

Internal Quality Assurance & Assessment Policy

Introduction

The RSA Academy recognises the contribution of a well-managed assessment and internal quality assurance process throughout the learner journey and the need to apply that process in a fair and consistent manner. The following policy is to be applied to all programmes offered by The RSA Academy.

The policy is designed to meet the standards laid down by awarding organisations, National Occupational Standards and any further links to required organisations to ensure a robust and collaborative approach.

The policy has been developed as a practical guide to assist practitioners in their roles within the assessment process. Working documents have been attached in the appendices to further assist and encourage best practice.

The following supporting policies should be read in conjunction with the content of this policy and procedures:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy

The RSA Academy are totally responsible for what happens internally and have overall responsibility for ensuring that robust systems of assessment and internal quality assurance are in place and that all assessors and internal quality assurers are using them consistently.

This policy has the intent of;

- Ensuring all internally assessed learning is demonstrated to be of an externally acceptable standard
- Ensuring the equality of opportunity in the assessment process throughout The RSA Academy.

- Providing guidance that supports the effective operation of the internal quality assurance and assessment processes.
- Providing a framework that ensures that the internal quality assurance and assessment processes meet all regulatory requirements.
- Providing a framework to identify staff developmental needs.

The Role of the Assessor

All internally assessed programmes must follow the assessment standards/guidelines laid down by the relevant awarding organisation. The role of the Assessor is to assess learners against agreed standards of competence using a range of assessment methods.

There is a full job description available to assessors outlining their role and responsibilities.

Occupational Competence Requirements for Assessors

The RSA Academy must be able to evidence that Assessors have *sufficient* occupational competence to ensure an up-to-date working knowledge and experience of the principles and practice specified in the qualification they are assessing in line with awarding organisation requirements.

The Academy Lead will keep records of occupational competence and monitor this on an annual basis.

The Role of Internal Quality Assurance

The RSA Academy recognises that the role of internal quality assurance staff is at the heart of the Internal Quality Assurance process as an approved centre. The role of the Internal Quality Assurer is to assure the quality of qualifications delivered by the Academy.

There is a full job description available to internal quality assurers outlining their role and responsibilities.

The Academy Lead will keep records of occupational competence and monitor this on an annual basis.

On certificated programmes all new and existing staff carrying out the internal quality assurance role must meet the requirements of the awarding organisation.

Sampling

Selecting a sample at random is unlikely to be effective, so sampling should be planned carefully. By adopting a structured approach, it is more likely that trends and problem areas can be identified, and remedial action taken. Best practice is that the nominated internal quality assurer achieves this by thorough planning which must at least in part include observing assessments and identifying areas of risk. Many factors need to be considered when sampling. Careful consideration of these can help to produce a plan that ensures assessment within the centre is being carried out to national standards and meets awarding organisation requirements.

Sampling assessments should involve reviewing the quality of the assessor judgements at both formative and summative stages. It should also meet the rules of assessment i.e.:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Sufficient

It is not acceptable that the internal quality assurer should search extensively to find evidence which supports the Assessors decision(s).

FACTORS needed to be considered for sampling purposes (CAMERA)

- C: Candidates (Learners) Ethnic origin, age, genders other factors. Something from all Learners (learners) should be sampled through their course
- A: Assessors Experience and qualifications, workload, occupational experience
- M: Methods of assessment – written submissions, product evidence, video, personal reflection.
- E: Evidence within the qualification. Problem areas, special requirements
- R: Records and reports from Assessors, learners' portfolios, and files
- A: Assessment - locations Workplace assessments.

All Internal Verifiers will:

- Have direct responsibility for the quality control of assessments and the quality assurance within the assessment centre that has been approved by an awarding organisation.
- Have a sound working knowledge of assessment and verification principles
- Either have the relevant qualification for internal quality assurers **or** have a development plan indicating progress towards that qualification
- Monitor that organisational health and safety protection procedures are applied within the assessment process.
- Ensure the application and monitoring of equal opportunities throughout assessment procedures.
- Monitor Assessors.
- Support Assessors.
- Monitor and support organisational administrative support.
- Monitor and make recommendations on resources required by evaluating the assessment process.
- Monitor and report the achievement rates of learners.
- Monitor the progress and learner satisfaction with the programme.
- Meet the assessment requirements of awarding organisations and other external agencies.
- Report any issue to the Academy Lead which may affect the integrity of any qualification

Quality Assurance of the assessment process

Quality assurance of the assessment process is seen as having two main objectives:

- Ensure consistent and reliable assessment decisions.
- Monitor the quality of assessment and highlight problems, trends and development needs of assessment staff, particularly new staff.

Sampling Strategy

All internally assessed programmes will require a sampling plan which reflects the needs of assessors and agreed with the external quality assurer of the awarding organisation.

Sampling is the reviewing of assessments and assessor's judgements at a point in time through observation or the review of supplied evidence. In determining the strategy internal quality assurers will need to consider a number of aspects:

- Current awarding organisation requirements
- Overall risk factor of assessor
- The assessor's experience - new Assessors will require a higher level of sampling to ensure accuracy of assessment.
- Cohorts of Learners
- Problem areas identified through previous sampling and EQA reports
- Training needs
- Assessor workload
- Specialist Assessor used in a qualification.
- Access to assessment and any reasonable adjustments or special considerations.

When sampling the RSA Academy will apply a RAG approach to sampling activities, this ensures that risk based approach is undertaken.

Assessors will be designated RED if unqualified and requiring countersigning, new to role, new to qualifications, new to the Academy, at this rating all assessment decisions will be sampled ie 100%

Assessors will be designed AMBER if newly qualified or if they have sampled less than 20 learner submissions, in this case 50% of work will be sampled at the internal quality assurance stage.

Assessors will be designated GREEN if qualified, familiar with the qualification, and have successfully been sampled with over 20 learner submissions, in this case 20% of the work will be sampled at the internal quality assurance stage.

The Academy Lead is responsible for the allocating of assessor RAG ratings and notifying the rating to the nominated internal quality assurer to inform the sample to be taken.

Sampling Assessments

In the case of all internally assessed programmes internal quality must not be “end-loaded” and must incorporate “on-going” internal assurance.

Sampling must not be exclusively on portfolio evidence alone. Evidence monitored must be;

- Valid - evidence is relevant to standards and assessment or grading criteria
- Authentic - produced by the Learner
- Sufficient - enough evidence to meet the standards
- Reliable - consistent reflection of Learner’s performance over time

The basic requirements are that the work of all learners should be sampled before their certificate is requested and over time all Assessors and the full range of qualifications are covered. Best practice is that the Internal Quality Assurer achieves this by thorough planning which must at least in part include observing assessor/learners’ assessments.

Awarding organisations will audit planned and actual sampling activities carried out to ensure that there is adequate coverage of assessors and the qualification being undertaken.

The internal quality assurers must sample an Assessor’s decisions over all units and all RSA Academy assessment methods within the qualification undertaken over an agreed time period.

The internal quality assurer must record all sampling on the internal quality assurance report in sufficient detail to be able to justify the decision made. The internal quality assurer must ensure that a range of assessment methods is sampled to ensure the assessor has applied the “rules of evidence” accurately over the qualification. The RSA Academy recognises the need for the “loop to be closed” on any action identified by the internal quality assurer for the assessor, whether at the interim or summative stage of sampling. Interim activities will enable the internal quality assurer to pick up patterns and trends at an early stage and so avoid the situation of turning down final decisions. It will also highlight individual assessor needs for support or training which in turn may be

used to develop the assessment team. Similarly, it provides an opportunity to identify and so share good practice within the Academy, particularly where one or more of the assessors have wider experience

Unqualified new assessors

All assessments carried out by unqualified assessment staff must be counter-signed by a competent qualified assessor during the interim period. The internal quality assurer must not countersign assessment decisions made by an unqualified assessor. It is vital that a new assessor must have a clear action plan to achieve the necessary qualifications and competence in the shortest possible time scales.

The external quality assurer will expect to see evidence that a plan is in place as part of the auditing process.

The Monitoring and Recording of Assessors

It is important to record any observations to demonstrate to the external quality assurer that monitoring is taking place. The process must ensure that the quality “loop is closed” on any action points discussed with the assessor. An assessor is entitled to prompt and timely feedback as practically possible.

Assessor Developmental Needs Review

It is considered appropriate that this form of monitoring should include a review of the Assessor’s needs during feedback regarding developmental training. This will also provide evidence towards the assessor’s longer term development.

Learner Interviews

The RSA Academy recognises that monitoring the assessment practice presents excellent opportunities for the learner to be interviewed about their experience and this feedback provides valuable evidence for self-assessment. The objective is to further inform the quality aspect from the employers and learner’s perspective and includes:

- The qualifications they are working towards.
- Understanding the assessment process.

- Progress that has been made through the qualification.
- Awareness of their right for unit certification.
- Understanding their role in evidence generation and the assessment process.
- Levels of confidence in their Assessor.
- Understanding the Appeals procedure.
- Current learning and development needs that have not been met through the programme.

Recording the Observations

It is recognised by the RSA Academy that there is a requirement for internal quality assurers to be observed carrying out their duties on a periodic basis. It is considered appropriate for the Academy Lead to carry out this role to enable future developmental needs to be identified.

Standardising Assessment Practice

The standardisation of assessment practice is seen as having four main objectives:

- Ensure assessors consistently make sound and safe decisions.
- Ensure that the assessors make the same decision on the same evidence base.
- Ensure learners are fairly assessed.
- Ensure assessors and internal quality assurance staff receive a consistent message.

Standardisation activity

Standardisation activities must be arranged and recorded by Academy Lead according to the awarding organisation current requirements. Standardisation events will be planned to run quarterly. However, the level of activity will be dependent on information disseminated from the internal/external quality assurer. The standardisation activity can take different forms but must involve learners' evidence – either products or

documentation/portfolios being reviewed by different assessors, or the assessors could compare the evidence they have collected for a particular unit.

Supporting New Staff and Assessment Team

The internal quality assurer must ensure that assessors are allocated suitable learners which will enable them to collect the evidence for their assessor qualification within the timescale. The internal quality assurer must ensure that the unqualified assessor learners' evidence is included as part of one of the standardisation activities as this is a requirement of the assessor qualification. The Academy Lead must ensure that the unqualified internal quality assurers are allocated assessors and internal quality assurance activities that will provide evidence necessary for the IQA qualification within the agreed timescale, the Academy Lead will countersign unqualified internal quality assurance reports, in addition, the Academy Lead will monitor and record the progress of the unqualified assessor and internal quality assurers.

Staff Development/Continuous Professional Development, CPD

The assessor/quality assurer standards require evidence of professional updating to include changes in assessment/quality assurance practice and improving professional competence through awarding organisation events, training up-dates and appropriate quality events, and other events such as :

- Work placement
- Job shadowing
- Technical skill update training
- Attending relevant courses
- Studying for Learning and Development Units
- Study related to job role
- Collaborative working with awarding organisations
- Qualification development work
- Other appropriate activity agreed with EQA

Tutor/Trainer/Assessor Meetings

The RSA Academy recognises that the key communication channel to the training and assessment team is through assessment team meetings held in line with standardisation meetings, it is the responsibility of the Academy Lead to structure the meetings appropriately, topics that may be included.

- Proposed internal verification activities.
- Monitoring and reporting of learner achievement.
- Learner satisfaction and evaluation data results.
- Review and allocation of learners to assessors