



Centre Quality Assurance Guidance

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Quality assurance overview

Qualsafe Awards (QA) is committed to ensuring that the systems, policies and procedures in place for the design, delivery and award of qualifications are continually monitored and reviewed.

The combination of QA's quality assurance arrangements and those we require from our Centres makes sure all individuals involved in the delivery and assessment of its qualifications can be confident of their continued quality and suitability. In this way, we promote public confidence, maintain the national standards and protect the interests of Learners.

We require Centre staff to read and understand our key policies and procedures and to abide by their contents. Centres are responsible for keeping up to date with any information and guidance issued by QA and any communications regarding changes in policies, systems or procedures. Centres must also make sure they keep their staff informed of relevant information and/or changes.

Every Centre has a dedicated Customer Relationship Executive (CRE) experienced in supporting organisations through the early stages of their approval and providing ongoing guidance. Centres are encouraged to contact QA with any queries relating to quality assurance or any other policies/procedures and our aim is to provide prompt and effective clarification.

Note: throughout this document "Trainer" refers to all individuals responsible for training and/or assessing Learners.

Centre quality assurance processes

Our requirements for Centre quality assurance are designed to make sure that over time all Trainers, qualifications, units, assessments and venues are quality assured. In this way all individuals involved in the delivery, assessment and award of QA qualifications can be assured of their consistency, validity and reliability across Centres and over time.

Centres are responsible for making sure that adequate quality assurance is carried out in line with this document and the specific quality assurance guidance QA has developed for each qualification suite it makes available.

Centres must outline the details of their quality assurance arrangements in their own internal quality assurance policy. QA has made available an internal quality assurance policy template for Centres.

IQAs should refer to the relevant *Trainer risk rating guidance* and assign a risk rating to each Trainer that fully reflects their knowledge, experience and record of quality assurance to date. The risk rating assigned to Trainers will help IQAs determine the quality assurance activity to be carried out for each Trainer and the frequency this should be undertaken.

Note: if a Trainer is responsible for delivering more than one suite of qualifications they must be assigned a risk rating per suite.

All internal quality assurance activity must be recorded and be made available for review on request by QA and our representatives, e.g. External Quality Assurers (EQAs).

If Centres do not carry out internal quality assurance activity in line with QA's requirements, sanctions may be applied. For more detail please refer to the *Sanctions Policy*.

Internal quality assurers

QA requires Centres to appoint suitable individuals as Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs). IQAs have specific responsibilities and should work closely with your Centre's Responsible Person and Trainers to make sure standards for the delivery and assessment of qualifications are consistent and maintained across your organisation.

The role of the IQA is integral to your Centre, promoting the continual professional development of Trainers and demonstrating your commitment to quality.

In order to secure and maintain approval from QA Centres need a minimum staffing requirement for each qualification suite they deliver:

Trainers	Responsible for the delivery and assessment of qualifications
Internal Quality Assurer	Responsible for verifying the delivery, assessment and award of qualifications

Although you must have minimum staffing levels, one person could perform multiple roles. If suitably qualified individuals are also able to work across qualification suites.

Note: individuals are not permitted to carry out quality assurance on a qualification/assessment where they were involved in the process of delivery or assessment.

Centres must make sure they have sufficient resources to ensure objective and impartial quality assurance at all times. It is recommended that "reciprocal" IQA activity (two IQAs quality assuring one another) be avoided wherever possible in order to maximise objectivity.

Qualifications, knowledge and experience

IQAs must be suitably competent, experienced and qualified to quality assure specific qualifications. For further details of the IQAs requirements, please refer to the relevant qualification specification.

Your Centre's IQA must have a good awareness of QA's requirements relating to administrative processes and systems (e.g. assessment procedures and how to use the Customer Portal) in addition to your internal quality assurance policy.

QA can provide ongoing advice and examples of best practice with regards to course administration and the delivery of training and assessments.

Roles and responsibilities

The IQA must undertake specific quality assurance activities:

- Trainer risk ratings (including rationale)
- Desk based reviews
- Trainer observations
- Action plans
- Sampling

Overall the IQA should:

- Maintain up to date knowledge of QA's policies and procedures
- Review qualification delivery and assessment practices, providing guidance and support to support Centre staff as required
- Ensure quality and consistency of qualification delivery, assessment and administration across all Centre staff and qualifications
- Maintain adequate records of their quality assurance activity (uploading information to the Customer Portal as required)
- Review the quality of venues and equipment and make appropriate recommendations
- Follow up on the progress/resolution of action plans
- Provide feedback to QA and work with our EQAs

Trainer risk ratings

QA appreciates that each Centre will manage its Trainers and programme of quality assurance differently. Your IQA should refer to the *Trainer risk rating guidance* for the relevant qualification suite and assign them with a risk rating of high, medium or low considering the following:

- Trainers experience and skill level
- Trainers record of quality assurance
- Any major or minor concerns that have been identified

IQAs should regularly review Trainer risk ratings and make sure they are kept up to date on the basis of continued quality assurance activity. Each time a Trainer risk rating is updated your IQA must provide a rationale for the decision.

Desk based reviews

Desk based reviews provide your IQA with the opportunity to sample and evaluate the quality and reliability of documentation completed during the delivery and assessment of a qualification. IQAs should confirm the quality of record keeping, the authenticity of Learner evidence and accuracy and consistency across assessment decisions.

First aid qualification suite

- Access and submit the *Desk based review form* online on the Centre Quality Assurance section of the Customer Portal
- Answer all the questions on the form, thinking carefully about each question and providing full and honest answers

All other qualification suites

- Download and use the appropriate *Desk based review form* from the Customer Portal
- Answer all the questions on the form, thinking carefully about each question and providing full and honest answers
- Note: records of completed forms must be stored securely at your Centre.

Trainer observations

During a Trainer observation your IQA has the opportunity to witness qualification delivery first hand in order to verify the quality of teaching and the validity of assessment methods. Observing qualification and assessment delivery allows IQAs to produce evidence that confirms that Learners are meeting all of the learning outcomes for a qualification and that Learner results accurately reflect their ability.

IQAs must follow the below process in order to complete a Trainer observation:

First aid qualification suite

- Access and submit the *Trainer observation form online* on the Centre Quality Assurance section of the Customer Portal
- Answer all the questions on the form, thinking carefully about each question and providing full and honest answers

All other qualification suites

- Download and use the appropriate *Trainer observation form* from the Customer Portal
- Answer all the questions on the form, thinking carefully about each question and providing full and honest answers
- Note: records of completed forms must be stored securely at your Centre

Action plans

IQAs are responsible for providing Centre staff with feedback on the results of their quality assurance activities across qualifications and qualification suites.

IQAs should determine whether Trainers require further support and/or training. If so, the IQA must develop an action plan that outlines the issue raised and the detail of any recommendations, outlining the issue raised and recommendations for remedial action. The IQA should consider appropriate timescales and responsibility for resolution, record evidence of the action plan and completion rationales.

IQAs must contact QA immediately if they identify any serious issues (e.g. if they suspect malpractice/maladministration).

Sampling

Centres must develop a plan for quality assurance to ensure that over time an adequate sample of qualifications and assessments for Trainers are reviewed at your Centre. IQAs must regularly review course documentation and delivery across all:

- Qualifications
- Units
- Assessments

In addition to reviewing:

- Trainer qualifications/portfolios
- Venues
- Equipment

First aid qualification suite

The Centre Quality Assurance section of the Customer Portal is a useful tool for helping IQAs prioritise their quality assurance activity.

The system uses information submitted to create a live quality assurance profile for Trainers and a summary of the qualifications, units and assessments that have been quality assured. This allows existing and new IQAs at your Centre to identify any gaps in a Trainers quality assurance record and plan future monitoring activity.

Record keeping

Centres must retain records for a minimum of three years. Records must be made available to QA, its representatives or regulators on request. QA may request documentation for review as part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance activities. This includes:

- Course documentation including Learner Registers, learner evidence (e.g. Answer Papers), records of assessment decisions and feedback forms
- Internal quality assurance documentation including Desk based review forms, Trainer observation forms and details of any action plans. Note: records for qualifications in the first aid suite should be uploaded directly to the Quality Assurance section of the Customer Portal. For all other qualification suites, records should be stored as per your Centre's internal quality assurance policy
- Records of reasonable adjustments/special considerations and any supporting evidence
- Records of appeals, enquires and complaints

Working with External Quality Assurers

QA operates a system of ongoing monitoring and feedback activity for approved Centres. EQAs are an important part of our quality assurance programme and have the overall purpose of maintaining national standards of qualifications and assessment practices.

With specialist knowledge and experience of QA qualifications, requirements and processes, EQAs are in a position to provide valuable guidance and support to Centres with the administration, delivery and assessment of regulated qualifications. EQAs also seek feedback from Centres about their experience of QA's qualifications, assessments and systems.

Centres will receive an EQA visit within the first 12 months of delivering their first regulated qualification. Visits will then be arranged on an ongoing basis.

EQAs will ideally make their visit when a training course is scheduled with the Centres IQA present and may want to review a selection of record, details of which will be provided to the Centre prior to the visit.

During visits EQAs:

- Meet and speak with key Centre staff involved in the administration, delivery and assessment of QA qualifications
- Confirm the Centres understanding of QA's processes and procedures and review the Centre's quality assurance arrangements (including the Centre's internal quality assurance policy)
- Observe the delivery of QA qualifications and assessments
- Review the delivery and administration of assessments to ensure they are carried out in line with QA requirements.

After the visit the EQA will send your Centre a completed report about the visit, which will include:

- Detail of the individuals met, records reviewed and any training or assessments observed
- Identified areas of good practice
- Any recommendations or action plans
- Feedback from the Centre about QA qualifications, assessments, policies, procedures and systems.

The EQAs feedback along with any recommendations and/or action plans should be communicated to all relevant Centre staff. The Centre is responsible for following up on any recommendations and action plans issued to them.

QA is happy to discuss the visit and report and to provide any further guidance to Centres.