

The learndirect Group

Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure (IQAP) Policy

Governance	
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Approved By:	Lynsey Darwood
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Internal Quality Assurance Policy Procedure (IQAP)

Scope

This is the Quality Assurance and Assessment Strategy for Learndirect

Commitment

Learndirect supports the commitment to the continuous quality improvement for the delivery of its offering of QCF/RQF qualifications through all of the Awarding Organisation that we work with. Most are both knowledge and competency-based units and are delivered through a variety of tasks and activities to enable the learner to progress and attain the correct standard of knowledge and ability. Candidates not on full time provision are advised that they should complete any course or qualification within 2 years (as a maximum).

Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) and Assessors undertake to work as a team with the Head of Strategy & Innovation and the Operations Manager (Commercial Delivery). Experience and good practice will be shared, evaluation undertaken, and decisions discussed and agreed through the IQA's and Quality Management and Compliance department.

It is the responsibility of the centre contact (administrator) assessor, internal quality assurer and quality manager to ensure that they are always aware of current policies and documentation pertaining to the awarding organisation that they are engaged with.

Awarding Organisations

- NCFE - <https://www.ncfe.org.uk/>
- CIM - <https://www.cim.co.uk/>
- CMI - <https://www.managers.org.uk/>
- CIPD - <https://www.cipd.co.uk/>
- NEBDN - <https://www.nebdn.org/>
- GDC - <https://www.gdc-uk.org/>
- IPET - <https://www.ipetnetwork.co.uk/>
- Gatehouse - <https://gatehouseawards.org/>
- AIM - <https://www.aim-group.org.uk/>
- Innovate - <https://innovateawarding.org/>
- Trinity - <https://www.trinitycollege.com/>
- TQUK - <https://www.tquk.org/>
- AAT - <https://www.aat.org.uk/>
- VTCT - <https://www.vtct.org.uk/>
- OCNWM - <https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/>
- QLS - <https://qualitylicencescheme.co.uk/>

Responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation

The IQA is responsible for keeping the Assessors and the Quality Manager fully informed of learner's progress and identifying any specific issues which may come to light that highlight difficulties or the sharing of best practice to ensure that learners can achieve in a timely manner. Information is provided to the Head of Strategy & Innovation using a variety of reporting mechanisms, including a monthly report which summaries key activities/topics/issues submitted by IQA's via the Monthly IQA Summary Report.

Formal evaluation or amendments to the IQAP will take place annually unless circumstances force a necessity for change earlier. It is the policy of Learndirect to support good practice and contractual requirements of the Awarding Organisations to maintain the approval, by ensuring that all learners are registered in good time; this will reflect the individual AO requests. Requests for access to premises, meeting records, general records, candidates work, and staff as required by the Awarding Organisations, in order to provide External Quality support, monitoring and verification will be met at all times.

Learner Support

When learners enrol, they can choose how to receive their learning materials*. Each learner is allocated an assessor to whom they submit work throughout their journey. All learners are treated fairly in line with the Learndirect Equality and Diversity Policy. Reviews, feedback and evaluation is provided following each assessment submission and support the monitoring of the learner's progression. All assessment and IQA decisions taken in respect of each learner are recorded and maintained together with the identification of the responsible allocated assessor and IQA.

Quality Personnel

The Head of Strategy & Innovation manages all quality processes and policies at Learndirect, with the Quality Manager. The Quality Manager, with support from the Quality Assurance Officer, has operational responsibility for managing the assessment teams. CVs, copies of assessor and IQA qualifications and CPD records are kept centrally in the main Centre File and are checked and updated every 12 months. Updated CPD records are requested every 6 months and all staff are expected to submit information, including details of relevant occupational hours, where necessary. New Assessors also have an induction which includes a Risk Assessment to identify an appropriate assessment strategy that supports any new assessors' development within the team.

Continuous Professional Development

All staff are required to be qualified in their vocational and professional areas and understand and accept their responsibility to maintain their CPD activity and record it appropriately. Learndirect supports the educational and professional needs of its staff to ensure that have the right skills, knowledge and experience to be able to deliver a high-quality experience for their customers.

These objectives include: -

- To ensure that teaching staff are appropriately qualified
- To promote and ensure skills currency (including industrial up-skilling) and application of knowledge
- To develop the workforce as professionals and provide opportunities to support staff to fulfil ambitions
- To fulfil legislative training requirements

Any assessor who is 'working toward' the qualification will have all assessment activities countersigned by a qualified assessor or IQA where appropriate. Where an IQA acts as a countersignatory to the trainee assessor, that individual cannot internally assure that same assessment decisions. Any trainee assessor or IQA will be allocated a mentor to support them during the achievement of their qualification.

As qualifications change it is the policy of SG to consider the developments in line with learner and business needs. Vocational competence will also be maintained in line with Awarding Organisations requirements.

Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance

Sampling ratios are based on an individual risk rating for each assessor. The risk assessment that will be carried out on each assessor will clarify the percentage of sampling relevant and plans will be adjusted accordingly; summarised as low, medium or high risk. Risk will be managed overall by the IQA Personnel who will review the sampling strategy in line with the internal and external changes to ensure the quality of assessment is maintained. Sampling is undertaken on an initial, interim and final basis and the frequency of this depends on the experience and knowledge of the assessor and is also dependant on whether the programme is new to SG.

All assessors will be placed on a traffic light system for sampling. Assessors can move up and down the system depending on the outcome and quality of work sampled. The system is flexible, and ratings can be changed each month if necessary.

Green -Low Risk Assessors

Assessors who are qualified and experienced showing competency across the qualification and continuously providing consistent detailed feedback for the learners.

1 in every 10 learners work will be sampled. 1 unit per sample plus longitudinal study & observations(eye), practical evidence.

Amber – Medium Risk Assessors

Assessors who are qualified, experienced and showing competency but have some actions in reference to their feedback or making some errors in assessment decisions, resulting in inconsistent feedback.

1 in every 4 learners work will be sampled. 2 units per sample plus observations & longitudinal study (EYE), practical evidence.

Red – High Risk Assessors

Assessors who are new to assessment and working towards the assessor qualification, new to the college or are showing inconsistencies in their marking or feedback or assessing a new course. Will be sampled 1 in 2. Every learner will be sampled 3 units per sample plus observations & longitudinal study (EYE), practical evidence (Learndirect learners).

The IQA will use a sampling strategy which, owing to the roll on roll off nature of learner recruitment, is supplied and based on the number of units marked on a monthly basis, and ensures that over a period of time assessment decisions are sampled for each assessor for each assignment method used, but not limited, to the following:

- Portfolio of knowledge evidence
- Written and pictorial information
- Scenario or case study
- Tasks to meet learning outcomes
- Learner Log or reflective diary
- Observation of practical competency assessments by audio visual evidence or work placement visit.

All of the above are accepted as pass or refer on the basis of the Assessor's professional judgement.

The sample plan will be recorded and maintained by the IQA and shared with the Central Administration Team. All relevant documents will be made available for External Quality Moderation and Monitoring. The allocation of learners to assessors and assessors to IQA is dependent on the demand of the qualification, the vocational competency and experience of the assessor, and the needs of the learner.

As part of the sampling strategy, the IQA will sample at a minimum of 10% of the total award volume for experienced assessors and as per traffic light banding for less experienced assessors – this will also take the form of interim as well as final on the same candidate to ensure progression. New programmes will generate a 50% monthly sample but 100% final sample. (Sampling strategy document is available as a separate document to this Quality Assurance Policy).

Process

As part of the overall Learndirect Quality Management Plan, the Lead Verifier samples at 10% of the IQA rate to ensure that feedback to the assessors has been appropriate and constructive and fulfils the Learndirect policies that support the overall quality management. Sampling of assessor decisions will be increased where new or unqualified assessors are being used or where award standards change or where new awards are introduced.

IQA and standardisation meetings take place on a regular basis (shown in Quality Calendar) and involve all members of the teams and are led by the relevant IQA. Where appropriate, the activities and discussions are centred around the following:

- Points from previous meeting
- Action Plan – update on previous and new actions
- Standardisation –
 - Quality and appropriateness of specific evidence sources
 - Sufficiency of evidence for specific units
 - Cross portfolio standardisation of a unit over time
 - Appropriateness of prior learning sources
 - Observation of assessment in the realistic workplace environment
- Staff development and Training (CPD)
 - Assessor and IQA feedback and evaluation
- AOB

The decision and minutes of these meetings are recorded and distributed electronically for comment. To comply with the QCA Code of Practice, there will be at least 2 meetings per year to ensure standardisation between IQA.

All learners are made aware of their right to appeal, should they feel disadvantaged in any way. Information and guidance in the Student Handbook is available to view and sent electronically at commencement of the course. This is a handbook and forms their induction to the terms and conditions with regard to studying with SG. Authentication and evidence produced by the learner must be evidenced.

Completed learner portfolios, either electronic or in hard copy, can be accessed by External Quality Assurer before or on visit, these will be retained for the External Quality Assurer and then returned to the learner or destroyed if required.

Assessor and IQA records are maintained as ongoing and current as learners at Learndirect engage in a roll on roll off programme which falls outside the academic years. Following learner completion

and external sampling those records will be archived for a period of at least 3 years, or to meet awarding body contractual requirements.

Evaluation of Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance

The impact on the learner of the success of the assessment and internal quality assurance practice will be monitored through achievement and learner feedback, and the results will be linked to the annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan.

Malpractice

Learners are made aware of their right to appeal and where there is evidence of malpractice, once a candidate has been registered, it is the responsibility of SG to investigate internally under the Lead IQA or Head of Strategy & Innovation and /or Quality Manager. Where there may be grounds to doubt the integrity of the assessment or internal quality assurance process, the Awarding Organisations must be advised under the regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual August 2008).

Where there is any incorrect certification claim, Learndirect must share the responsibility with the Awarding Organisation to resolve the problem whilst protecting the interests of the learner.

APPENDIX 1

Procedure

Competency will be assessed by the submission of a portfolio of work which will provide evidence to meet the performance criteria set by the awarding body. This will also include practical evidence session sheets, witness statements, case studies and observed assessments to support the practical element of the training.

Learner Registration

Candidates will be registered with the appropriate awarding organisation, in a timely manner, from the commencement of the course as long as the IAG elements of the course have been completed successfully. The IAG units are designed to give learners an opportunity to experience online learning and self-directed study and to use the portfolio system. IAG units are not wholly related to any Awarding Organisation qualification specification but do contribute to the overall number of units within a course. All learners will be registered in accordance with Awarding Organisation guidelines (i.e., timely manner) and this will include access to any relevant, 3rd party resources and/or online portals (where necessary as part of the course). Learner details are captured at enrolment stage and are retained in a learner management system. Progress is tracked in the LMS, and this is linked (as of April 2021) to an automated registration reporting function.

Assessor Feedback

Assessor feedback is given at the submission of each unit and provides a constructive feedback per question to the learner to whether they have met the criteria and passed the individual question. Feedback in relation to literacy and grammar and presentation and quality of research or additional submission is also offered along with a position statement in relation to progress towards completion of the course. Informal feedback is also available via the online email system. Upon completion of the units the learner must be advised that their work is now to Internal Quality Assurance and may require additional evidence to be submitted prior to presenting to the External representative of the Awarding Organisation.

Professional Discussions

In the instance that an assessor decision is not agreed with, and a professional discussion is planned, This must be arranged via the correct channels for audit purposes and a plan agreed with the IQA prior to the discussion taking place.

Internal Quality Assurance Sample Record

Records the date, assessor, candidate, material, outcome and provides assessor feedback. This will formulate the action for addressing any points that have been raised by the feedback section of the form. It should be target and date driven and supply the method for improvement

Internal Quality Assurance Claim Authorisation

Following the IQA sample, the claim forms will be completed, or the list of completers will be passed to the registration and certification department for certification claim.

NB: It is the responsibility of the IQA to ensure that the claim forms are correct and that final IQA is performed and the candidates on the claim form are part of a batch sample.

Meetings and Action Plans

Records of standardisation meetings, telephone conversations and all matters that require action or refer to the completion of action points are maintained.

Certification Claim Form

All claims are checked by the IQA for that faculty/Quality Manager prior to claim for accuracy to limit the possibility of maladministration.

External Quality Support/Verifier Reports

These reports are held in the Quality File in the electronic online system and in hard copy for the reference in the Centre File. The EQA reports are also shared with the IQA and cascaded to assessors to share good points and good practice.

Learndirect Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedure

The recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process by which individuals can gain credit towards qualifications based upon evidence of their past achievements and experience.

By assessing the evidence or outcomes of learning, RPL facilitates formal certification of current competence (regardless of formal training) this enables individuals to identify appropriate routes to further development as required.

Candidates can request RPL from a variety of backgrounds without having previously registered with any awarding body. There is no time limit on the time between initial training and the final RPL assessment process, however, all assessments and evidence will need to current at the time of final assessment.

Learners will have to be registered prior to the claim for certification under RPL guidelines

Only RPL advisers with appropriate qualifications may make judgements for the issue of credits.

While RPL advisers are not registered, they are expected to be unbiased in their approach and follow the process established for assessors and internal verifiers. The basic principles of assessing RPL works are contained within the assessor qualification framework. This is closely monitored by the lead verifier.

If the candidate appears to have appropriate skill experience, they will be able to undertake a normal assessment. In the application of RPL procedures, the object must be to ensure the widest access to credit is made available and in the most cost-effective manner.

Candidates wishing to use the RPL route to acquire any qualification will need to provide evidence that they have achieved and maintained the standards specified in the qualification.

Forms of Evidence

Performance Evidence

Observation of candidate performance in the workplace or at a practical assessment session by an assessor is the most reliable source of evidence.

Oral Questioning

This will mainly be used to support other sources of evidence. Documentation needs to be kept showing the questions asked and the responses obtained.

Certificates Covering Prior Learning

Candidates who wish to put forward evidence in the form of certificates already acquired in a skill area will need to provide additional evidence that it matches and meets the requirements of the qualification they wish to undertake i.e. cross referencing the syllabus to the essential knowledge and range. The certificates must also be authentic although alone cannot be used in any way other than a preliminary indication of standard. N/SVQ units from other awarding bodies may be offered for automatic RPL without the need for additional assessment.

Other Documentary Evidence

This may include references from employers or clients, documentary proof of research or project experience, or other evidence in applying treatments in the subject area.

All relevant evidence should be collected by the candidate under the guidance of the RPL adviser. It must show how the evidence has been collated and its source. That it relates to the qualification requirements (cross referenced to the assessment book). It is current and authentic and that the process used is open to verification. All cases will be referred to the Lead Verifier for verification.

Appeals and Procedures

All learners are informed that an appeals procedure relating to the internal assessment process exists within Learndirect. A copy of this procedure will be made available on request. Learners may only appeal on the grounds that they do not agree with the assessment decision made by the assessor/tutor or that the assessment procedures have not been carried out properly.

The Quality Manager or Internal Verifier will manage any internal appeals, including the dissemination of information about the procedures

A written record of all appeals is maintained by Learndirect, and written record includes the outcome of an appeal and reason for that outcome. Full details of any appeal will be made available to the awarding organisation on request.

As per the Appeals Procedure Policy the process covers 3 stages:

- Stage 1 – Learner appeals against an assessment decision and requests a review
- Stage 2 – Learner disagrees with appeal review decision – appeal is escalated to Head of Strategy & Innovation. In the event that this is also the IQA, the appeal will be allocated to an alternative senior member of staff.
- Stage 3 – External Awarding Organisation is notified.

The address for correspondence and contact point for further advice is:

Quality Department
Learndirect
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Lorne Park Road
Bournemouth
BH1 1JN