

Internal Quality Assurance Strategy and Policy

Practice Managers Association (PMA) will assure that all assessments made are consistent across all learners and Tutors; that they meet the standards set by the awarding organisation (AO), the relevant assessment strategies and the joint awarding organisation guidance on the internal quality assurance of award/certificate/diploma.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility regarding upholding the quality of assessment lies with the Head of Education (HoE) and Lead Internal Quality Assurer (LIQA). It is the responsibility of all PMA Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) to carry out the internal quality assurance procedure fully.

Competence

All IQAs will be occupationally knowledgeable within the occupational area where they are carrying out their verification activity. IQA's will demonstrate knowledge during the recruitment process, on their curriculum vitae and within their ongoing continuous professional development (CPD) log. IQAs will hold a D34 qualification, the V1 award or its current equivalent. Trainee verifiers will be qualified within the time limit dictated by the AO. All verification decisions, made by trainee IQAs, will be checked, authenticated and countersigned by a PMA qualified IQA who has the relevant, occupational knowledge.

A copy of all IQAs' D34, V1 or equivalent certificates and current curriculum vitae are available for the appropriate AO and held within their management information system. This is to ensure all External Quality Assurers (EQAs) have accessibility.

IQAs will have a clear understanding of the national occupational standards to enable and provide support to all Tutors.

IQA role in monitoring assessment practice

Details of the IQA key aims listed below:

1. To ensure national standards are adhered to by all Tutors which can be demonstrated through the processes of observation of assessment practice, observation of online testing, moderation of Functional Skills and through sampling evidence of assessment judgments.
2. To identify problems or areas where Tutors require advice or development and to put in place development plans to show a clear plan of action.
3. To share any consistent areas of concern with the Tutors line manager at an early stage to support performance management where this may be required.
4. To ensure that learners are aware of and satisfied with the qualification appeals procedure.
5. To maintain full internal assessment records to ensure the centre remains compliant.
6. To monitor the quality of assessment and collection plans. This includes the improvement of assessment planning and feedback.
7. To support the operations team with portfolio completions.

Sampling system

IQA will assure the quality and consistency of assessments through a system of sampling. The sampling strategy is as follows:

1. Sampling is representative of all activities. This is based on the CAMERA (candidates or learners/assessors/methods of assessment/evidence types/records/assessment location) and will provide evidence of the quality check, interim sample, 2 month planned end date PED sample and summative sampling documented within Aptem, the e-portfolio system.

2. The sampling is based on the 100% sample of every qualification that a Tutor delivers during a 12-month period. Sampling frequency accounts for high risk units, Tutor performance and EQA feedback. Sampling and evidence of is reportable within Aptem. The sampling plan will be provided to the External Quality Assurer (EQA) upon request
3. The sampling frequency will be under-pinned by Tutor RAG rating.

IQAs will ensure:

1. Each Tutor receives support and development in line with sampling plans, OTLA (observation, teaching, learning and assessment) findings and KPIs (key performance indicators)
2. The outcome of observations will inform the development needs of a Tutor
3. All support and concerns identified and provided, will be logged and held within SharePoint (SP)

Planning

Planning the IQA activity will be based on sampling requirements and the IQA knowledge of the Tutor. IQA will use the principles in CAMERA to ensure that the sample is representative.

As with any risk management tool, the rating of Tutors will be reviewed quarterly (academic year) or as and when required, based on Tutors identified with development needs or inconsistencies.

IQA checks

This consists of:

1. Compliance checking, learner Interviews and employer Interviews
2. Formative check-IQA portfolio check at month two to ensure learner contact has been made and unit selection is correct. APL to be obtained and mapped to the qualification.
3. Formative sample one - Interim IQA will take place at the midpoint of a programme. Additional sampling will be set based upon the RISK rating of a Tutor and qualification requirements.
4. Formative sample two - 2 month PED sampling (Pre-completion)
5. Summative sampling (final IQA).

For completed learners, this consists of submitting the End pack

Unit certification

Where a learner has completed a unit and wishes to discontinue with the programme/award or have it transferred to another provider, completed units which have been assessed and internally quality assured, can be certificated

IQA trends reports

Each month, IQA trends, reported and discussed during IQA standardisation meetings and will be actioned through either relevant managers, standardisation or performance improvement and risk management.

Equality of access for learners

Whilst carrying out their duties, IQAs will ensure that all learners receive equality of access to all aspects of support, guidance, advice, training, assessment and verification carried out by any PMA employee.

IQAs will report any issues related to equality of access involving any PMA employee or other persons employed at the learner's work place to the HoE.

The HoE will discuss any issues involving equality of access with the senior management team (SMT); at this stage, any action will be agreed and implemented.

Sector specific standardisation forums

The IQA team (including freelance IQAs) will meet at a minimum every 6 weeks to discuss areas of assessment and verification across all awards.

1. Feedback from recent EQA visits will be discussed. Actions will be agreed and implemented by the IQA through their own team standardisation meetings
2. Assessment processes for problem units/elements, new schemes will be discussed and action agreed.
3. Information gained by IQAs from attending relevant courses/workshops will be shared with the group. Any action required will be agreed
4. Minutes of IQA meeting will be taken
A copy of the minutes will be sent to the team and stored on the Sharepoint system

The Tutors (including freelance Tutors) will meet as a minimum, three time per year to standardise areas of practice chaired by the IQA:

1. Feedback from recent EQA visits will be discussed and actions agreed and implemented
2. Assessment processes for problem units/elements, new schemes will be discussed and action agreed
3. Information gained by IQAs from attending relevant courses/workshops will be shared with the group. Any action required will be agreed
4. Minutes of Tutor standardisation meetings: a copy of the minutes will be sent to all Tutors and IQAs (stored to PMA's secure SharePoint)

IQA communication update

1. To meet bi-weekly to encourage standardised Tutor assessment practices - this will include feedback from trends of IQA activity and business/industry updates.
2. Include recommendations for improved practice.
3. For sharing good practice ideas.
4. Trends will be collated on a monthly basis, to inform of standardisation activity, which has a quarterly structure and is flexible based on the needs of each sector.
5. IQA documentation.
6. Aptem system/Processes.
7. Tutor risk rating & sampling (SP).

Quality self-assessment and external stakeholders

The HoE will annually carry out a self-assessment of the PMA IQA system. Outcomes will feed into the annual company self-assessment report (SAR) and the subsequent action plan for implementation throughout the following year.

EQA

The AO will allocate an EQA to quality monitor systems and structures. The EQA will support the centre with any updates and training opportunities as well as any complaints or appeals the centre is unable to deal with.

The Head of Education/Lead IQA

The Head of Education/LIQA will support the IQAs by:

1. Chairing IQA team meetings where required
2. Updating on EQA visits

3. Updating IQAs on centre and external changes
4. Giving feedback on mentor judgments
5. Being first point of contact for any verification issues.

Appeals procedure (learner)

This procedure can be invoked when an assessment decision which has been made and the learner does not agree with it. Where a learner feels aggrieved to assessment decisions made within their qualification, the below process is adhered to

1. The learner will raise their appeal directly to the Tutor allocated to the learner’s programme of learning. The Tutor will provide a rationale to their assessment decision(s)
2. If the learner is unsatisfied, their appeal is disseminated to the Tutor allocated, *IQA who will investigate the appeal and review all evidence and assessment decisions within the portfolio to confirm the validity of the appeal (dependent upon the appeal this stage may be a panel of two independent IQAs)
3. The final stage of the procedure is to appeal to the EQA from the awarding organisation, whose decision is final.

The Appeals form, together with all relevant documentation should be sent to the dedicated IQA at stage 2, which is to be sent to the address to the allocated IQA as detailed below

PMA House. The Old Post Office, 1 Macclesfield Road, Alderley Edge, Cheshire. SK9 7BQ

*The IQA will judge the evidence and within 14 days will advise the learner of the decision in writing.

Appeals procedure (Tutor)

This procedure can be invoked if a verification decision has been made and the Tutor does not agree with it.

1. In the first instance, the Tutor will need to speak with the IQA and question the decision(s). If the Tutor is not satisfied with the response, the IQA upholds their decision(s) and an agreement cannot be reached the Tutor will need to make their appeal in writing to their line manager and/or their Head of Education (HoE) or Lead IQA and reference the specific assessments and evidence that the IQA decision(s) relate to.
2. An alternative IQA will look at the provided assessments and evidence to provide a second opinion and this will be in the form of (i) Agree with original IQA decision (ii) I do not agree with IQA original decision. If the alternative IQA activity supports the original decision(s) this will be the final decision.
3. If the subsequent IQA activities contradict the original IQA decision(s), a third IQA will review the assessment and evidence and their decision will be final in the form of (i) Agree with original IQA decision (ii) Do not agree with IQA original decision.

This policy works in conjunction with the **Observation policy**. For assessment malpractice, please refer to the **Malpractice policy**.

Emergency notification contacts:

Name	Email address	Mobile phone
Carol Brown	carol@practicemanagersuk.org	07511319421
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Austin Ambrose	austin@practicemanagersuk.org	07726 921685

Main Contacts:

Name	Job Title	Address	Mobile phone
Ian Jones	Operations Director	ian@practicemanagersuk.org	07880 788 985
Austin Ambrose	Client Services Director	austin@practicemanagersuk.org	07726 921 685
Lisa Lindgren	Head of Education	lisa@practicemanagersuk.org	07751 091 395

Should you have any concerns around Safeguarding please email:

PMA DSL, Lisa Lindgren at: safeguarding@practicemanagersuk.org

Please be assured your email will be treated in the strictest confidence and that you will receive a direct reply from Lisa within 24 hours.

Revisions control:

Date	Summary of changes made	Changes made by (Name)	Version No.
10 th Nov 2017	PMA IQA POLICY STATEMENT created	Cathryn Lyon	1.0
14 th Nov 2017	PMA IQA POLICY STATEMENT reviewed and formatted	Ian Jones	1.1
16 th Nov 2017	PMA IQA POLICY STATEMENT agreed with PMA Directors & ILM	PMA Directors	1.2
18 th July 2018	Updated with minor amendments	Elaine Crowther	1.3
December 2019	Amendment of head of education to refer to academy manager / removal of ref to delegate central	Elaine Crowther	2
23 rd Sept 2020	Updated frequency of sampling and contacts	Carol Brown	3

Next Review Due: September 2021