



APPRENTICESHIP QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Statement:

Always Consult is committed to implementing a system of Internal Quality Assurance for all of our apprenticeships. This will ensure that Quality Assurance standards achieve excellence within a flexible, yet robust, framework of validity and reliability across a range of levels within the organisation.

This policy has received the full endorsement of Senior Management Team (SMT). The SMT take an active role in the implementation of procedures and policy. Accordingly, a member of the SMT is proactively involved in the Internal Quality Assurance process of all programmes and is available for any External Verification visits from Awarding Bodies and/or other external bodies e.g. Ofsted as required.

The SMT has recognised the importance of both Internal Quality Assessors (IQA), Assessors/Trainers and other team members within this process. They will ensure that appropriate time is allocated for both Internal Quality Assessors and Trainers in order for them to complete their duties and responsibilities.

In addition, Always Consult has a commitment to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and opportunities will be created for Centre staff to update their occupational expertise. A separate CPD policy is available.

Qualified Assessors/IQAs shall review their Continuous Professional Development at least annually. All Assessors/IQAs shall be asked to keep a record of activities that updates both their Assessor/IQA skills/knowledge and relevant professional competence.

Trainee Assessors/IQAs shall be involved with developing an action plan for completion of their qualification within 12 months.

ASSESSMENT, TRAINING AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS:

Assessment is the process of collecting and judging a Learner's performance and knowledge evidence to ensure that they achieve competence to national standards. The role of the Assessor is integral to the assessment process. (See Role of the Assessor). In the case of apprenticeship training, the role of the trainer is to educate the learner, using a variety of methods, with the aim of providing knowledge, developing skills and observing, and in some cases changing, the behaviours of the learners in relation to the standard they are undertaking.



Internal Quality Assurance is a quality management process. The main role of the IQA is to audit the assessment and training process to ensure that assessment consistently meets national standards across the organisation. (See Role of the Internal Quality Assessor)

Always Consult is committed to the on-going training and development of both IQAs, Assessors and trainers. Qualified IQAs shall support, monitor and countersign the work of a trainee IQA. Trainee Assessors shall be supported by a qualified Assessor.

All IQAs, Assessors and Trainers shall be notified of their roles and responsibilities during induction.

Project/Portfolio Verification/Sampling:

Internal Quality Assurance is an on-going process and shall happen at all stages. The IQA will produce a Sampling Plan and Observation of Assessor/Staff Performance Plan.

Verification of project work/portfolios shall take place quarterly (some interim verification sessions may take place also).

Assessors have overall responsibility for ensuring that all of the documents are completed when they transfer the portfolio over to the IQA, having completed their section of the Submission to IQA Form. Assessors must ensure that all work submitted is signed and dated. Candidates must not complete any of their work, or supporting documentation in pencil.

IQAs shall undertake the verification process and once completed will complete the appropriate section of the Submission form.

IQAs will also provide feedback to Assessors on the completed portfolios.

The IQA shall then ensure that the project work/portfolios are passed onto the Centre Co-ordinator, who will make these available to the External Verifier for certification and/or ratification of IQA decisions.

All trainers working on apprenticeship standards are required to submit a monthly update on all learners. Learner folders will be sampled within 2 months of start, at approximately halfway through the course and finally 2 months prior to proposed gateway.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES:

The External Verifier(s) shall visit the Always Consult/Qualification Centre on a bi-annual basis at least to ensure that the Centre meets the Awarding Body/Contract standards. Additionally, the Centre Co-ordinator may request additional EV visits where there are a number of candidate portfolios waiting to be signed off for certification.



All members of the Qualification Centre Team, including the Centre Co-ordinator, IQAs, Assessors, and Senior Management will be made available for the EV to speak with, where possible. Additionally, a sample of candidates shall be called upon in person to feedback to the External Verifier.

All EV reports shall be circulated to Assessors, IQAs and Senior Management Team. This report will be discussed at Assessment meetings and from this feedback a plan of recommendations shall be developed and implemented.

COMMUNICATION OF PROCEDURES:

The Centre Co-ordinator shall be responsible for overall communication within the Qualification Centre; between the relevant Awarding Body, Contractors, between Senior Management, between IQAs and between Assessors. They shall need to be in continuous contact with Assessors and establish an open dialogue through regular meetings on a quarterly basis.

The Centre Co-ordinator shall be responsible for updating and disseminating Awarding Body-specific information requirements to the Qualification Centre team.

The Centre Co-ordinator shall notify the Awarding Body/Contractors immediately of any changes to the status of the Qualification Centre.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MEETINGS:

The Internal Quality Assurance process shall be supported by a range of meetings to facilitate communication channels and assess candidates' competence levels on a both a formative and summative basis.

Assessment Meetings/Standardisation Meetings: Attended by the Centre Co-ordinator, IQAs, Trainers and Assessors. Issues of Standardisation, fair assessment and validation shall be discussed. The ratio of candidates to Assessors shall also be considered. Each meeting shall also have a learning element to it in order to continuously update professional skills and knowledge. These are quarterly meetings. As part of Standardisation, interpretation of standards, fair assessment, EPA, and appeals/complaints procedures shall be discussed to ensure consistency. The effectiveness of the sampling strategy will be considered.

Assessment/Standardisation meetings shall be on the same day to reduce time and wastage and optimise the opportunity to discuss key issues.

Self-Assessment Meetings: Centre staff shall convene these meetings to evaluate and review the effectiveness of the Centre and consider improvements. These meetings can be incorporated into Assessment meetings. Self-Assessment should take place at least annually.



All meetings shall have recorded minutes and be stored appropriately. All copies of minutes shall be made available to the External Verifier.

Feedback, Observation of Staff, Assessors' Practice, IQA Interview of Candidates to inform Quality Assurance Procedures

IQAs shall provide prompt, constructive feedback to Trainers/Assessors using the IQA Report on Assessors Performance form when assessing observations. For all other types of assessment, the IQA will use the Submission form in order to feedback to Assessors.

Any additional development needs for the learner shall be forwarded onto the Learner's workplace Manager by their Assessor. We will plan to observe Assessors/Trainers three times over a 12-month period. Learners shall be encouraged to feedback on the effectiveness of the provision available on an on-going basis.

At least ONE candidate per Trainer/Assessor will be contacted during a 12-month period to elicit feedback on Trainer/Assessor practice and support. Interviews can take place either over the telephone or face-to-face.

Evaluation following certification/completion will take where possible with all learners. Questionnaires are also sent to employers, where relevant, to identify the impact our training/qualifications has had on staff members.

The Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance procedure shall be reviewed at least annually at an Assessment Meeting attended by the IQAs, Assessors, Trainers and Centre Co-ordinator. Any feedback is disseminated through the next available Assessment meeting.

Feedback from External Verification Meetings shall be forwarded, discussed and evaluated at the nearest Staff/Assessment Team meeting following an EV visit. These recommendations shall be included in an action plan to address any shortcomings within the Qualification Centre. Individual responsibilities and accountabilities shall be assigned to the appropriate member of the Centre team and progress shall be reviewed at following meeting(s).