



The
**Falkland
Islands
Company**

Environmental and Safety Solutions

Internal Quality Assurance Policy

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Introduction

Effective quality assurance allows everyone involved in qualifications to have confidence in the assessment decisions. All learners who are competent should be assessed as meeting the assessment criteria set out in the awarding organisations qualification specifications, ensuring the validity of assessment decisions is a joint responsibility for all those involved in the quality assurance of the qualifications.

The Falkland Islands Company (FIC) working together with an awarding organisation share the responsibility for quality assurance. The ultimate success of this process depends on the individuals who implement it. This means that everyone involved in the quality assurance of qualifications must be clear:

- What their role and responsibilities are in relation to quality assurance
- Why they should be doing it
- How they should be doing it
- When they should be doing it
- What standards they should be achieving; and
- Who is responsible for different parts of the quality assurance system

FIC internal quality assurance strategy has been developed to ensure that quality assurance is maintained not only in the standards of assessment but also the administration procedures and systems in place within the centre. The monitoring of all aspects of the assessment process through the strategy will allow the centre to be pro-active and progressive in continually improving standards.

Awarding Organisations must be confident of the standard and reliability of the centres management, quality assurance and assessment, therefore the strategy will include the following:

- Recruitment and training of IQA's
- Role and responsibilities of the IQA
- Risk assessment
- Working with assessors
- Sampling of assessment
- Monitoring of assessment practice
- Standardisation
- IQA documentation
- Guidance and Support to assessors
- Tracking of learner progress
- IQA Meetings

Selection and training of IQAs

The appointed internal quality assurer (IQA) will have appropriate occupational background and understanding of the standards and their role. The centre will ensure that all IQA's have appropriate occupational background and understanding of the standards and their role, and that they maintain professional competence through their continuous professional development (CPD). 2

This includes:

- IQA CV's are checked and validated to ensure occupational background at an appropriate level in the specific sector as required by the awarding organisation and copies to be held in their centre files
- A system of professional updating is available for all IQAs
- Newly appointed IQAs are monitored by experienced EQA's on a regular basis to ensure their understanding is thorough
- Training/development is carried out to address identified training needs
- All IQAs have a clear understanding of their role in quality assurance systems

The centre ensures that all final decisions are quality assured by a qualified IQA. The centre must consistently ensure that all assessment decisions, unit, and award claims are quality assured by an accredited IQA.

Continuous professional development (CPD)

Qualified IQA's will be required to maintain their continual professional development (CPD) and ensure continuing competence (Competence refers to having the relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes to do a specific job in a particular way to an agreed standard)

CPD can take many forms and a record of activities should be available for the previous 12 months, for example:

- Studying for IQA
- Study related to job role/occupational competency
- Collaborative working with the awarding organisation
- Development work regarding qualifications/occupational Standards
- Other appropriate occupational activity as agreed with centre co-ordinator and/or EQA.

IQA's who already possess D34 or V1 qualification will be expected to update their CPD to reflect the recent IQA requirements through development of their role. This does not imply that they must achieve IQA re-qualification as this is not a requirement of the regulators.

Internal quality assurer (IQA) role

Verification is one aspect of quality assurance which relates to the day-to-day delivery of qualifications. It is the process of monitoring assessment practice to ensure that assessment decisions are consistently accurate. The purpose of quality assurance is to ensure and demonstrate that assessment is valid and consistent, through monitoring and sampling

assessment decisions. Rigorous internal quality assurance ensures sound assessment practice leading to consistent and valid assessment decisions. IQA's contribute to the quality assurance of qualifications. Awarding Organisations must be confident of the standard and reliability of the centre's management, quality assurance and assessment.

Quality assurance involves:

- Monitoring the conduct of assessment
- Sampling learners' evidence to verify assessment decisions
- Assuring the quality of the systems and procedures used for assessment and verification
- Supporting and advising assessors
- Keeping quality assurance and assessment records up to date; and
- Providing information for analysis by the centre

There are two types of quality assuring of qualifications, external quality assurance is Safety Training Awards responsibility for validating that assessments within the centre have been carried out consistently and to Safety Training Awards qualification criteria. Internal quality assurance carried out by the IQA is the centres responsibility to ensure that assessment is carried out to the qualification specification.

The IQA role can be determined by the criteria within the IQA qualification units. The main functions of an IQA are to:

- Provide advice and support to the assessor
- Operate, monitor, and evaluate to a consistently high standard of assessment practice
- Meet external quality assurance requirements

Risk assessment

The IQA will be required to carry out a risk assessment on all of their identified work-based assessors. The risk assessment will be carried out within one month of the assessor commencing assessment on their learner. The risk assessment will identify the necessary contact time and support needed from the IQA for each individual assessor. The risk should be recorded on the learning needs analysis form and the internal quality assurance feedback sheet. The risk assessment should be reviewed on a regular basis, at least every 6 months.

It is anticipated that in most instances new assessors risk banding scores will diminish as they gain experience and competence through the achievement of their assessor qualification. Those assessors who have multiple learners may be in more than one category dependent on the qualifications the assessor is involved with and/or any special circumstances.

Risk rating

High: New assessor/tutors, new staff, new to programme, awarding organisation linked to sanction by EQA or if deemed necessary by the IQA

Medium: Experienced and sound assessor/tutor but involved with few portfolios (less than 6) experienced but different level or if deemed necessary by the IQA.

Low: Sound assessor/tutor with current programmes and levels.

Contact for the purpose of support may be in the form of visits to the work area, centre, via telephone, email. Evidence of this support should be documented and held within the internal quality assurance contact records.

Working with assessors

Each assessor will be provided with an identified IQA from the day they commence with their learner assessment. Allocation of the IQA and assessor will be managed and monitored by the centre co-ordinator. If necessary, a lead IQA will be appointed for each occupational area and appropriate qualification that will be occupationally competent to carry out quality assurance. This person will be the assessor's first point of contact for guidance and support.

New assessors

Assessors new to the assessment process will be required to meet with their IQA within the first month from the date of the assessor induction. The Assessor induction checklist. The assessor will also be required to complete strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis identifying strengths and development needs.

Experienced assessors

Experienced assessors will be risk rated and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis should be completed on an annual basis to identify ongoing developments and identify learning needs. IQAs must ensure assessors have attended their yearly update and maintained occupational competence. This will ensure that they continue to meet the requirements for being an assessor by their qualification criteria. It will be the responsibility of the IQA to report back to the centre co-ordinator any common qualification/quality assurance training requirements not currently accommodated within the centres planned courses.

Additionally, assessors will be required to participate in standardisation sessions every year, which will be held on a regular basis throughout the duration of their learner qualification. This will ensure quality and consistency is maintained via standardisation and close inspection of the assessment process. Meetings will be chaired by the IQA.

The purpose will be to discuss:

- Examples of good practice
- What constitutes valid, reliable and authentic evidence
- Ideas on different examples of assessment
- Sharing of ideas
- Different assessment methods
- What constitutes fair assessment
- How comparability may be achieved

New assessors will be allocated a qualified assessor who will second assess any units they complete up until they achieve their appropriate assessor award.

Monitoring of assessments

Monitoring of assessment provides a quality assurance process which allows the IQA to ensure that assessment strategies are being utilised in accordance with centre and awarding organisation requirements. This monitoring will vary between assessor's dependant on experience. The amount of contact will be determined from the results of the risk rating assessment. It should be noted that extra support may be required by some assessors and IQAs will need to use their own discretion to determine this.

The purpose of these meetings will be to:

- Check the progress of the learner
- Ensure that there is consistent interpretation of the standards and assessment strategy
- Directly observe part of the assessment process
- Identify and resolve any problems
- Carry out informal training where required in particular with the completion of documentation
- Identify any training needs and refer on
- Review risk rating and learning needs analysis (LNA)
- Sign off completed units not identified for sampling

The IQA will be required to complete a feedback to assessor Form for each monitoring meeting conducted. This will summarise the main areas of discussion, feedback or action points agreed, any areas of assessment checked or observed and the risk rating score. This form must be signed by both the assessor and IQA, a copy will be given to the assessor and filed in their portfolio and a copy is retained by the IQA for their file.

Sampling of assessment

Sampling of assessment is necessary to check the consistency and accuracy of assessment decisions, identify any difficulties or potential problems at an early stage and make valid claims for certificates. Checking everything undermines assessor's confidence in their judgements and takes up valuable IQA time which can be better used for carrying out other duties e.g., developing assessors and monitoring live assessments. Sampling must take place for all learners on all registered STA courses.

Quality assurance should occur throughout the assessment process and not left until the end. The IQA should look at a representative sample of assessment decisions. A sampling plan should be agreed with the centre co-ordinator and assessor to reflect a broad range of all aspects of units and criteria for each qualification.

Sufficient sampling can be defined as being achieved when the IQA is "...Confident (within reason) that everything you don't see is of the same standard/quality as everything you do see." The IQA's confidence in the assessor's decisions can therefore be built through effective risk rating and monitoring of assessment practice.

Learner support

Any support must be suited to the needs of the learner. The IQA will ensure an appropriate level of support to learners on a one-to-one basis, where a high standard of learner support is maintained at all times. Assessors are chosen for their suitability, expertise, and professionalism. Learners are fully aware from the outset who their assessor is, how much support is available and how to access this. Learners with special needs are not disadvantaged in any way and all learners are encouraged to seek help, as they need it. The centre will maintain and monitor a system of feedback from learners to measure the degree of satisfaction with the level of support provided. Advisory sessions are linked to assessment and learning opportunities relevant to the qualification. Learners will also be encouraged to complete evaluation forms after taught sessions to provide feedback for future sessions.

The support will be: -

- Suited to the learners needs i.e. language, access & experience
- Recorded and monitored by the centre
- Explained to learner at their induction
- Linked to development and assessment opportunities
- Regular and consistent throughout the learner's progress towards their qualification
- Monitored through assessor's progress and IQA tracking mechanisms

The process

For each course that commences the IQA will be required to complete a sampling plan for each qualification for that centre. This will identify at least 1 mandatory and 1 optional unit to be sampled for each learner. This will provide the minimum sample as more units may be sampled at the discretion of the IQA. The copy of the plan should be stored in the IQA file along with any additions that are made.

The following points need to be considered when deciding on the sample size for each learner:

- It is large enough to ensure reliability
- The types of assessment methods used (all should be covered where possible for each individual group)
- Experience/qualifications of the assessor
- Experience/ special assessment requirements of the learner
- The qualification being assessed
- Difficulty/potential problems with the units
- IQA confidence in individual assessor's performance
- External quality assurer recommendations
- Recommendations identified through standardisation meetings

Other points to consider are:

- That all learners should be sampled at mid and final programme stages prior to any request for certification
- Each unit should be sampled at least twice during the whole course depending on the number of learners available, the number of units being accessed and the time period for the qualification
- More units are likely to be sampled for learners with additional support needs
- It is likely that experienced assessors will have fewer units sampled than inexperienced assessors
- Assessment planning and reviewing of learner's progress should also be included

Sampling can be described as the scrutinising of the evidence presented to ensure it meets all requirements. This can be achieved by checking the following:

- Effective assessment planning covering a number of units
- Good use of a variety of evidence
- Evidence of naturalistic observation
- Transparency of assessment decisions
- That the evidence appears valid, authentic, current, reliable and sufficient (VASCR)
- Documentation has been completed accurately
- All evidence is available, dated and signed
- All aspects of the range statement have been covered
- Performance criteria (including contingency criteria) are all reflected in the evidence presented
- Evidence demonstrates the assessment of underpinning knowledge required for each unit
- That feedback and reviewing of progress has taken place
- That a fair assessment has taken place which has comparability to the whole of the centre

Once an IQA is satisfied that the evidence meets these requirements, a clear record of the sampling which has taken place should be made. This will involve the initialling of each piece of evidence checked. The course progress and sign-off sheet will also be signed for that relevant unit. This should be located at the front of the learner's portfolio.

A record of the sampling which has taken place should also be made on the IQA sampling plan and retained in the IQA File. Each assessor the IQA is responsible for should have a separate IQA sampling plan for not only recording this, but also any parts of assessment observed through the IQA monitoring process.

All additional units which have been reviewed but not sampled by the IQA will be signed off in on the unit summary sheet. Feedback to the assessor on any units reviewed should be recorded and a copy must be retained by the IQA within their file for future reference.

IQA documentation

IQA's will be required to complete the documentation as indicated within this strategy. All learner and assessor documentation must be retained for the minimum period specified by the awarding organisation, in order to comply with legislative requirements. Once a learner has achieved their

qualification any documentation pertaining to the learner must be forwarded to the centre co-ordinator to be stored centrally. IQA files and documentation may be subject to auditing by the centre, EQA or the awarding organisation. Documentation should be completed accurately, legibly and in black ink unless otherwise stated.

All IQA's will be responsible for ensuring the security of records. Locked cabinets or rooms should be used where possible, if these are not available then suitable alternatives must be made.

Certification

Any requests for certificates may only be authorised by a qualified IQA. IQA's working towards their qualification may only make requests if their evidence has been countersigned by a qualified IQA. Once a learner's qualification is deemed to be complete a summative quality assurance sheet must be completed and copied. The learner file must be retained or made available in readiness for the next EQA visit with a copy of the summative quality assurance sheet within it. A copy of this sheet may also be sent to the learner to confirm their success.

Standardisation meetings

Regular IQA meetings will be held by the centre. IQA's will be expected to have regular attendance to ensure they keep up to date with the centres policies and practices. This will also provide a forum for the reviewing of quality assurance procedures, problem solving and dissemination of information. Part of the IQA meetings will be allocated for standardisation.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed annually as part of our quality assurance requirements to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Please see below for the relevant contact details.

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