomly drawn. BTQ samples will be validated every third year, unless the universe from which the sample is drawn is not within ± 2% of the ETA 9052 or 9054 reference population. In such a case, the review must be repeated the following year.

There are two basic approaches to selecting the quality samples. In a conventional interval sample, the programmer (or a utility program) divides the size of the desired sample (e.g., 30) into the size of the population (e.g., 300) and derives the sample interval (every 10th observation). Using random start number supplied by the National Office every December for the upcoming calendar year, the programmer selects a random start point between 1 and 10 and selects every 10th case from that point. States may also use a sampling utility program that randomizes the file and selects the first 30 observations. This approach is somewhat more difficult to validate but could involve reviewing the sample against the source file (see Step 6, below), or reviewing the utility program specifications.

If the sample size is correct and selection procedures are random, the cases may be given to the BTQ reviewer for investigation. If the sample selection procedures do not satisfy the validation criteria contained in this module, then the validator must consult with the programming staff to ensure that the sampling procedure is fixed and the sample redrawn until validation indicates it is randomly drawn. Assignment of the cases can then proceed accordingly.

B. MATERIALS

The validator must obtain the following materials from IS staff:

1: Copy of the Universe File of Nonmonetary Determinations for the Quarter

(For nonmonetary determination quality sample)

2: Copy of the Universe File of Appeals for the Quarter

(For appeals quality sample)

C. METHODOLOGY

Nonmonetary Determinations Quality Sample

To validate the selection of the nonmonetary determination quality sample, the validator must complete the following five tasks:

Task 1: Determine the Quarterly Sample Size

This is done in two parts. The first is to determine the basic sample that will be drawn every quarter during the calendar year. To determine the basic sample, review the total number of nonmonetary determinations reported on the ETA 9052 report for the preceding calendar year. If the total is 100,000 or more, then the sample size is 100 (50 separations and 50 nonseparations). If the total is fewer than 100,000, then the sample size is 60 (30 separations and 30 nonseparations).

In addition, the sample for any given quarter must include cases to "make up" for cases that could not be reviewed in the previous quarter because case material could not be located. For example, if the basic separation sample is 50, and in the previous quarter 2 cases could not be reviewed because of case material not found, the sample for the validated quarter would be 52.

Task 2:

Compare the total count of the nonmonetary universe for the quarter with the count reported on the ETA 9052 for the three-month period. This comparison validates that the correct universe was used.

Task 3:

Determine whether an interval sample was drawn (and how it was drawn) or whether the file was randomized such that the first set of cases could be selected without establishing intervals.

Task 4:

Obtain a copy of the nonmonetary universe file for the quarter with the observation number and SSN of each case.

Task 5a:

If an interval sample was drawn, check to see that the first case was selected using the random start numbers supplied by the national Office, and that the proper subsequent cases were selected (e.g., if the random start was 10 and the interval was every 40th case, check to see that 50, 90, 130, and so on were selected). The validator can identify the sampled cases from the quality review documentation and can compare the sampled cases with the observations in the universe file by matching on observation number and SSN.

Task 5b:

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. The validator can compare this order with the way the file was ordered prior to randomization to ensure that the file was randomly reordered.

Appeals Quality Sample

To validate the selection of the appeals quality sample, the validator must complete the following five tasks:

Task 1:

Review the total number of lower authority appeals decisions for the preceding calendar year. If the total reported is 40,000 or more, then the sample size is 40 decisions per quarter. The sample size is 20 decisions per quarter if the total reported is fewer than 40,000.

Task 2:

Compare the total count with the count reported on the ETA 9054 report for the three-month period. If the quality sample is drawn from a universe that includes all appeals decisions, the universe may be compared directly with the 9054L count. The two should match, and the comparison passes if the two are one another.

If the programmer who selected the sample deleted appeals decisions representing withdrawals, dismissals, and no-shows from the sample universe (i.e., appeals decided but for which no hearing materials were available to review), then the quality universe should be smaller than the count reported on the ETA 9054 report. The validator can examine a printout of the sample universe and can examine the code used by the programmer to distinguish between decisions with reviewable hearings and other decisions, or may obtain from the programmer a count of appeals decisions with no reviewable materials. If the sum of the two groups is within 2% of the count reported on the ETA 9054 report for the three-month period, then it may be concluded that the correct universe was used.

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

State:

Lower Authority Appeals Quality Sample (Benefits Pop 8)

Year/Quarter: 2007:1
Sample Size: 20
Universe: 2,298*
9054 Count: 2,268
Difference as % of 9054 Count: 1.3%
Sampling Method: Interval
Problems/Comments: The sample pull comes from data that is loaded from the ONAMS (Appeals database) into the GUIDE system and the sample subsequently is pulled from the GUIDE system. The totals are consistent with the reports that are run from the data warehouse.

*Universe File		1665
Withdrawn Cases	124	
Dismissed Cases	477	
Program type U8	32	
Universe Total		2298

Task 3:

Determine whether an interval sample was drawn (and how it was drawn) or whether the file was randomized such that the first set of cases could be selected without establishing intervals.

Task 4:

Obtain a copy of the appeals universe file for the quarter with the observation number and SSN of each case.

Task 5a:

If an interval sample was drawn, check to see that the first case was selected using the random start numbers supplied by the National Office, and that the proper subsequent cases were selected (e.g., if the random start was 10 and the interval was every 40th case, check to see that 50, 90, 130, and so on were selected). The validator can identify the sampled cases from the quality review documentation and can compare the sampled cases with the observations in the universe file by matching on observation number and SSN.

Task 5b:

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. The validator can compare this order with the way the file was ordered prior to randomization to ensure that the file was randomly reordered. If the sample is not random, the sample must be redrawn and must pass validation before the samples can be evaluated. Because validation of the sample must precede the BTQ review, validation must occur as soon as the appropriate sample can be drawn.

D. RESULTS

If the sampling method was not correct or was not implemented properly or the wrong sample size was selected, the sample must be redrawn and must pass validation before the samples can be evaluated. The validator should discuss the problems with the programmer and determine what corrective actions are needed to ensure that subsequent sample selections are random. If the universe for either sample is not within ± 2% of the 9052 or 9054 reference population--after Populations 5 and 8 are validated, the validation counts for these reports should be used if available--the validator should discuss the problems with the programmer and determine what corrective actions are needed to ensure that the universe matches the reference population, and plan to repeat the review the following year.

The Sun-based software does not include a screen for forwarding the results of the quality reviews. Results of the quality review validation 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. Note any problems in the Comments field.

Templates for Reporting Results of Validations of Quality Sampling Reviews

State:
Nonmonetary Quality Sample (Benefits Pop 5)

Year/Quarter: YYYY:Q
Sample Size:
Universe: XXX,XXX
9052 Count: XXX,XXX
Difference as % of 9052 Count:
Sampling Method: (Interval or Randomized File)
Problems/Comments:

State:
Lower Authority Appeals Quality Sample (Benefits Pop 8)

Year/Quarter: YYYY:Q
Sample Size:
Universe: XXX,XXX
9054 Count: XXX,XXX
Difference as % of 9054 Count:
Sampling Method: (Interval or Randomized File)
Problems/Comments: