

Quality Assurance and Standards Policy

Policy Review

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Aims

TradeTechs Northern Ltd 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 can 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 TradeTechs Northern Ltd provides such assurance.

Rationale

The company's 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 able to award such qualifications, the company must work with Awarding Organisations (AOs) and demonstrate that it can meet their assessment and quality assurance requirements.

Principles

Quality Assurance covers all aspects of the learning experience, and the procedures should be an effective blend of development, support, and compliance checks. TradeTechs Northern Ltd wants every learner to have a meaningful and valid leaning experience, and this means that the qualifications standards in terms of delivery, assessment, quality assurance and moderation must always be met with every learner. Quality assurance is about developing excellence in provision and improving the delivery of all personnel involved in the programme.

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 must identify and act on performance that requires development and always ensure that the integrity of any qualification delivery is maintained.

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

TradeTechs Northern Ltd recognises the cornerstone of a quality organisation is a commitment to ensuring that internal quality assurance is executed, valid, reliable, robust, and fit for purpose.

The diagram below shows the interdependent elements of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) framework.



Key Learner Processes (KLPs)

Processes include:

- Selection and recruitment of employers/learners
- Initial assessment & induction
- Planning learning
- Training (classroom-based)
- Training (work-based)
- Review & assessment planning
- Verification
- Completions

All staff will be trained as appropriate and key learner processes will be reviewed as required.

Management information/ Operations data

- Management information is generated by the Learning and Skills Director.
- Learner progress on all programmes is monitored via Progress Reviews
- Learner feedback questionnaires and collected on course.

The aim of our quality system is to ensure that:

- We comply with legal and statutory requirements.
- We routinely assess the needs of interested parties in our business, i.e., all stakeholders including staff, learners, employers, funders, Ofsted, and awarding organisations.
- We meet our contractual requirements with funding bodies and prime contractors.
- We meet our regulatory requirements with qualification awarding organisations.
- We identify and deliver a quality service to maintain excellent relationships with our customers: our learners and employers.
- All work is carried out consistently to a defined standard that is measured through our quality objectives.
- We have the skills and resources to fulfil our customer requirements.
- All activities support the strategic plans of the business.
- We strive to continuously improve our systems and procedures.
- Any complaints are dealt with efficiently and within an acceptable period.

Key learning processes will be internally quality assured by observation, feedback, verification, documentation completion, performance data. TradeTechs Northern Ltd will retain documented information to have confidence that the quality system is effective.

A Quality Calendar is in place to monitor the implementation of the quality system. Our commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for our learners, as well as TradeTechs Northern Ltd's commitment to continuous improvement starts with our robust Safer Recruitment practice and our well-planned staff induction to ensure that we recruit the appropriate qualified and experienced members of the team. Also, the delivery of a well-planned induction for both staff and learners ensure that all are aware of the expectation and meet the criteria of the staff vacancy and learn a qualification.

The Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

It is TradeTechs Northern Ltd 's objective to obtain an accurate judgement on the quality of teaching and assessment delivered to learners.

Each member of staff who has responsibility for delivering or supporting lessons must be observed at least once a year by the Quality Manager or Lead IQA. This outlines both key strengths and areas for supported development. If there are areas for development identified, then the action plan for each member of staff will be agreed setting targets for improvement will be completed. All information recorded is used to inform CPD needs.

The information from the OTLA forms is submitted to the Quality Manager for central analysis and standardisation.

If there are concerns with the quality of the observation and findings, then the observer should complete the action plan at the bottom of the OTL form and agree a re-observation of the member of staff.

Procedure

Employees will be informed prior to the observation by email. This will be 3 working days in advance of the observation. This notification will inform them of the window of observation and guide them towards appropriate documentation to support their preparations. The observer will require diary information to plan effectively.

The schedule of observations will be included in the quality calendar.

The Observation

Observers will respect the professionalism of employee and resulting feedback will be handled in a way which maintains confidentiality between the Observer, Employee, and their Manager.

- Probationary employees will receive an ungraded developmental observation within the first eight weeks of employment.
- Observers will be asked to hold pre-observation meetings with employees if required.
- If there are areas for development identified during the observation an action plan for each member of staff will be agreed setting targets for improvement. The member of staff will be required to complete training as outlined on the observation improvement action plan and will be re-observed following this support.
- The training assessment session will be observed for a period of at least 35 minutes and no more than one hour.
- The observer will use the standard documentation as agreed and indicate strengths and areas for development according to Ofsted standards, ensuring tutors and assessors consistently achieve at least 'Good'

To allow for quality procedures, written feedback will be provided within 7 working days of the observation. Employees who would require an individual meeting for the purposes of more detailed feedback can contact their observer to arrange this. The observer and employee will agree on the focus of identified CPD.

- Recommended training via the observation improvement action plan will be organised by the Quality Manager.

Appeals – Grounds for appeals may be (i) conduct of the observation or (ii) dispute over identified areas for development.

In either case, the employee should appeal in writing to the Quality Manager, if the Quality Manager conducted the OTL then this should be redirected to the Director of Learning and Skills within 5 working days of receiving written feedback from the observation. If the appeal is upheld in the case of a dispute over a decision, a re-observation can be arranged through the Learning and Skills Manager.

Quality Assurance of the process

Moderation will be planned to ensure that all observers are moderated each year. This will be completed in two ways and this process will be added to the quality calendar.

- Buddy observations will be carried out by TradeTechs Northern Ltd and the prime contractor. Or by two members of the quality team within TradeTechs Northern Ltd if there is no prime contractor at least yearly.
- A Joint moderation of a sample of lesson observation reports will take place yearly with the Quality Lead Prime Contractor. Written feedback will be provided to observers.

The Trade Techs Learning and Skills Director will receive a summary report of the observation and feedback.

Learning Walks (for classroom-based activity)

The Quality Manager and/ or IQAs will conduct learning walks (**minimum of 1 per tutor/ assessor**) to monitor the quality of delivery at that time. However, that is not an indication that the Tutor/ Assessor is effective all the time, just a snapshot of the quality of teaching and learning. Learning Walks can be themed and matched to staff meetings/ staff training identified that may have taken place. Findings are recorded and again, used to develop practice and our commitment to continuous quality improvement.

Moderation of IQA's Sampling of Learners' Work (for classroom-based activity)

The Quality Lead and IQA's will moderate learners work which has been quality assured or sampled to ensure that the qualification criteria and standards have been met and the qualification achieved. The selection should represent a range of abilities and all subjects delivered. These findings will highlight good practice and inform any training needs. The IQA will be responsible for the rationale for the sample based upon the tutor/ assessors' experience and industry knowledge.

Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

The Learning and Skills Director will demonstrate full commitment through annual self-assessment and will support the use of the key learning processes and ensure the quality system is accessible to all staff and achieves the intended results of the business. On an annual basis, all staff will be involved in the completion of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) based on the above evidence and any external evidence sources. The SAR is crucial in identifying strengths and areas of development which should be backed-up with clear and explicit evidence. This should be reviewed regularly to inform progress and impact of each education contract. These areas of development then inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which is completed annually and reviewed regularly. The SAR and QIP review should be discussed at each Team meeting and after annual completion should be sent to the Learning and Skills Manager.

Internal Quality Assurance and Sampling

The IQA system seeks to ensure all assessment is fair, consistent and meets TradeTechs Northern Ltd and Awarding Organisation requirements.

This policy has been designed to promote quality, consistency and fairness throughout the assessment and internal quality assurance activities. It aims to ensure that standards of assessment are maintained over time.

This document is applicable to everybody involved in assessment administration, management, verification, and moderation of any TradeTechs Northern Ltd qualifications.

The IQA will be responsible for establishing the Verification/Sampling strategy sampling plan and subsequent implementation. As a standard, the range of workbooks or portfolios to be sampled will be 100% in the first 3 months of delivery and then consistent with the recommendation of the awarding bodies thereafter.

If any quality issues are raised, the 100% sample will be extended and the frequency of IQA visits will be increased. This will be agreed by the Quality Lead and IQA. An appropriate development plan will be agreed between the Tutor/ Assessor and the IQA.

Internal Quality Assurance Aim:

Is to ensure effective management of assessment and verification processes, effective support for assessment and verification personnel, and to quality assure the outcomes of assessment in-line with TradeTechs Northern Ltd and Awarding Organisation requirements.

Internal Quality Assurance Objectives:

- Operate from established verification policy and procedures that are reviewed where required in-line with the centres' quality control arrangements.
- Ensure that the assessment and verification teams understand and follow all the centre policies and procedures.
- Ensure that equality and diversity is embedded throughout the verification and assessment activities.
- Ensure quality via accurate and effective assessment of all learners.
- Monitor and ensure consistency of assessment outcomes via appropriate interpretation of awarding organisation criteria.
- Review and evaluate the quality and consistency of assessment at different stages of the assessment process.
- Maintain accurate and current records of verification and moderation.
- Standardise all components of the assessment where appropriate.
- Carry out continuous improvement activities to ensure all corrective actions best practice guidelines requested by the external verifier/ TradeTechs Northern Ltd IQA/ Learning and Skills Director.

When Sampling, factors to be considered include:

- Tutors / Assessors; Assessment and delivery experience, competence, current and working towards qualifications, current workload and occupational experience and competence.
- Methods of assessment; Questioning, observation, witness testimony, product evidence, assignments, projects and tests, professional discussion, and portfolios
- Records; Reports from Tutors/ Assessors, correct assessment practices, IQA records, learner portfolios, meeting notes and EQA reports/actions
- Internal Quality Assurance Planning
- Standardised assessment practice
- Health and safety practice, safeguarding, equality & diversity and prevent strategy.
- Additional support of new employed and associate qualified and trainee Tutor/ Assessors
- Standardisation activities across all Tutor/ Assessors and IQA's within each qualification
- Each IQA must use TradeTechs Northern Ltd 's IQA procedures and associated recording systems.

- This plan is developed and monitored by the Quality Lead and the IQA team to ensure that the verification process is standardised throughout the company.
- Each IQA is notified at the start of a course the number of learners in that cohort and their names. The IQA will create the sample plan which will include all learners having at least one unit sampled; this is for the shorter courses.
- The IQA must carry out interim sampling through the duration of longer course, this cannot be left to the end of the assessment. It is expected that first sampling is planned within the first 3 months of learning. Findings will be included in the process for risk banding and grading.
- TradeTechs Northern Ltd will ensure that each learner has work sampled across all units at different points in each learners' period of assessment. The IQA must identify on their sampling plan how many units per qualification they are sampling for each Tutor/ Assessor.

The IQA will also need to focus on all additional areas of IQA responsibility.

This includes:

- Monitoring all practice.
- Monitor all teaching and learning by observation.
- Monitoring learner evidence.

Based on the findings of the above the IQA may amend the sampling proportion. Where it is necessary to vary from the sampling plan, the reasons should be recorded, and the variations clearly added to the sampling plan.

Newly employed personnel:

- Each unit assessed by trainee Tutor/ Assessor is overseen and countersigned by a qualified Tutor/ Assessor, including feedback to trainee Tutor/ Assessor
- The qualified Tutor/ Assessor supporting the trainee Tutor/ Assessor judgements, must confirm and agree all the relevant units.
- Each unit checked by trainee IQA is overseen and countersigned by a qualified IQA including feedback to Tutor/ Assessor
- The qualified IQA supporting the trainee IQA, must confirm and agree all the relevant units.

The IQA must complete all relevant IQA records timely and in line with TradeTechs. Northern's procedures throughout the assessment process for all their Tutors / Assessors.

Internal Quality Assurers Competencies

All those who quality assure qualifications internally must have up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in assessment and quality assurance. They must have subject knowledge and/or occupational competencies of the qualifications they are verifying. The IQA must also and show current evidence of continuing professional development in assessment and quality assurance in the relevant subject areas.

IQA Induction

The Quality Lead will ensure that IQA's have access to all relevant information and resources and understands the processes & procedures and recording requirements.

Standardisation

It is important to standardise Tutor / Assessor judgements to ensure that each Tutor / Assessor consistently makes valid decisions and that all learners are assessed fairly. Standardisation sessions will be carried out at least once per quarter unless there are significant changes within the sector or following significant feedback from EQA visits.

The Quality Lead will be responsible for planning standardisation meetings and will follow a standard agenda. Tutors/ Assessors are expected to participate. Topics regularly covered in this session include:

- Improvement Plan relevant action.
- Qualification achievement rates
- Results and analysis of observations of assessment, reviews and teaching and learning
- Strategic and sector developments
- Discussion of new qualifications and evidence requirements
- Problem units – where it has been identified that several candidates are having problems understanding the criteria or gaining advice.
- Tutors / Assessors may be asked to share experiences of dealing with alternative forms of evidence or candidates with special needs.
- Discussion on hot topics and embedding.
- Internal quality assurers discuss sampling requirements and problems encountered with monitoring observation.
- EQA visits and feedback from awarding bodies

The effective implementation of this strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the IQA standardisation meetings.

Evaluation

- A 'learner voice' approach is implemented to obtain feedback from learners at observation and through feedback forms (paper-based or electronically)
- An 'employer voice' (where appropriate) approach is implemented to obtain feedback from employers at observation and feedback forms (paper-based or electronically)
- Staff and stakeholder surveys will be taken formally and informally, including at staff away day, team meetings and self-assessment.

Feedback results will be analysed by the Quality Lead. The results will be shared, and actions agreed at team meetings and standardisation meetings attended by IQAs and other staff. All feedback will be analysed, and the results fed into the business action plan and self-assessment report. Complaints will be dealt with promptly and logged. The complaints and appeals process will be followed.

Managing Quality

The Quality Lead with the support of the IQA's will ensure that assessment / training resources are effectively managed and planned. They provide a link between the awarding body, QCA and other regulatory bodies, and provide an overarching quality assurance role for the company.

Malpractice

If Malpractice is identified at any stage, the person identifying this must report their findings to the Quality Lead who will investigate and record their findings. If required, they will then inform the appropriate Awarding Organisation.