Internal Quality Assurance Policy

Introduction

Internal Quality Assurance is an important role as it maintains quality standards and monitors the quality and assurance of qualification and unit delivery and certification. The Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) is the key contact between the Centre and Awarding Organisation in relation to monitoring activities.

There are three main aspects to the role of the internal quality assurer

1. Moderating assessments
2. Developing and supporting assessors
3. Managing quality of qualification delivery

The three functions are explored below. This sets the policy for internal quality assurance in the centre to meet national requirements.

1. Moderating Assessments

Aim:

- To ensure consistent and reliable assessment and IQA decisions
- To monitor the quality of assessments and highlight problems, trends and development needs of assessors.

Moderating assessment is fundamentally about maintaining the quality of assessments for all learners and forms the main part of the IQA's role. There are three strands to moderating assessments.

1. Sampling assessments
2. Monitoring assessment practice
3. Standardising assessment judgements

The three strands of moderating assessments are explored below and set the policy for the centre.

Moderation sampling strategy

Sampling of assessments should involve the reviewing of the quality of assessor's judgements at both interim and summative stages. Both stages are equally important to the IQA process.

Interim Sampling

This method is important because it allows the Internal Quality Assurer to 'dip into' the assessment process with the learner at different stages in the process. Activities will include reviewing the learners work (a) before decisions have been made on any unit and (b) by looking at portfolios with one or two units completed. This method of internal quality assurance will entail checking the key tracking record given to learners by assessors; this will enable the IQA to evaluate the quality of formative guidance on assessment and the effectiveness of assessment planning.

Interim sampling also enables the IQA to identify problems at an early stage and so avoid the situation of turning down final decisions. It also highlights individual assessor needs for support or training, which in turn can be used to develop the assessment team as a whole. Similarly, it provides an opportunity to identify and share good practice within the centre and amongst the staff of the centre.

Summative Sampling

This method of sampling will entail reviewing the quality of assessment decisions by evaluating how the assessor has reached that decision. The IQA must be able to follow an audit trail, which clearly demonstrates that the assessor has checked that the evidence presented meets the evidence requirements. Evidence must have been confirmed by the assessor as:

Valid	relevant to the standards for which competence is claimed
Authentic	produced by the learner
Reliable	accurately reflects the level of performance which has been consistently demonstrated by the learner
Current	sufficiently recent to be confident the same level of skill/understanding/knowledge exists at the time of claim
Sufficient	meets in full ALL the requirements of the standards

The sampling strategy is agreed with the External Quality Assurer and is dependent upon the following

- Size of the sample needed to ensure reliability
- Assessment methods used
- Assessors - number, experience, workload and location of sites
- Learner cohort e.g. programme types, start dates, different employees
- The qualification (s) -particularly if new/revised
- All units and particularly focusing on problem unit(s)

Monitoring Assessment Practice

The second strand is to monitor assessment practice

Aims

1. To ensure that national standards of assessment are adhered to by all assessors
2. To identify problem areas where assessors require advice/ development
3. To ensure that learners are aware of and satisfied with the assessment process

Monitoring assessment involves the IQA observing the assessors in action, looking at how they conduct an assessment and providing them with feedback on their performance. It also includes reviewing the internal quality assurance records completed with each Assessor and evaluating all aspects of their performance as recorded in the IQA records. It is the role of the lead IQA/s to evaluate the performance of all its moderators and in turn the Assessors.

Standardising Assessment Judgements

The third strand is to standardise assessment judgements

Aims

1. To ensure that each assessor consistently makes valid decisions
2. To ensure that all Assessors make the same decision on the same evidence base
3. To ensure that all learners are assessed fairly

Standardisation is an important part of IQA duties. This will be carried out by collecting copies of evidence presented for unit accreditation and then each assessor making a judgement based on what is in front of them. Assessors may note any queries they may have e.g., further information needed or authentication of a piece of evidence. This process enables the IQA to check that assessors are asking the right questions when looking at a portfolio of evidence as well as arriving at the correct decisions, i.e., that the process as well as the judgement is sound.

This activity will be carried out by the IQA and assessor team and will also apply to the standardisation of internal quality assurance.

2. Developing and Supporting Assessors

The second duty of the IQA is to guide, support and ensure the continuing professional development (including occupational updating) of his/her team of Assessors. This will be carried out at the following stages:

- When an Assessor is new - to the team, the Centre or to the qualification/s

- When Standards change or guidance is revised
- Following an external moderator visit or other inspection
- Following an observation or appraisal

Supporting Assessors

- Ensure that all new Assessors receive an appropriate induction
- Help Assessors to interpret and apply the learning outcomes correctly and consistently through effective observation and mentoring
- Ensure that Assessors have opportunities to update and develop their Vocational and Assessor competence and maintain continual professional development
- Hold regular meetings with Assessors and lead **standardisation activities** quarterly, or as appropriate.
- Be responsible for ensuring that all assessors are aware of codes of practice, assessment strategies, national standards, awarding organisation guidance and appeals procedures.

Monitoring the quality of Assessors' performance

- Ensure that all Assessors meet occupational competence requirements and are either qualified or working towards the assessor award.
- Ensure that all Assessors are aware of and use agreed documentation and record decisions accurately and promptly, and store records securely.
- Develop a sampling plan covering a range of candidates, units and assessment types and keep it up to date.
- Observations of Assessors in the field must be planned and completed at the specific frequency; this will be dependent upon delivery frequency of each specific Assessor but as a general guide an observation should be carried out every 3 months minimum for new awarding body/qualification/assessor delivery, or every 12 months minimum for experienced Assessors who continually meet the required standards. Records of these observations will be completed by the Observer and feedback provided to the Assessor at a convenient point after the assessment has taken place. Observation records and action plans will be recorded in the Centre file Quality section.

3. Managing the Quality of QUALIFICATION Delivery

The third main duty of the Internal Quality Assurer is to manage the quality of qualification delivery

Aims

1. To ensure assessment resources - including personnel - are effectively managed and planned
2. To provide a quality assurance role
3. To provide a link between the awarding body, the RQF and other regulatory bodies.

The IQA will have a full role in managing the assessment team through systematic evaluation of each learner's assessment needs. The IQA will hold up to date information on individual learner progress as well as an overall picture of potential new learners and assessor availability both current and projected. The IQA will hold regular meetings of the assessment team.

Each programme will be allocated an IQA. Their role will be in assuring and ensuring quality standards in the delivery and assessment of qualifications and will in turn form an integral part of the organisation's quality assurance. Carrying out self-assessment of the centre's performance against the requirements of the Code of Practice is also a key part of the role.

The IQA is the key link between the External Quality Assurer and the Centre. The following information will be held by each IQA:

- Number of current registered learners per qualification level
- Learner enrolment and awarding body registration details
- Assessor details - specifically CV's assessor qualifications. Development plans. Workloads
- Learners progress reviews and achievements, special assessment requirements

- Assessment records and plans
- Learner support resources available
- Assessment sites
- Sampling strategy
- Internal quality assurance records including feedback to assessors, discussions with learners
- Records of claims for certification
- Candidate evidence files/portfolios

All learner portfolios will be securely held as required by the External or Internal Quality Assurer; both those awaiting verification internally or externally. All assessor records will be retained for a minimum of 3 years and be available for external verification and allow for any appeals to be progressed and resolved.

Signatures
A signature sheet will be held by the IQA to refer to and prove authenticity of documents provided for IQA. This sheet will contain: Signature, initials, printing of full name and date. This sheet should be updated at Standardisation meetings to ensure relevant and fit for purpose.

Additional Responsibilities of the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)

The IQA will take a key role within the internal appeals procedure and adjudicate in assessment disputes or variances. The IQA's assessment decision will take precedence over the assessor's decision.

The IQA will take a lead role by understanding the legal requirements in terms of maintaining records such as data protection, confidentiality, and secure storage of records. IQAs will maintain all assessment records meeting Gecko Programmes's/Awarding body requirements.

The IQA will take a lead role in the evaluation of trends in terms of equality, diversity and where appropriate bilingualism in relation to assessment decisions, monitoring retention and achievement rates. The IQA role and associated responsibilities as indicated in the above is key to the implementation of the Centre's IQA policy and strategy.

In summary – IQAs will be involved with recruiting and developing deliverers and assessors, guiding and supporting them, planning a rigorous and robust risk managed assessment and sampling strategy, organising standardisation events, ensuring Gecko Programmes/Awarding Body policies and procedures are adhered to, communication, storing and recording information to provide a clear audit trail and liaise with the EQA. All IQAs must hold as a minimum, the L4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance Award and must have up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in assessment and quality assurance and show current evidence of continuing professional development in assessment and quality assurance and improvement.

Assessors and IQAs will be responsible for recording and updating their CPD record and development plan on an ongoing and annual basis.

Coordination of Internal Quality Assurance Team
The Quality Team (QT) consisting of the Quality Manager, Lead IQAs and IQAs is responsible for ensuring that internal assurance is carried out effectively and is the link between assessors and external quality assurance. The QT will take responsibility for the following:

- preparation for EQA visits and liaising with the team to ensure that all staff requested to attend a visit are prepared for it.

- ensuring that the action points on the EQA report are met and will liaise with other relevant personnel to ensure that quality monitoring procedures are being followed and are fit for purpose.

- The QT will develop and prepare a sampling plan for internal assurance, which includes observation of assessment and portfolio sampling, and ensure that records are kept of all internal quality assurance activity

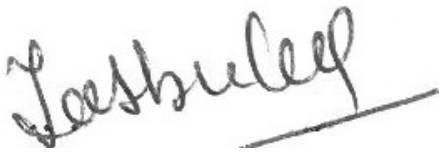
- work towards achieving and/or maintaining 'Direct Claims Status' (DCS) enabling the centre to claim certificates based on the authorisation of the IQA without having to hold an EQA (External Quality Assurance) visit.

- ensure that internal assurance is carried out according to internal procedures meeting the requirements of the awarding organisation.

- ensure that records are kept of all internal assurance activity.
- monitor progress and contribute to improving the quality of assessment and assurance through the annual quality improvement plan for the programme.
- ensure that equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices are upheld in the assessment process.
- ensure that professional updating is provided to the team following EQA visits and inspections.
- ensure revisions of standards are provided to Assessors as development occurs.
- oversee compliance requirements including counter-signing, registrations and certification claims

Countersigning Procedures
A qualified and occupationally competent person will countersign where an Assessor or IQA is not qualified as appropriate. The counter signatory will not undertake any other role in respect of that learner's award.

Declaration: I will review and revise this policy as necessary and at regular intervals:



Signature of Jasbir Behal, Managing Director, Gecko Programmes Ltd

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