

Box 9.

Strategies for portfolio assessment derived from the methodology of qualitative research

- Incorporate feedback cycles into the mentoring process that accompanies the portfolio to ensure that the mentor's final recommendation does not come as a(n) - unpleasant - surprise to the learner; this approach relates to the credibility strategies of prolonged engagement and member checking.
- Maintain a careful balance between the roles of the mentor as coach and assessor. The aim is to ensure that the person who knows the learner best provides the most relevant information while minimizing any damaging effect on the mentor-learner relationship by using an assessment committee to assess the portfolio; this approach relates to the credibility strategy of prolonged engagement.
- Involve the learner in the decision process to ensure commitment on the part of the learner and allow the learner to communicate a different point of view to that of the mentor; this approach relates to the credibility strategy of member checking.
- Use a sequential judgement procedure in which conflicting information necessitates more information gathering. This ensures the efficient use of resources by limiting the use of additional resources to cases where this is necessary to achieve reliable judgement. This approach relates to the credibility strategy of triangulation.
- Document the different steps of the assessment process. For example a formal assessment plan approved by the Examination Board; portfolio and assessment guidelines; overviews of the results per phase, and written assessment forms per learner. This approach relates to the dependability strategy of audit trail.