

Internal Quality Assurance Strategy

Purpose

To ensure that:

- *Assessment is valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient and meets the needs of the learner*
- *Internal quality assurance covers all LDC and learning programmes, ensuring a standardised approach for consistency and comparability across qualifications*
- *IQAs are appropriately qualified, experienced and skilled*
- *There is an audit trail of the learner's progress and achievement*
- *It forms part of Mercuri's quality improvement processes*

Responsibilities

The Quality Manager will ensure that the Internal Quality Assurance process operates effectively by working closely with them to ensure accuracy and consistency of training and assessment practice to support the learner experience, retention rates, attainment and deliver cost effective programmes.

Internal Quality Assurers are responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of assessment, ensuring the standards are reliably met by supporting and developing LDC's.

All IQAs have responsibility for managing the timely iterative quality assurance of referrals.

LDC Grading Procedure

Purpose

To ensure that the quality of delivery and assessment by any LDC in Mercuri is continuously monitored and supported in order to achieve the following targets:

- *80% of LDC's to achieve at least a grade 2*

The grading process underpins the requirements of the TAQA (Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance where the TAQA refers to the range of assessor and quality assurance qualifications) suite of qualifications and is aimed at all delivery and assessment staff. Every quarter the grading of each LDC is reviewed. This is based on the previous three months' quality assurance activity including sampling. The grading given to each LDC will then determine the minimum amount of support and quality assurance that a LDC will receive from their IQA.

The grading criterion is determined as follows:

Grade 1 – Outstanding

Grade 2 – Good

Grade 3 – Requires Improvement

Grade 4 - Inadequate

Sampling Plans

The plans, produced and monitored by the Quality Manager, ensure that all LDC's are subject to structured internal quality assurance via sampling and direct observation that meets the requirements of 'CAMERA':

- *Candidates/Learners*
- *Assessors*
- *Methods of assessment*
- *Evidence*
- *Records*
- *Assessment sites*

The Internal Quality Assurance Strategy outlines the minimum requirements for internal quality assurance. The judgement of the IQA determines whether further units and evidence need to be sampled. The Quality Manager distributes the Internal Quality Assurance Sampling Framework each month to the IQAs to ensure that units are sampled across all sectors. These units will form the basis of standardisation activities taking place within the month.

Initial Quality Assurance

Each month the IQA will run the TEAMS IQA report which will identify which learners are required for initial quality assurance. The portfolios are available for sampling via BUD. After the learner has been on programme for approximately a quarter of their programme the initial quality assurance check is triggered.

The IQA is expected to plan and diarise the activities with all LDC's for a period of 3 months in the future and keep this up to date on a monthly rolling approach.

The IQA has responsibility to communicate, monitor and follow up all referrals following IQA activity to ensure completion and return for further IQA activity within 5 days. This enables the LDCs to offer timely opportunity to learners to update and improve evidence of knowledge, learning and development.

It is the responsibility of the IQA to holistically check at least:

- *Check 121's and ¼ reviews are completed in full and meet the requirements of TAQA*
- *Sample evidence via BUD in line with the IQA sampling framework*
- *Ensure Literacy and Numeracy is embedded through the 121's and ¼ reviews*
- *Ensure the curriculum for the overarching apprenticeship is being followed*
- *Check registration details especially assessment carried out before registration (need to ensure reassessment form is in place if assessment carried out before registration)*

- *Confirm the correct qualifications are being delivered at the correct level according to the Reg and Certs on BUD*

- *Sign off any received proxies and to communicate the requirements for Functional Skills completions where appropriate*
- *Complete an IQA record on BUD*
- *Directly communicate with the LDC with the findings of the IQA activity report*
- *Update BUD with date completed, evidence/units sampled and grading of the LDC*

Interim Quality Assurance

*Each month the IQA will run the TEAMS report which will identify which learners are required for **interim quality assurance**. The portfolios are available for sampling via BUD*

The IQA has 5 days from the date that it is due on the report

The IQA is expected to plan and diarise the activities with all LDCs for a period of 3 months in the future and keep this up to date on a monthly rolling approach.

For every interim activity at least one of the following must be undertaken:

The IQA has responsibility to communicate, monitor and follow up all referrals following IQA activity to ensure completion and return for further IQA activity within 5 days. This enables the LDCs to offer timely opportunity to learners to update and improve evidence of knowledge, learning and development.

The internal system allows for the completion of the interim quality assurance activity to take place at approximately halfway through the programme of learning.

Summative Quality Assurance

Each month the IQA will run a TEAM'S report which will identify which learners are required for summative internal quality assurance. The portfolios are available for sampling via BUD. The IQA is expected to plan the activities with all allocated LDCs for a period of 3 months in the future and keep this up to date on a monthly rolling approach.

The IQA has 2 working days to complete a summative quality assurance activity following submission from LDC on BUD.

The IQA, in liaison with the LDC, has 5 working days to complete summative referrals. This enables the LDCs to offer timely opportunity to learners to update and improve evidence of knowledge, learning and development.

Desktop summative – *all components of the apprenticeship (Diploma, Standards, Functional skills) must be checked for progress in line with the delivery model. The relevant sampling strategy must be applied. It is the responsibility of the IQA to:*

- *Check that actions from the interim and the QAP activities have been completed*
- *Check Progress reviews are completed in full and meet the requirements of OFSTED*

- *Sample evidence via BUD*
- *Double check the number of credits is correct, and the rules of combination are followed (if diploma only)*
- *Complete an IQA record on BUD*
- *Directly communicate with the LDC with the findings of the report*
- *Update BUD with date completed, evidence/units sampled and grading of the LDC*
- *Check that the milestones of the apprenticeship standard have been met and achieved*
- *Ensure that the Pre gateway checklist has been completed and fully checked*

IQAs must ensure that the interim and summative Gateway activities includes a review of the 20% off-the-job training (OTJT) undertaken by the learner, as detailed within the Pre Gateway checklist. Where it is identified that the requirements of 20% OTJT have not been met a Gateway meeting cannot be authorised. Please liaise with compliance manager if any queries.

Observations

Observations must be carried out in line with the PDM grading document on TEAMS. Observations should include a range of activities such as:

- *First or Introduction session*
- *Monthly 121*
- *Progress Reviews*
- *Group Teaching and Training*
- *Supervised Assessment/Testing (SPL)*

It is the responsibility of the IQA to:

- *Observe the teaching and learning as well as the assessment*
- *Create a record of an observation and email to Quality Manager*

Standardisation

Standardisations must take place in line with the yearly standardisation planner. This should link to current topical quality assurance priorities and is coordinated by the Quality Manager. Qualifications and unit standardisation must have a planned, coherent, iterative approach.

A full set of detailed minutes must be sent to the Quality Manager. These must be received - within one week of the standardisation being held.

Each IQA is responsible for ensuring the implementation of 4-6-week standardisations.

CPD

LDCs and IQAs are responsible for maintaining their own professional development so that they are aware of changes within their sector. All learning must be recorded on the CPD log with particular focus on the 'impact' or the benefit the training has had. These are submitted to the Quality Manager each quarter for collation and summary.

The IQA has the responsibility of completing, on an ongoing basis, the LDC Development Plans for all LDCs in attendance of LDC's 121's with the LDC manager. These must be sent to the Quality Manager quarterly.

Handovers

When a new LDC is due to take over responsibility for supporting and continuing assessment with a learner, it is the responsibility of the IQA:

- To arrange an effective handover for the new LDC (in liaison with the LDC manager and compliance manager)*
- To ensure that all ongoing actions in a portfolio have been reviewed and completed prior to new LDC taking over*
- To ensure that all outstanding IQA activities are completed on the affected portfolios*

When a new LDC has taken over responsibility for supporting and continuing assessment with a learner, it is the responsibility of the IQA:

- To remind the new LDC that they must reassess **all** evidence carried out by the previous LDC*

Countersigning

*On allocation of an unqualified LDC, it is the IQA's responsibility to ensure that countersigning arrangements are in place. A countersigner can include the IQA and/or experienced qualified Assessor / LDC. The countersigner will make contact with the LDC and make arrangements for countersigning. The countersigner needs to provide detailed and constructive advice / guidance. The countersigner will look at **one piece of evidence in every unit** (ensuring that across all units all assessment methods are countersigned). It is the LDC's responsibility to inform the countersigner once a unit has been completed and is ready for countersigning. This must be an on-going process (weekly) throughout the requirements of the TAQA qualification, not end loaded, and is the joint responsibility of the unqualified LDC and the countersigner to ensure this process is applied until the LDC becomes qualified.*

Audit of new staff (qualified)

When an LDC begins employment auditing of assessment decisions will occur for a set period of time until consistent standardised judgements have been applied.

A minimum of 2 audits must take place within the first 12 weeks of their employment. This must include the assessment judgements and the application of actions from previous assessors where appropriate.

Internal Quality Assurance Sampling Approach (minimum expectations)

	Green (1)	Amber (2)	Red (3/4) This includes staff who are new to Mercuri	White (Unqualified)
Observations	Once every 6 months	Once every 3 months	Twice a month	Twice a month
Initial check	10% of units (qbs included if available)	20% of units (qbs included if available)	25% of units (qbs included if available)	all units (qbs included if available)
Interim Sampling - Desktop	10% of units and gateway sample check	20% of units and gateway sample check	25% of units and gateway sample check	All units and gateway sample check
Summative-Desktop	10% of units and 100% gateway checks	10% of units and 100% gateway checks	25% of units and 100% gateway checks	100% of units and 100% gateway checks
Diploma	10% of units	20% of units	25% of units	100% of qualification
Countersigning	N/A	N/A	N/A	One piece of evidence in each unit, ensuring all assessment methods are sampled

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