

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

HANDBOOK

City & Guilds/ILM



Further Training Limited
CENTRE NUMBER: 721734

Updated December 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

Further Training Limited is committed to internally quality assuring high quality programmes that consistently meet the requirements of awarding organisation standards. The establishment of the FURTHER (INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE) system and procedures ensures quality assurance in the assessment process and provides all learners with access to fair and reliable assessment.

The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE process is an unconditional part of ensuring all assessment judgements meet national standards and maintaining FURTHER credibility when issuing qualifications. This handbook has been produced to guide staff so they can provide a secure environment for learners to achieve their goals.

STAFF NOMINEE

The Centre Co-Ordinator acts as the FURTHER Nominee for City and Guilds (C&G) and Institute of Leadership and Management (ilm) Programmes informing the external quality assurer schedule and meeting with the C & G and ILM External Quality Assurer.

The Centre Co-Ordinator supervises the internal system for controlling External Verification (EQA) reports and the Assessment Appeals procedure.

The Centre Co-Ordinator and the CEO will supervise the Complaints Procedure.

If you need any help or support you can contact the Team:

Chris Luty	CEO	07885 826128 chris.luty@bctg.org.uk
Jemma Sutton	Centre Co-Ordinator	0791948 5912 jemma.sutton@furthertraining.co.uk

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

The aims of this Handbook are to provide a practical approach to the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE process, while maintaining the highest standard of provision.

The specific objectives of the internal quality assurance Handbook are:

- To support and guide assessors and IQA's
- To produce a consistent system of assessment/verification
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the verification process
- To provide recording documentation which can be used in the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE process
- To provide the process of appeal against assessment decisions
- To ensure all learners have access to fair and reliable assessment judgements that are secure and meet awarding organisations standards

The following publications have been used for guidance in the production of this handbook:

<https://www.i-l-m.com/trainers-and-centres/guides-and-resources?n=1000&spdt=policies&tab=centresupport#centresupport>

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/delivering-our-qualifications/centre-development/centre-document-library/policies-and-procedures>

3 POLICY

1.0 Purpose

Although there are a wide range of programmes on offer at FURTHER, it is the intention that the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE process will set minimum standards to ensure a consistent approach across all areas.

The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER has 4 main areas of responsibility:

- Carry out and evaluate internal assessment and quality assurance systems
- Supporting assessors
- Providing advice, guidance and support to his/her assessors and monitor the quality
- Maintaining internal quality assurance documentation and meet external awarding organisational quality assurance requirements

2.0 Scope

All programmes/awards offered by FURTHER through the C & G and ILM awarding organisation should follow internal quality assurance/moderation process instructions as indicated in the assessment strategy and specification of each qualification.

3.0 Responsibility

The Centre Co-Ordinator will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

4.0 Policy

- 4.1 Each relevant programme will be allocated at least one INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER who will be responsible for quality assuring assessment plans/briefs and assessment decisions, along with all relevant documentation used. Jemma Sutton will hold overall responsibility for this.
- 4.2 All INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's will either hold D34/V1/TAQA or be working towards TAQA.

The Centre Co-Ordinator will coordinate and monitor the process and provide support to INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's, assessors, administration staff and business development officers.

4.3 Standardised FURTHER recording documentation will be used for recording the internal quality assurance process.

4.4 Assessors and INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's will attend standardisation meetings. Learning & Development assessor/standardisation meetings will be held at least on a three monthly basis. If a 3 monthly meeting is missed by any assessor, whether it be an employed or freelance assessor without a valid reason, no further learners will be issued until further notice or until attendance at the next meeting has taken place.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 ROLE OF THE CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR

- Coordinates and monitors the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE process to ensure that quality control procedures for assessment are in place and are operating efficiently in all areas
- Disseminates information from awarding organisations
- Supports INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's and contributes to the development of the assessment team
- Identifies and takes on the Internal quality assurance part in staff development in this area
- Summarises External quality assurer reports and follow up actions with the assessment team
- Arbitrates when agreement cannot be reached between assessors and INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's
- Updates FURTHER INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE systems/handbook, yearly

4.2 ROLE OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will normally act as the main point of contact between the Centre and C & G and ILM through the EQA.

The main responsibilities are:

- Overseeing ALL administration – including registration and results
- Assuring fair and equal access to assessment for all learners
- Monitoring the conduct of assessments
- Sampling learner evidence to quality assure assessment decisions
- Assuring the quality of the systems and procedures are used for assessment and verification
- Supporting and guiding assessors and advisers
- Maintaining up-to-date quality assurance and assessment records
- Providing information for analysis by the Centre and C & G and ILM
- Ensuring that assessors are familiar with FURTHER systems and assessment strategy
- Ensuring confidentiality and security of all records and portfolios is maintained at all times
- Ensuring security of all external assessment papers and to ensure they are kept locked in an appropriate fire proof cabinet until the date in which the external assessment takes place
- Managing the workload of assessors (ratio of learners to assessors)
- The Accredited Awards Manger will hold a monthly or quarterly one to one with individual assessors, depending on experience with assessment and occupational area. In addition to the face to face one to one activity, the Accredited Awards Manager will telephone all assessors on a weekly basis, thus ensuring any issues, problems or concerns are identified early and support and action plan be agreed by all parties.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's will sample (using the sampling strategy document - electronic) a range of assessment decision taken from assessors, learners and units as follows:

Sampling Ratio

All new awards/standards/assessors	100%
Newly qualified assessors	100%
Ongoing awards/standards	25-50%
Qualified assessors	25-50%

4.3 ROLE OF THE ASSESSOR/S

- To determine the sources of evidence to be used
- To make sure that the evidence planned is clearly related to the criteria to be assessed
- To ensure access to fair and reliable assessment
- To discuss and agree assessment plans with the learner and others who may be affected
- To ensure that the assessment plan meets all the performance criteria
- To conduct assessment and judge results
- To judge evidence accurately against the criteria only
- When assessing differing sources of evidence, ensure that it can be reliably attributed to the learner
- To ensure that any inconsistencies are clarified and resolved
- To provide feedback to the learner following each assessment decision
- To encourage the learner to see clarification and advice
- To ensure that all records are legible and accurate
- To maintain learner confidentiality
- To liaise with the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER and seek advice on any issues that need clarification
- To keep abreast of the standards that the learner is working towards
- To actively be involved in your own training and development.
- To attend peer group meetings on a regular basis in order to share good practice
- To attend at the request of the Centre Co-Ordinator any external training activity as appropriate.
- Freelance assessors to refer to their SLA for guidance.

4.4 ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

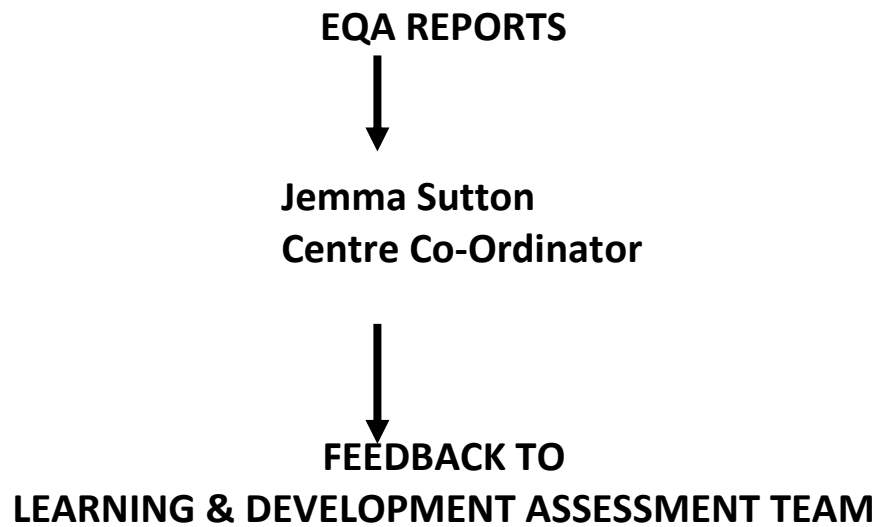
Check Assessor details – specifically CVs, Assessor qualification (D, A & V units AND/OR TAQA), development plans, workloads, training needs and continuous professional development logs/journals (CPD development).

- Sample assessment decisions, assessment plans and assignment briefs to confirm that national standards are being met
- Record comments in the External Quality ASSURER's report
- Sign for acceptance of units and full qualifications
- Make recommendations where appropriate
- Promote and improve quality
- Provide information, advice and support
- Communicate and feedback to the internal quality assurer and assessment team
- Check registrations of learners
- Inspect records
- Satellite and off-site provision
- Provide feedback to the awarding organisation on the performance of its centres' in maintaining the consistent application of the national occupational standards
- Recommend to the awarding organisation the imposition of an appropriate sanction or penalty, as specified – in cases where a centre is failing to comply with the requirements of the approved centre criteria. Awarding bodies must monitor the consistency of external quality ASSURER's in applying the tariff of sanctions and penalties. The regulatory authorities will, in turn, monitor the awarding organisations use of the tariff.

4.5 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER CHECK LIST

1. Course is valid to run (Scheme Approval)
2. All learners are registered
3. Related staff are qualified to awarding organisation standards or working towards it
4. Staff appraisal or training needs analysis has been conducted
5. All new assessors are being supported and monitored
6. Records of course team meetings are available
7. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER records are up to date
8. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE is taking place over the duration of the course not end loaded
9. All centre assignments that may have been developed have been internally verified/moderated.
10. A balance of units and assessors is internally quality assured
11. Evidence of Internal Quality ASSURER's supporting assessors
12. Detailed feedback from Internal Quality assurers to Assessors
13. Learners issued with appeals procedures
14. Action points from previous EQA visit recorded and actioned
15. Evidence of advice and guidance induction seen to be appropriate for learners
16. Equality of opportunity/H & S and safeguarding is apparent, relating to types of learners evidence
17. New technology is integrated into this programme/award
18. Teaching, learning materials, resources and equipment are adequate
19. Staff are occupationally/technically competent
20. Records of assessor/INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER signatures/initials are issued
21. Records are stored securely and access is appropriately controlled
22. Learner support is available.

4.6 PROCEDURE FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORTS AND ACTION FOLLOW-UP



- Read it and summarise information/action points, disseminate to Assessment team
NO ACTION REQUIRED –
- EQA report to be forwarded to the CEO and stored electronically in the relevant EQA visit folder.

Where actions have been identified, this will be discussed and shared at the next assessor meeting in order to move forward.

5. ASSESSMENT AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The Appeals Procedure has 3 stages:

- Informal stage
- Appeals Panel
- Refer to awarding organisation

All Appeals will be notified to the allocated Internal Quality Assurer, who will present findings if appropriate to the Centre Co-Ordinator and CEO.

1.0 STAGE ONE

- 1.1 A learner who wishes to appeal against an assessment decision should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the trainer/assessor concerned. Wherever possible the Assessor and the learner should come to a mutually agreed decision concerning the assessment.

2.0 STAGE TWO

- 2.1 If the learner is still dissatisfied after completion of Stage One, then s/he may make a formal appeal against the assessment decision.
- 2.2 The learner will notify the Internal Quality Assurer that they wish to make a formal appeal against an assessment decision. The Internal Quality will arrange for the evidence and relating documentation to be submitted to an appeals panel.
- 2.3 The Internal Quality Assurer will inform the Centre Co-Ordinator that an appeal has been lodged.
- 2.4 The Appeals Panel will consist of:

CEO, Chris Luty
Centre Manager, Jemma Sutton
Another IQA who has not investigated initially
Plus one other with relevant vocational related expertise
- 2.5 The learner must set out specific reasons s/he wishes the appeal to be considered. This may be done in writing or in discussion with the panel at the discretion of the learner. The learner may wish to be accompanied by a friend.
- 2.6 The Assessor's written comments on the reason for the assessment decision must be made available to the Appeals Panel.

- 2.7 The Appeals Panel will appoint a trainer/assessor to reassess the work prior to their meeting.
- 2.8 The Appeals Panel will consider the appeal within 10 working days of the formal appeal being notified. The meeting **must** be recorded.
- 2.9 The Appeals Panel will have the power to confirm or amend the assessment decision. The decision of the appeal will be notified to the learner as rapidly as possible.

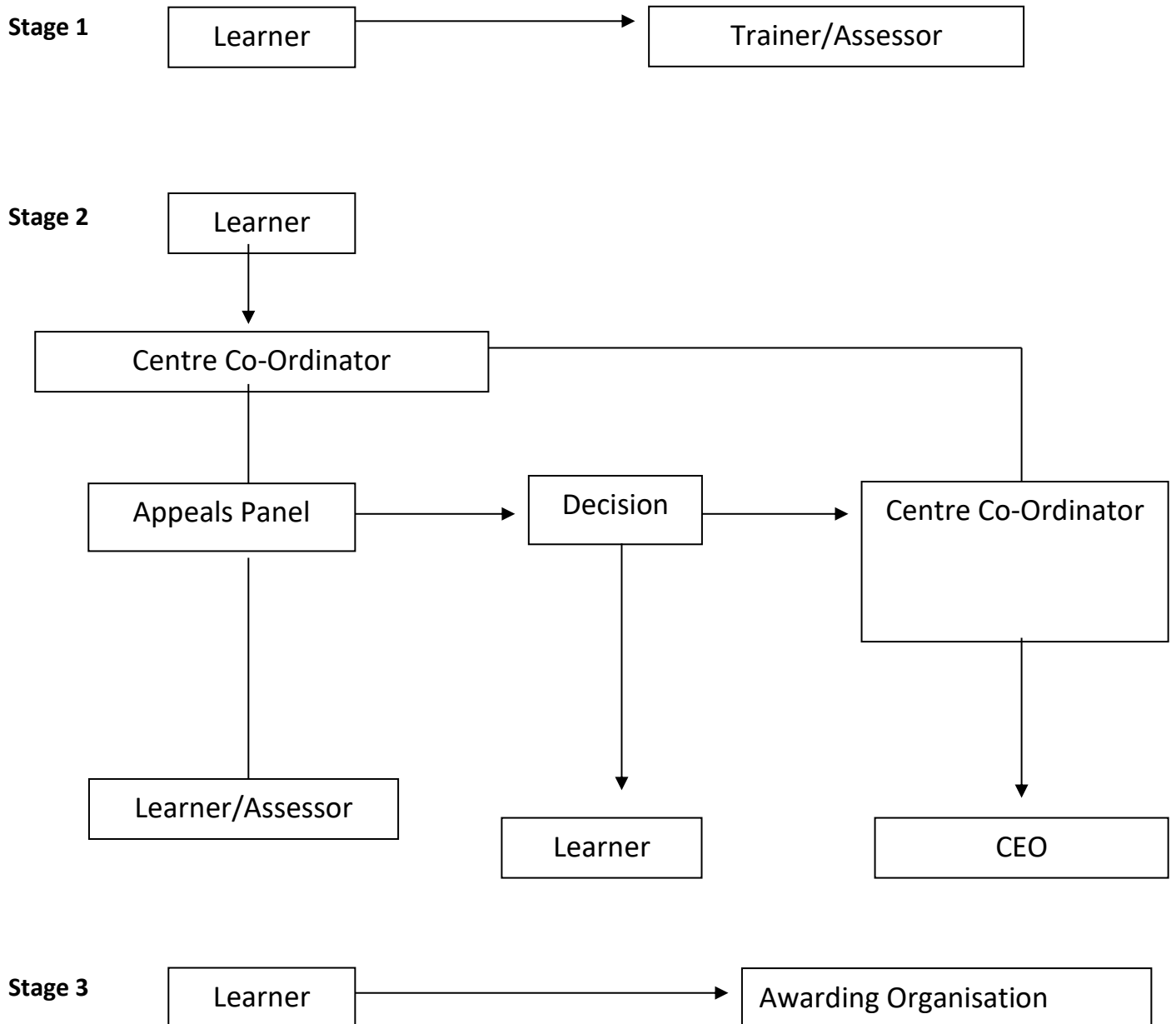
3.0 STAGE THREE

Where a learner is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeals panel, the learner may appeal to the Awarding Organisation.

A failed appeal against an assessment decision will not disbar a learner from making a formal complaint under the appropriate quality procedures.

2.10

APPEALS PROCEDURE



6. Customer Complaints Policy & Procedure

Whilst the organisation strives to ensure that at all times customers, learners, clients and users of our programmes and services will be fully satisfied, we acknowledge that there may be occasions where this is not always the case.

Therefore in the instance where any individual is unhappy with the service we have provided, the following procedure will apply.

Stage One

Where any individual is unhappy with a programme or a service provided, they should write, within **14 Days**, stating the nature of their complaint to:

The Centre Co-Ordinator
Further Training
European Business Park
Taylors Lane
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 2BN

Stage Two

Upon receipt of the letter of complaint the Centre Co-Ordinator will be responsible in ensuring that the complaint is investigated. Within **21 Days** of receipt the letter of complaint the Centre Co-Ordinator will write to the individual explaining the outcomes of the investigation, and describing how their grievance will be addressed.

If the complaint cannot be investigated within 21 days, the Centre Co-Ordinator will write to the individual stating this and indicating when the investigation will be completed and a response provided.

Stage Three

If the individual is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the proposed remedial action, they can write directly to the CEO of Further Training Limited using the same address outlined above. The CEO will then investigate and write to the individual, describing the outcomes of the investigation and his final decision within **28 Days** of notification of the complaint. If the complaint cannot be investigated within this timescale, the CEO will write to the individual stating when an investigation will be completed.

In parallel to this Complaints Procedure all learners undertaking accredited qualifications with Further are at liberty to raise issues and concerns as outlined by the various Awarding Organisations. This procedure will have been notified to each learner upon registration for his or her award.

7. THE SAMPLING STRATEGY

The sampling strategy sets out the standard Internal Quality Assurers and assessors should work towards.

It aims to:

- Establish a standardised approach to internal verification and assessment
- Guide FURTHER assessors and INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's to meet Awarding Organisation Standards particularly of NVQ and Learning & Development.
- Reflect FURTHER quality assurance policy/system/standards
- Provide EQAs with sharp but comprehensive information
- Ensure that FURTHER learners have equality of opportunity in all judgements impacting upon their progression

The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will look at the assessment decisions of all of his/her assessors. Initially 100% of their decisions for, say, the first six/twelve months for unqualified and inexperienced assessors. The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will decide on the actual sample size, taking into account the experience of the assessors, and timing and by learner cohort. Following on from the level of experience of the assessor the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will sample the full range of assessor methods. These will include observations, product evidence, professional discussion, independent assessment, project work, simulation, witness testimony, question and answers and RPL. The range and frequency of this will vary from award to award, NVQ/QCF to NVQ/QCF (varying NVQ/QCF). The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER must show that they are aware of any "special" assessment tools or methods employed by the assessor. Following on from this the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will then show how they have dealt with this, ie if learners have used CD, DVR or video, or maybe a learner has requested RPL. These factors will have influenced who, what, where and especially why particular INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER has been targeted. The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will record the rationale behind what sort of sampling they will be conducting and how it dovetails into that of the assessor. This will be available for the scrutiny of the EQA.

Although samples can be selected at random, it is often more efficient to plan a sample which targets particular characteristics that influence assessment. For example, the following characteristics in the table overleaf may influence what is included in a sample.

Characteristic	Features which should be taken into account when selecting a sample
The number and type of learners	Age, gender, ethnic origin, with/without a disability, learners with special assessment needs
The number of assessors and their experience	Experienced/inexperienced, qualified or unqualified, assessment load, occupational background
The elements within the NVQ/QCF and Learning & Development	Those that occur frequently/rarely, those that are critical to the occupation role, those which are problematic e.g. with extensive range statements
The range of assessment methods used	Observation of work practice, questioning, witness testimony, prior achievements, professional discussion, independent assessment, products of work, simulations*, written tests, projects and assignments. (*You have specific responsibility for ensuring these produce reliable evidence)
The type of records of assessment	Assessor reports' records, learner evidence files/portfolios
The number and range of assessment locations	In the workplace, off-the-job, several different sites

8. PROCESS AND GUIDANCE

APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

Records all Accredited Awards and STANDARDS offered by FURTHER.

It lists all trainers/assessors and internal quality assurers.

It is also a vital check that the course is still valid to run.

The Centre Co-Ordinator has sole responsibility for completing relevant application documentation for approval.

TRAINER/ASSESSOR TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's should remember that it is their duty to guide, support and ensure the continuing professional development of assessors allocated to them.

For new and unqualified assessors extra support may be needed, in which case any agreements made, must be recorded. Additionally the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will inform the assessors that sampling will be increased substantially for say 6-12 months, or until the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER records that sufficient experience has been gained to reduce the ratios. This training needs analysis is in no way an alternative or replacement for the FURTHER appraisal conducted by managers.

CPD log will be the responsibility of the assessor to update and maintain and send to the Centre Co-Ordinator on a yearly basis, normally end of July to fit contractual requirements.

NEW TRAINER/ASSESSOR INDUCTION PROGRAMME CHECKLIST

To conduct induction of new assessors to the team is essential. This process should inform them of many very important factors relating to the accredited awards. The Centre Co-Ordinator/INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER will carry out this induction. The induction process will consist of at least a four week shadowing/settling in period, (depending on experience) this will ensure consistency is followed from the onset.

SAMPLING PLAN

This plan forms a crucial part of the overall sampling strategy and shows a Unit pathway of the programme coupled with identifying each assessor against each unit. This gives a clear picture of the extent of internal quality assurance in line with the Sampling Strategy. It also gives the IQA the chance to ensure that early and interim verification is taking place. This avoids problems experienced by the learner not being picked up until it is too late.

The INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER should ensure that assessors are reviewing while communicating with their learners at all stages of the programme and not the end. This is a big risk area where the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER should ensure that end loading does not take place. This planner should eliminate learner problems not being picked up by the assessor by the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER conducting early internal quality assurance of assessments and assessor performance.

IQA REPORT ON ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

The IQA will record on sampling report that the learner has met the standards/requirements within a specified unit.

This shows clearly that the learner has or has not provided the required amount of evidence. It also shows by evidence referencing that the assessor and IQA understand the standards. The assessor should ensure that the learner has a well-organised portfolio, which shows clearly division between units and by index cross-reference evidence. The sampling report does not in any way replace evidence of written summative/formative feedback from the assessor to the learners.

This comprehensive document records a great deal of important data and must be fully explained to all assessors. It enables both the assessor and IQA to use a wide range of assessment methods, although the frequency and use of particular assessment methods may vary depending on the level and type of programme. IQA's and assessors should avoid in all instances simply "agreeing" with decisions or only signing off evidence.

DOCUMENTATION/EVIDENCE REFERENCING

Multi-purpose record will be used to agree and develop assessment plans, as well as for ongoing assessment and feedback. Correct evidence matrices devised by Further Training will be used at all times.

The use of eAssessor came to a stop at the end of September 2023. All live learners at that point, and any new learners will use the Further Training Google Drive as a replacement portfolio system. Any fast track courses will use paper-based portfolios.

The lead assessor /IQA will sample all e portfolios across all assessors over a period of time using a range of sampling methods.

IQA REPORTING/OBSERVATION

Observing the assessor gives the IQA many opportunities. The timing of this will be agreed when the sampling planner is being completed, identifying which assessment method is to be observed.

The quality of assessment planning as well as trainer/assessor's records/reports should be included in the review. This is also the opportunity for the IQA to meet learners and allow them to reflect on how things are progressing.

LEARNERS INTERVIEW RECORD

Contact with the learner is important for both the INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER and learner alike. There are many crucial questions to be asked at this stage, some may make the difference between "dropping out" and completing the programme. If anomalies are found then an increased sample of learners should be interviewed and then a meeting with the assessors should be planned.

LEARNERS TELEPHONE 'CUSTOMER SERVICE' REVIEW

A sample of learners will be telephoned on a regular basis after start of the programme. This in turn will be fed through to the Further MI system. It will also link into Centre Co-Ordinators monitoring system.

ASSESSOR/TRAINER ONE TO ONE AND APPRAISALS

All assessors/trainers will undertake a one to one with the Centre Co-ordinator, bi monthly. Findings from the lead assessor/IQA sampling outcomes will be addressed accordingly, with an action plan of support being implemented to share good practice and build on any development needs. The

depth and content of support will be agreed between the Centre Co-ordinator and lead assessor/IQA.

During the bi monthly one to one's, data reports will be x referenced and matched with visit/assessments as defined within eAssessor, and in line with the lead assessor/IQA reports.

The Centre Co-Ordinator will share information from all one to one activity with the lead IQA, who will incorporate within her sampling across the whole learner journey. The Centre Co-Ordinator and lead IQA will work closely to identify issues and trends, and where necessary devise an action plan of support for assessor/trainers to ensure they meet required targets and deadlines effectively.

When support measures have been implemented, and whereby improvement suggestions are not being addressed accordingly, the Centre Co-ordinator will bring to the attention of the CEO to establish next steps within the support process.

The above one to ones will feed into interim and yearly appraisals and in line with company KPI's. ALL Further Training staff must ensure they familiarise themselves with company staff handbook and subsequent policies.

IQA AND TRAINER/ASSESSOR RECORD

This is an information-gathering tool. It updates the central records on existing INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER's and their assessors and checks that:

- The training needs meetings have been conducted
- That standardisation meetings have been held
- All documents are held securely either electronically or in lever arch folders, and in adherence to GDPR.

IQA's SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

On an annual basis conduct a self-assessment of quality assurance policies and procedures held at FURTHER for all accredited awards.

IQA/ASSESSOR/TRAINER SICKNESS

In the event of an assessor/trainer being off sick, depending on the length of absence, the Centre Manager will in the first instance notify the CEO and IQA.

The Centre Co-ordinator, or in her absence the lead IQA will notify assessor/trainer learners of the need to cancel any visits during the absence.

Where it is identified that an assessor/trainer may have to take long term absence, over 7 days including weekends, the Centre Co-ordinator will notify learners up to a period of 2 weeks.

In any instant where there may be prolonged absence by an assessor/trainer, the Centre Co-ordinator will make the decision to ensure all learners are receiving regular contact with the

IQA, or an experienced assessor/trainer in that given sector. Where a learner may be near the end of their learning journey, so as not to disadvantage the learner, another assessor/trainer will be allocated, in order for them to achieve their learning programme with minimum disruption.

