

End-point assessment Quality Assurance Strategy

Contents:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Moderating Rationale
- 3) OAL Risk Status Process
- 4) Moderation Plans
- 5) Non-Moderation of Evidence
- 6) Standardisation Activities
- 7) EPA Observations
- 8) Development Plans
- 9) Apprentice Interviews
- 10) CPD
- 11) Moderation and Internally set resources
- 12) Conflict of Interest
- 13) Roles and Responsibilities

1) Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to outline the activities that will be undertaken by the Quality Assurance Team to continually improve assessment practice through support, development and training of individual Independent Assessors (IA). Identify robust quality assurance activity to ensure accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions and support Apprentices achieve their end point assessment methods in a timely manner.

OAL delivers apprenticeship standards on a national basis across a wide range of sectors

Quality assurance is led by the Quality Assurance Team who are responsible for the Quality management of the end-point assessments.

All end- point assessor staff who work for OAL are occupationally competent in their sector and hold relevant qualifications. They also carry out Continual Professional Development (CPD) and maintain recorded evidence of CPD.

2) Moderating Rationale

The moderating of each Independent Assessors' practice will be carried out on a risk-based approach based upon the level of risk each end- point assessor represents. The level of monitoring of assessment practice will increase/ decrease according to the level of risk each IA represents. Review of IA judgements will be carried at various stages during an apprentice's end-point assessment. 100% moderation will be carried out on new assessors until the SQM has moderated a number of their assessment decisions and agreed a risk rating.

By moderating we do not mean reassessment, we mean picking elements and checking they have been delivered correctly. If at any point a concern is raised, then deeper checking by further moderation can be undertaken.

To enable the Quality Team to evaluate the quality of end point assessment, monitoring checks will be conducted at different stages. This will include:

- Timely acceptance of Apprentices
- Timely Management of assessments
- When one or two of the required methods have been completed
- Checking apprenticeship achievement grades against each assessment methods

These quality assurance checks will enable the Quality team to identify any risks at an early stage and highlight any individual needs for support and development.

The Quality Team will also review the end-point assessment judgements that have been made. The Standards Quality Moderator will follow a clear audit trail which demonstrates that IA's have covered all of the requirements and evidence that has been presented.

The Standards Quality Moderator (SQM) will be responsible for confirming whether evidence is:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Current
- Reliable
- Sufficient
- Meets the Judgement criteria and direct standard criteria

3) OAL Awarding Risk Status Process

For the first year of delivery, moderation will consist of 100 per cent moderation on all Standards/ Levels

For new Standards and new Endpoint Assessors the sampling will consist of 70- 100 per cent moderation over a period of time.

Moderation is based per individual Standard and level

Risk Banding and Rationale forms will be in place per End-point Assessor to monitor risks in line with development plans to work in conjunction with the Independent Assessor

Red – indicates a high level of risk, this will apply to:

- New IA's to the organisation
- IA's who have been identified as making unsafe judgements
- IA's with high caseloads

Monitoring of EPA practice for Red RAG rating

Will consist of bi-monthly support to include:

- Field Observations
- Apprentice/employer interviews
- Moderation of evidence/ judgements on 70%-100% of the caseload per level component

The Quality team will provide ongoing support and development until the IA has demonstrated consistent decisions. Carrying out a 70%- 100 % moderation of the

caseload component which will include every EPA method until the Quality team is confident the percentage moderation can be reduced.

Amber – indicates a medium level of risk this will apply to:

- IA's who have few actions identified on moderation
- Newly recruited IA's who are highly experienced

Monitoring of EPA Practice for amber RAG rating:

Will consist of quarterly visits to include:

- Field Observations of live EPA assessment practice
- Apprentice/Employer Interviews
- Moderation of evidence/ judgements on 30%-50% of the caseload per level component

The Quality Team will provide ongoing support and development until the IA has demonstrated consistent decisions. Carrying out a 30%-50% moderation of the caseload component which will include every EPA method until the Quality Team is confident the percentage sample can be reduced.

Green – indicates a low level of risk, this will apply to:

- Experienced IA's who consistently deliver high quality end point assessments and judgements. These IA's will have no/ minimal actions against them.

Monitoring of EPA Practice for green RAG rating:

Will consist of twice a year visits and include:

- Field Observations of Live EPA practice
- Candidate/employer Interviews
- Moderation of evidence/ judgements on 10%-30% of the caseload per level component

The Standards Quality Moderator will provide ongoing guidance and development to ensure the IA maintains consistent decisions. Carrying out a 10%- 30% moderation of the caseload component which will include every EPA method over a period of time.

4) Moderation Plans

The Sampling plan will contain End-point Assessment information such as:

- Apprentice name
- Date of Sample
- Grade Achieved
- Any developmental actions in order to monitor for standardisation

The moderation plan will also contain information for each Standard/ Level showing selected Apprentices on the EPA caseload until the risk information is revised which will be updated every 3 months in line with the standard-length Endpoint Assessment activity.

Fail Grades

The only exception to the Sampling Plan is if the Apprentice receives a 'Fail' grade, all Fail grades will be sampled whether the Apprentice is a moderation or non-moderation

The sampling plan will consist of Apprentice names selected for moderation based on level and risk, utilising the active caseload report.

If the Apprentice EPA changes the Moderation plan must reflect any changes

5) Non-Moderation of Evidence

For Non-Sampling of evidence. The SQM must complete the IA non-moderation audit checklist and note any comments if required. This checklist contains the required information below:

- Evidence belongs to the correct Apprentice and evidence opens correctly
- The EPA record is fully completed
- Grading Judgements are completed, and the correct terminology applied
- Feedback is accurate to the Apprentice/ Provider

The Non-Moderation audit checklist must be signposted in the SQM comments box on the electronic portal

6) Moderation Activities

Moderation Activities are imperative to the Level /Standard of the Sector

Moderation Activities will take place twice yearly and attendance is Mandatory for all IA's within the Standard Delivery

The Moderation Activities will take place in the form of the below:

X1 Face to Face Moderation event and X1 Remote Moderation event

Set agenda items will be prepared prior to the sector activity and will also include activities, sharing best practice and any relevant update to the Standard Sector

IA Evaluation forms will be completed and collated. These will then be moderated.

7) Independent Assessor Observations

IA Observations will be conducted on each end point assessors in line with the risk status and sector standards.

Observation risk will be completed on the IA Observation monitoring form which will detail areas of the end-point assessment requirements.

The IA Observation monitoring form will also highlight a clear development plan which will be implemented and reviewed.

8) Development Plans

Development Plans are in place to support the IA. The Quality team/ EPA Operating Officer will use the document to document any issues and apply as an ongoing tool with the EPA until Issues are minimised. Clear target dates will be applied

9) Apprentice Interviews

The Quality Assurance team will conduct Apprentice Interviews randomly after the End-point Assessments have been conducted.

The purpose of the Apprentice Interview is to maintain and develop the Standardised Approach and monitor the consistency of the Assessment and to ensure Independence has been maintained at all times

10) CPD

All Independent assessors must have current CPD activities within the sector that they are conducting end point assessments.

This must take place at regular intervals and must be logged on the OAL sector CPD documentation.

11) Moderation and Internally set resources

Where assessment materials are developed internally there is a need to ensure the materials are fit for purpose and meet the required skills, knowledge and behaviours required.

Internal assessment material may include: -

- Assignments
- Projects
- EPA Handbooks

All internal assessment materials will require sign off by the Standards Quality Approval panel.

A moderation team comprising of experts in each sector will carry out moderation of completed internally developed assessment materials twice per year.

Records of sign off and moderation will be held by relevant party/ Responsible Officer.

12) Conflict of Interest

All OAL staff must complete a conflict of Interest form which will be stored in the EPA consultants personal file/ electronic system. IA's must highlight any potential conflicts.

EPA staff must not work with any Apprentices who they know or if there has been involvement in the Apprentices assessment or portfolio prior to the end- point

assessment process. This also includes establishments. See Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure for further guidance.

13) Roles & Responsibilities

The Head of EPA Operations is responsible for:

- Line management of the Permanent EPA and Contracted IAs/SQMs
- Scheduling Assessments
- Development and management of EPA-Live the on-line portal
- Involvement the overall plan and Moderation activities
- Supporting the wider team
- Providing training, support, advice and guidance to IA's
- Monitoring IA CPD activity with the Quality Team and Head of Quality and Compliance
- Recruitment and selection of EPA's along with the SQMs
- Monitoring data reports
- Communicating recommendations and actions
- Identifying EPA development needs
- Reporting to the Governance Board on all aspects of EPA Operations

The IA's responsibilities:

- Responding timely to allocated caseload candidates via the electronic portal or other reporting mechanisms
- Monitoring timely EPA method bookings and managing assessments
- Conducting end-point assessment activities
- Providing accurate judgements on end-point assessment methods
- Collecting end-point assessment evidence
- Completing the EPA record/ grading justification form for each end-point assessment component
- To inform the EPA Operating Officer/ Quality Improvement Lead of any issues
- Acting as a positive role model on behalf of OAL

Standards Quality Moderator Responsibilities:

The Standard Quality Moderators role within OAL, is paramount to ensure that robust sampling and quality mechanisms are in place to support the business and provide timely results to our Clients/Customers.

The key responsibilities include:

- Component moderation- This is completed within two working days of the Assessment evidence being uploaded on the electronic portal system / agreed way
- Completing Field Observations- ensuring that all documentation is uploaded to the designated area within two working days of the Observation
- Complete Risk Banding and Rationales for all IA's that they are responsible for
- Ensure all data is tracked via the sector sampling plans
- Act in a professional manner at all times whilst representing the business
- Report concerns and issues to the EPA Operating Officer as soon as possible

- Attend Quality Assurance update meetings
- Attend all Sector Training and development sessions
- Ensure full audit trail evidence is visible and presentable
- To develop the IA and ensure timely progression through the risk status process

Quality Assurance Lead

The Quality Lead is responsible for sampling Standard Quality Moderators (SQA's) evidence when they act as Independent Assessors to ensure risks are minimised in terms of SQM's moderating their own evidence collection

The Quality Lead will also act as a SQM in the absence of the SQM to ensure timely delivery of results

The Quality lead will be responsible for completing regular monitoring of the SQM's.

The key responsibilities include:

- Moderation of the SQM feedback to IA's
- Conducting Field visits with the SQM and IA to monitor the feedback given by the SQM to ensure it meets the requirements
- Conducting Initial Standards Training sessions with new IA's
- Feeding into Development plans to assist the EPA Operating Officer