

Quality Assurance Policy

Aims

The Hub for Learning aims to ensure that every learner that they work with enjoys a safe, enjoyable quality learning experience during their programme and achieves their full potential. To support a positive learner experience, it is vital that the company is able to offer accredited qualifications that both learners and employers can trust. Learners and employers need to be assured that the recognition of individuals' skills and knowledge can be regarded as valid, authentic, current and are based on reliable and sufficient evidence of competence: the company's training and assessment and Quality assurance policy details how The Hub for Learning provides such assurance.

Rationale

Our organisations primary goal is to provide employers and learners with training that meets their needs. An outcome of successful training and development interventions can be the awarding of accredited qualifications. To be in a position to award such qualifications, the company has to work with awarding organisation (ASQA) and demonstrate that it can meet their assessment and quality assurance requirements.

To acquire approval with any awarding organisation, a prerequisite is that the company has a documented quality training, assessment and quality assurance policy.

Principles

Quality Assurance covers all aspects of the learning experience and the procedures should be an effective blend of development, support and compliance checks. The Hub for Learning wants every learner to have a meaningful and valid learning experience and this means that the qualifications standards in terms of delivery, assessment, quality assurance, invigilation and moderation must be met at all times with every learner.

Quality assurance is about developing excellence in provision and improving the delivery of all personnel involved in programme delivery. Quality assurance looks to share best practice; offer recommendations for improvement and monitor performance to ensure that staff are supported to deliver a service that is attuned to the needs of their learners and employers that they work with.

Quality assurance has to identify and act on performance that requires development and ensure that at all times that the integrity of any qualification delivery is maintained. Quality

assurance activities protect the company's reputation as a consistent, reliable provider of vocational training and to this end; quality assurance will evaluate the company's performance against every aspect of the learner journey/experience.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Hub for Learning expects all qualifications to meet the required Minimum levels of performance (MLP) for completions on all programmes and qualifications offered. The company will comply where reasonable with the recommended length of programmes, as advised by relevant external organisations and will state as appropriate minimum programme duration.

The RTO Manager is accountable for securing programme completions that meet the awarding organisation requirements and the implementation of this policy and the development and support of delivery staff in respect of training and assessment activities.

Operations are accountable for candidate allocation, programme management and performance management of delivery staff. Delivery staff are responsible for the maintenance of their professional development and adherence to quality assurance requirements as detailed through 121's team meetings; standardisations; observation of teaching and learning and assessment feedback; sampling plan instructions and internal quality assurance reports.

Arrangements

The Quality assurance system in place for qualification registration, delivery, assessment, testing and quality assurance includes the following;

- An appropriate induction programme, that provides members of staff with information and guidance to support them in meeting the essential requirements of their given job roles. - In order to remain compliant it is important that we are adhering to the individual Awarding Organisations policy/procedure in regard to registering learners.
- A risk banding system for trainers/assessors and IQA's to identify individuals levels of competence and developmental requirements. The risk – banding systems should also indicate levels of monitoring required, identify at risk staff and /or learners and work in conjunction with operational and compliance procedures.
- A regular set of standardisation and development activities based on: actions raised by SV/EV (SQA) (EQA) quality assurance visits, feedback from Internal quality assurance activities, industry and legislative updates, qualification updates and learner and employer feedback, as well as compliance findings - see annex 5
- A sample plan process
- A system of quality assurance checking points that includes employer site visits, telephone audits, review of test results and evidence (portfolio)1 sampling to determine the validity of

qualification delivery methods and the service experience as perceived by learners and their employers

- Administration and invigilation of tests policy - A regular review of all activities associated with the learning experience, to include a monitoring of all aspects of the programme from pre-selection of learners to completion of their programmes and further progression. Ensuring learning needs are met and supported and where applicable learning support planning and delivery is monitored, developed and enhanced
- A process of formative quality assurance and summative quality (FQA/SQA)
- An appeals and disputes procedure that is communicated to all interested parties
- An assessor, tutor and IQA suspension and sanction policy that links to other relevant policies and makes clear the required codes of performance and what constitutes as non-compliance.
- A process of disseminating feedback received from external quality assurance activities, compliance checks and independent quality reviews to include standardisation activities
- A communication platform that provides a central point for all relevant information and updates in respect of qualification delivery.
- Set of personnel policies and procedures that cover induction; disciplinary and grievance; and staff training and development - Definition of plagiarism and cheating and processes to avoid such incidents
- Recognition of prior learning Policy
- Learner review and guidance policy
- Observation of teaching, learning and assessment, the company has a set training programme and undertakes dual observations, planned and unplanned observations. Observations are recorded on a specific observations record form
- Learner transfer/ hand-over and identification of at risk learners and actions to take
- Deployment of technologies in the assessment process
- Use of remote assessment
- Dealing with loss of evidence/ paper-based portfolios
- Any conflict of interest for any staff member needs to be noted, recorded and discussed with an impartial colleague. Conflict of interests can be defined as where there is a family member or close relationship that may indicate that the assessment or quality assurance processes could be biased. If for an example you are the sister of a learner assigned to you, you would be required to declare that relationship to you Quality Assurer and it would be their decision as to what action was deemed as necessary to guarantee parity of treatment. In some cases this will mean the re-assigning of learners or sites; in other cases this may only require additional sampling. As a general rule- assessing or quality assuring family members is not ideal, and the company will re-assign TAs and or QAs accordingly.

Conflict of interest can be regarded as a member of staff having a vested interest to meet targets and either undertaking or influencing assessment outcomes that are not congruent with the learners capabilities. In such circumstances, where proven this would be seen as malpractice and result in the suspension and sanction policy being invoked and disciplinary action being taken.

- Maladministration- i.e. where administrative mistakes have been made, this could not be checking the correct spelling of a learners name, and the subsequent re-ordering of a certificate. Maladministration refers to genuine mistakes and generally will not incur penalties, providing it is a one-off mistake or a system error where the AO or the company did not provide the correct information.
- Malpractice is a very serious offence and where proven will result in immediate sanctions, disciplinary action and possible dismissal and notification to the relevant awarding organisation, notifying them of the malpractice and action taken. Malpractice is the term applied to any intentional and planned act to alter an assessment or quality assurance decision by changing/removing/not recording accurately or augmenting information. Instances of malpractice Instances of malpractice arise for a variety of reasons:
 - Some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment - Some incidents arise due to ignorance of the regulations, carelessness or forgetfulness in applying the regulations - Some occur as a direct result of the force of circumstances which are beyond the control of those involved (e.g. a fire alarm sounds and the exam is disrupted). The individuals involved in malpractice are also varied. They maybe:
 - Candidates
 - Teachers, lecturers, tutors, trainers, assessors or others responsible for the conduct, the administration or the quality assurance of examinations and assessments
 - Assessment personnel such as examiners, assessors, moderators or internal and external verifiers - Other third parties, e.g. parents/carers, siblings, friends of the candidate. Training Assessment and Quality Assurance Policy 5 Irrespective of the underlying cause or the people involved, all allegations of malpractice in relation to examinations and assessment need to be investigated. This is to protect the integrity of the qualification and to be fair to the entre and all candidates. Failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report to an awarding body allegations of suspected malpractice constitutes malpractice. Also, failure to take action as required by an awarding body, as detailed in this document, or to co-operate with an awarding body's investigation constitutes malpractice. If as a result of a full investigation any member of staff is found to have committed an act of malpractice the company will inform the appropriate awarding organisation of the incident providing facts and information as requested. Compliance checks in the quality assurance context In addition to the QA processes identified above, the QA process will also include independent compliance checks. Compliance checks can include calls to learners (specifically to check on test etiquette and compliance) Poor performance identified from such compliance checks could result in sanctions being applied and in serious cases of poor practice; staff could be suspended or removed from training / assessment/ quality assurance activities, pending an investigation. Depending on the results of the investigation, staff maybe

subject to disciplinary action. Where a compliance check comes back as satisfactory no communication will be provided.

Commitment to Quality Assurance

An important part of the role as a trainer, assessor / IQA is the contribution to the centre's quality assurance process. It is fundamental to ensuring that standards of assessment are maintained and improved upon over time. The main ways in which delivery staff contributes to quality assurance are by:

- Responding to and clearing actions identified by your IQA
- Adhering to deadlines for submission of formative and summative quality assurance activities
- Keeping calendars up to date so planned and unplanned observations can be easily facilitated
- Communicating with your Line Manager and QA about any concerns you have re a learner's progress
- Reviewing your sampling plan, to support the meeting of deadlines
- Attending training and development activities, that you have been booked onto, or have requested
- Working in a professional manner as all times with your caseload of learners and employer settings, to deliver a timely and effective training and assessment service
- Contributing to standardisation meetings
- Keeping up to date with professional practice (this means updating your CPD record on a regular basis) ensuring relevant certificates are sent to the RTO manager

The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding organisations to make reasonable adjustments to ensure a learner who is disabled as defined in the Act are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to learners who are not disabled. The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievements so long as the equity, validity, and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessments easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a head start.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained, these are through: -

- Reasonable adjustments– agreed before the assessment takes place
- Special considerations – applied post assessment

Definition of reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what is being assessed.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the assessment activity. The use of a reasonable adjustments will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

Awarding Organisations and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Definition of special considerations

Special considerations can be applied after an assessment if there is a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. Reasons for special consideration could be temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment.

Learners cannot enter a plea for special considerations for assessment solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty. Learners must declare their needs prior to the assessment period and all necessary reasonable adjustments arrangements must have been implemented before the time of their assessment. Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, the learner's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

Special consideration may result in a small post – assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the learner but will always be a minor adjustment as to do more may jeopardise the standard.

In some circumstances, it may not always be possible to apply special consideration. It may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to retake the assessment at a later date or to extend the registration period so that the learner has more time to complete the assessment activity. All learners regardless of their special consideration must still meet our minimum requirement for the award of a certificate.