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**Quality Assurance**

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**Version History**

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| **Revision Date** | **Author** | **Approved by & Date** | **Description of Revision** |
| June 2017 | SCIL | IQA Panel | Annual Review |
| Sept 2018 | SCIL | IQA Panel | Annual Review |
| July 2020 | SCIL | IQA Panel | Annual Review |
| December 2020 | SCIL | IQA Panel | Addition of CAMERA |
| July 2022 | SCIL | IQA Panel | Annual Review |
| November 2023 | SCIL | IQA panel | Annual Review |

This Policy has been developed by Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL), part of Somerset Council. All training programmes have a commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all Students, Apprentices, Learners and Trainees (SALTs) who have chosen to study with SCIL to achieve their full potential.

This policy should be read in partnership with the Assessment Policy.

**Assessment is** the process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner’s work meets the criteria of a unit, or any additional evidence requirements.

**Assessors/Tutors -** will have an understanding of the standards and the levels at which they will be taught or assessed. The Assessor/Tutor needs to be occupationally competent, knowledgeable and up to date with practice for both accredited and non-accredited qualifications. For assessment, in relation to the areas that they are qualified to assess, a list of accepted qualifications for Assessors and Tutors can be found within the assessment principles of the accredited qualification.

It is the assessors role to be a ’guardian’ of the standards and to ensure that they are not compromised.

**Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)**

IQA is the process of assuring the consistency and validity of assessment judgements within the centre. It is not a re-assessment exercise.

For all programmes the IQA process must be independent of the assessment process. Assessors cannot internally quality assure their own activities.

Internal quality assurers need to ensure the specific assessment strategies or principles of the different sector skills councils, awarding organisations or the commissioners, are met.  The IQA needs to be occupationally competent and knowledgeable of units they IQA within the qualification/training.

The IQA approach should include sampling assessment plans, assessment decisions and feedback to learners for each assessor over a stated period of time.

The IQA role is highly autonomous and therefore the sampling strategy for the centre recognises the IQAs ability to judge the level of sampling necessary for individuals. The sampling strategy forms a guide to minimum requirements to create quality assurance plan. The IQA plan is changeable in response to on-going sampling of the qualifications’ processes and assessment decisions, assessor training needs/experience and standardisation activities.

Our sampling strategy is informed by the acronym **CAMERA**:

**C - Candidates or learners** – sampling must cover gender, and employed full or part time and special arrangements, all referrals.

**A - Assessors** – sampling will cover all assessors taking into account a higher risk of new assessors or feedback from External Quality Assurer (EQA) reports, across all assessment sites, occupational and qualification, experience, evidence of countersigning of unqualified assessors.

**M - Methods of assessment**- sampling will cover all qualifications and programmes delivered; units’ assessments, a higher percentage if the method of assessment has been adjusted in terms of agreed flexible assessment method, questioning, observation, product evidence or evidence of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

**E - Evidence types**- written confirmation that evidence/assignments are valid, authentic, current, sufficient, plus a focus on any special requirements and identified problem units.

**R - Records** – all documents relating to assessments and assessor feedback to learners.

**A – Assessment locations**- across different assessment locations, main centre location and satellite centres Interim sampling must be built into the plan and will occur at both the early and middle stages of your qualification assessment. Interim sampling enables you to check formative assessment for a whole or part of a unit and identify consistency or issues at an early stage for corrective action. Summative sampling will occur at the end of the qualification assessment.

**Roles and responsibilities of the Lead IQA include:**

* Responsible for the quality of assessment and IQA across the centre, including planning, preparation and attendance of EQA visits, where appropriate
* Recruitment of IQAs and assessors
* Leading the IQA process and updating policies and procedures, including allocation of work, monitoring and reporting to centre SMT
* Providing advice and guidance and training for IQAs regarding the assessment process
* Alterations in assessment methods - there may be occasions where assessment methods may need to be altered to meet the requirements of the centre, SALT and awarding organisation.  If an alternation is to be considered the centre, via the lead IQA, must adhere to any guidance given by the awarding organisation to ensure that the assessment requirements for that qualification are met.
* Updating and keeping the SCIL Senior Management Team informed
* Keeping updated with awarding organisations regulations, ensure update and adjust the centres policies/practices accordingly e.g., pandemics, government legislation, funding.

**Roles and responsibilities of the IQA include:**

* Advising, supporting and providing developmental feedback to tutors/assessors.
* Documenting the quality assurance process and decisions.
* Ensuring tutors/assessors interpret, understand and consistently apply the correct standards and requirements.
* Identifying key issues or trends, for example several SALTs misinterpreting the same thing.
* Observing/interviewing tutors/assessors and any other relevant staff.
* Leading standardisation activities to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions between tutors/assessors.
* Monitoring the SALTs full journey from commencement to completion.
* Planning and carrying out the sampling of assessed work.
* Taking part in continuing professional development (CPD).
* The quality assurance of each assessor, each assessment method and each level of unit assessed over a stated period of time –generally the delivery period of the qualification at the Centre; and in line with the requirements of the Sampling Strategy and the sector Skills council/awarding organisations and commissioner’s requirements.

All staff members are encouraged to continue their professional development through attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops, and through individual study programs. Continuing professional development (CPD) provides the staff with increased knowledge concerning changes and new developments.  CPD records will be submitted biannually to the centre administrators who will send a reminder request.

The IQA will be notified of their allocated tutor, assessor and SALTs and will then need to develop or create a sampling plan. When the sampling plan is complete a copy needs to be approved by the Section Lead (where appropriate). Sampling plans should cover each allocated tutor/assessor/SALT, each unit in the qualification, the full range of assessment methods and across as wide a range of candidates/learners as possible over an annual cycle. Sampling plans should be devised in advance before any assessment has taken place. They are working documents and are subject to change, especially in relation to planned dates. Changes should be tracked to reflect when the QA actually took place.  Sampling plans will be uploaded to SharePoint after each QA activity, overwriting the previous version.

At regular intervals the sampling should include an assessment of one method/unit by all tutors/assessors to ensure consistency and reliability of assessment.

If an IQA is concerned while sampling work, they will clearly note their concerns and adjust sampling plans for that tutor/assessor/SALT to ensure that improvements are consistently being met.  Records of concerns will be forwarded to the Lead IQA so they can be fed into standardisation meetings and tutor/assessor training. Tutor/assessors risk rating should be adjusted accordingly.

Monthly IQA panels/standardisation meetings will take place at the centre or virtually, to ensure all IQA’s use a standardised approach across all tutors/assessors and each assessment method. Where possible all QA activity should take place at the planned IQA meeting.  The Lead IQA may request for QA activity to take place outside the planned meeting.

**Quality Assurance Procedures**

All IQA plans are based on a sampling rationale whereby assessors are rated according to the level of risk they represent.  Assessors are RAG rated bianually.

It is recognised that experience, of tutors/assessors and IQAs will vary across training and accredited qualifications, therefore sampling plans will be created per award/level/unit and will reflect an increased sampling regime for newer awards, reducing as all involved gain more experience and expertise in managing these awards. In deciding upon the rating of tutors/assessors, consideration will be given to their experience and currency of assessment. Monitoring of assessors will increase according to level of risk.

IQA’s monitoring of all areas of delivery increases according to the level of risk that attaches to the tutor/assessor. It is SCILs aspiration that all tutors and assessors move through the system to attain green status and will develop the members of staff accordingly.

SCIL uses the “traffic light” rating system as follows:

**Green (low risk)**

Experienced/frequent tutors/assessors – Regular work assessed and presented for quality assurance. Tutors/assessors who consistently demonstrate up to date practices in line with sector standards - rare actions identified on sampling.

For tutors/assessor rated as Green, the centre will ensure that face to face or virtual contact in made bi-annually. Sampling will be based on CPD objectives in the assessor’s individual training record, and/or observation of practice. To remain Green, the tutor/assessor must not incur more than 1 action on any visit. More than 1 action will move the green assessor to amber.

At least 40% of all decisions must be sampled.

**Amber (medium risk)**

Experienced but new to the centre/infrequent tutor/assessors, newly qualified tutor/assessors - with few actions identified on sampling.

For tutors/assessors rated as Amber, the centre will ensure that face to face or virtual contact is made termly. Sampling will be based upon CPD objectives, observations of practice and previous outcomes of monitoring. To move from Amber to Green the tutor/assessor must achieve 1 observation and 1 sample with no more than 1 future action on each.

At least 60% of all decisions must be sampled.

**Red (high risk)**

Inexperienced/newly qualified tutor/assessor, new to the centre or infrequent tutor/ assessor, existing tutor/assessor with no record of CPD including non-attendance at standardisation.  Tutor/assessors identified as having made unsafe decisions or those with high caseloads.

For tutors/assessors rated as Red, the centre will ensure that frequent face to face or virtual contact is made, as well as observations of delivery/assessment as appropriate.  Sampling will be based upon on-going sampling of all decisions across all units, learning outcomes and assessment criteria until the assessor regularly demonstrates accuracy and/or consistency of judgement and practice. To move from Red to Amber the tutor/assessor must achieve 2 observations and 2 samples with no more than 1 action identified on each.

At least 70% of all decisions must be sampled.

Trainee tutor/assessors (unqualified) – **All units must be countersigned by a nominated qualified tutor/assessor, the sample will therefore reflect the experience of the countersigning tutor/assessor.**

When undertaking QA activity, the IQA should ensure that assessment decisions confirm that learners work is:

**V - Valid** – relevant to the standards and method for which competence is claimed

**A - Authentic** – produced solely by the learner

**C - Current** – sufficiently recent for assessors to be confident that the same level of skills, understanding or knowledge exists at the time of claim

**S - Sufficient** – meets in full **all** the requirements of the standards

**R - Reliable** – consistent across all learners, over time and at the required level.

The centre will decide, in accordance with awarding organisation guidance, whether sampling should be undertaken by method or by completed unit.

Below is the agreed sampling amount (agreed August 2020)

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| **Agreed Sampling Strategy** | | |
|  | **Sampling of Methods** | **Sampling of Units** |
| **Tutors/assessors rated Green** | 30% sampling | 30% sampling |
| **Tutors/assessors rated Amber** | 45% sampling | 45% sampling |
| **Tutors/assessors rated Red.** | 75% sampling | 75% sampling |
| **Sampling of Standard only apprenticeships**  Apprenticeships that are linked to a standard are also subject to end point assessment (EPA).  However, the centre recognises that it is good practice that sampling in undertaken on all qualifications regardless of whether they are subject to EPA.  For Apprenticeships that are standard only, we have agreed the following sampling should be undertaken:    Tutors/assessors rated Green – 20%  Tutors/assessors rated Amber – 30%  Tutors/assessors rated Red – 45%  All new standard only apprenticeships will be RAG rated red for the first cohort and subject to 45% sampling.    Sampling will be carried out as initial, Interim and summative checks.  For 12-month Apprenticeship Programmes this should be at months 3, 6/7 and 11/12.  For 18-month Apprenticeship Programmes this should be at months 3, 10/11 and 17/18.    **Functional Skills**  All internally assessed Functional Skills assessments will be internally quality assured by a qualified IQA.  Sampling will be carried out in conjunction with the current RAG rating of the assessor.  For example: Red, RAG rated assessors will be subject to 75% sampling. | | |

All tutors/assessors and IQA’s must attend a minimum of one standardisation activity per year. Standardisation activities should involve looking at the actual working practices and products of the tutors, assessors and internal quality assurers to arrive at a benchmark for practice within the centre and to maintain that level of practice; Standardisation activities should be recorded in enough detail to show who was present, what took place and the outcome.  Whole team standardisation meetings will take place twice a year, assessors and IQAs will be expected to attend at least one of these meetings.

At the end of the IQA process it is the responsibly of the IQA to ensure there is a clear auditable record of the process and that all records are stored securely. Storage of records should mainly be on our Virtual Learning Environment ‘Quals Direct’ or at the centre, however in some cases this may not be appropriate, on these occasions the Lead IQA should always be informed.

**Lead Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinators:**

Service Manager - **Karen Shopland**

Lead IQA – **Michelle Armstrong**

Health and Social Care- **Helen Rolls**