

 **FIREBRAND** | Apprenticeships

IQA Strategy and Observation Process

June 2017

Scope:

Quality assurance is fundamental to all qualifications offered by Firebrand. Quality assurance is embedded in all of our processes, products and services. It guarantees the integrity and value of our qualifications and/or assessments throughout their life cycle. We ensure that quality is embedded in the design and delivery of our qualifications and programmes, and work with our learners and employers to ensure this.

There are tangible benefits for all from this approach as it means:

- improved learner experience
- raised learner achievement rates
- increased learner retention rates
- more cost effective programmes
- regulatory requirements are met
- support for other planning and monitoring processes such as self-assessment

Purpose:

This Internal Quality Assurance Strategy ensures that quality assurance measures are built into all processes that affect the 'learner journey'. This includes:

- the induction process
- initial assessment
- learning plans
- teaching and delivery (to include facilitation of group learning)
- assessment processes
- facilitating learning
- reviews of progress
- learner achievement
- progression planning

Our clearly defined quality assurance strategy will help ensure quality in all aspects of delivery and assessment.

The Role of The IQA:

The Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) is the one of the key drivers of quality assurance in Qualifications. The role, in terms of managing assessment, is key in ensuring the validity and reliability of qualifications. Therefore, internal quality assurance is a key factor in managing 'risk' within Firebrand ensuring that when certificates are claimed for learners, the requirements of the national standards have been reliably met.

Firebrand develops a sampling strategy and plan which must be implemented by all those undertaking the internal quality assurance role.

The internal quality assurance system contains documented evidence of:

- A set of written internal quality assurance procedures
- Sample planning based on the principles of 'CAMERA'
- Effective communication
- Interim sampling (see IQA procedure doc)
- Summative sampling
- Monitoring of facilitator practice (including observation)
- Internal standardisation activities (see IQA doc)

There are four main aspects to the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) role:

- Plan, operate and evaluate internal assessment and quality assurance systems
- Support and develop tutors and/or facilitators
- Monitor and improve the quality of assessment practice
- Apply policies, procedures and legislation to meet external/regulatory requirements

Planning:

The IQA is responsible for creating sampling plans for the qualification, which should outline what will be monitored and how the sample will be selected. It is important that the plan must be a representative sample based on sound principles and take into consideration the risk factors in the centre or in the qualification team.

Typical risk factors that would be taken into consideration when initially planning the sample would be areas such as:

- the number of learners in the cohort or qualification
- numbers of tutors and facilitators
- experience and confidence of tutors and facilitators
- changes to the qualifications
- known problem areas/units/learning outcomes

When the above has been taken into account then the IQA will use the principles of 'CAMERA' to ensure that the sample is representative. This means that the sample plan must take into account each of the following:

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

Firebrand takes a risk management approach and the sample is selected using the principles of 'CAMERA', this sample should be representative of the whole cohort. This gives an accurate picture of the delivery and assessment of the qualifications. Our risk assessment approach provides a rationale that allows the IQA to increase sampling activity based on the risk of assessment practice that is identified.

Current staffing:

| Name | Role | Status |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| Barbara Turner | Quality Manger | Qualified |
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The **Lead IQA** will monitor all aspects of IQA practice consistently, and over time, to ensure compliance with quality assurance and Ofsted requirements.

The Internal Quality Assurer will undertake internal verifier activity involving each facilitator and some of their learners monthly. These activities will include:

- **Sampling** the units as identified on the sampling plan to quality assure assessment practices in line with TAQA requirements
- **Observing** facilitator practice at least **once** per year, with the option to increase observations based on a rag rating risk assessment process
- **Interviewing** learners about their experience of assessment practice
- **Monitor** the continued professional development of all facilitators to ensure that facilitator decisions remain current and in line with legislative and regulatory requirements

Each internal verification sampling plan applies to all learners registered within an identified 3 month period. This plan remains active until the learner completes the apprenticeship or leaves learning.

The focus of the Internal Quality Assurance sampling will be:

- Sampling 1 unit from each group
- Initial quality check at 6 weeks into programme, the ILP is correct with expected start dates and completion dates are agreed
- Interim sample formative samples at 12 weeks and every 12 weeks thereafter - check planning is taking place and is thorough and also check reviews are taking place and the next one is scheduled
- Summative sample on completion of programme
- Agree readiness for EPA

Sampling to include all assessment methods in line with CAMERA requirements, for example:

- Direct Observation
- Assignment Tasks
- Reflection
- Written/Oral Questions
- Professional discussion
- Expert Witness/Witness testimony

Appendix 1**RAG Rated Sampling**

Different rates for sampling will be adopted dependent on the experience of the Facilitator delivering the qualification or unit they have been assigned to as follows:

| Category | Required Activities |
|--|--|
| High Risk:- Newly qualified Facilitators or Facilitators new to the centre or those Facilitators who are continually falling short of the standard required | 100% sampling rate |
| | Facilitator observation – 3 per year min |
| Medium risk:- Facilitators who are in need of development but often meet the standard required | 50% sampling rate |
| | Facilitator observation – 2 per year min |
| Low Risk:- Facilitators who are experienced with the qualification or unit they have been assigned to and continually meet the standard required | 25% sampling rate |
| | Facilitator observation – 1 per year min |

The rates above may be subject to change for instance:

- Where a qualification is new to the centre the first 2 cohorts will be sampled at a 100% rate unless otherwise authorised by the Awarding Organisation
- Where the sampling strategy of the Awarding Organisation overrides that of the centre due to the risk rating or actions resulting from monitoring activities
- Where a contractual requirement requires additional sampling to take place (N.B. this will not override the requirements of the previous two instances where this sampling rate would require a lesser sampling rate to be adopted)

Appendix 2

Observation Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the Observation Framework in respect of all contracted provision that is delivered by Firebrand and associated companies.
- 1.2. This document is designed to complement our over-arching Quality Framework
- 1.3. The observation process and management of the schedule will be the responsibility of the Quality Manager and Lead IQA.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a formal framework for observations
- 2.2. Successful implementation of this policy will ensure that:
 - quality of provision is monitored and a consistent standard of delivery is maintained across the business.
 - outstanding practice is identified and shared.
 - weak practice is identified and addressed through the Quality Improvement Plan in order to ensure continuous improvement.

3. Frequency of Observations

- 3.1. Each staff member will be observed a minimum of once in a 12 month period.
- 3.2. New members of staff will be observed within 3 months of their starting date.
- 3.3. Observations will be planned within an appropriate timeframe and indicated by a previous grade using the following rationale:
 - Grade 1 or 2 (RAG rated low risk) awarded will require an observation every 12 months
 - Grade 3 (RAG rated medium risk) awarded will require an observation every 6 months.
 - Grade 4 (RAG rated high risk) will require an observation every 2 months
- 3.3. On completion of the observation, results including the date, grade and next planned observation must be entered on the Observation Schedule. The schedule will be monitored monthly by the Quality Manager to ensure that the observations are completed in a timely manner.

4. Preparation for Observation

- 4.1. The observer must give 48 hours notice to the staff member and the appointment must be confirmed in an email. This is also the opportunity to request any documentation that must be presented on the day of the observation.
- 4.2. Documentation may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Customer Initial Assessment
 - ii. Individual Learning Plans
 - iii. Action Plans
 - iv. Session Plans/ Scheme of Work
 - v. Delivery materials
 - vi. Customer portfolio
- 4.3. If a staff member is absent on the scheduled day of observation a further 48 hours notice is not required. An observation will be scheduled at the first available opportunity on their return to work.
- 4.4. The staff member must inform the learner/s that the session will be observed and inform of any adjustments that will be made to accommodate the observation. The observer may request some time to talk to the learner/s about their experience, time must be allowed for this to minimise disruption to the session.

5. Conducting the Observation

- 5.1. The observer must discretely position themselves during the session and must not interrupt unless there is a specific safety or contractual concern. The observation will last 45 minutes to 1 hour. If at this stage the observer feels that they have not seen sufficient evidence they may continue to observe up to a period of 90 minutes. During the observation detailed notes will be entered onto the observation document.
- 5.2. The staff member must introduce the observer to the learner/s before starting the session.
- 5.3. The staff member must complete a Lesson Reflection Form after the lesson, which will form part of the feedback following observation.
- 5.4. The observer may want to clarify some areas with the staff member. If time allows, this will happen during or straight after the observation, otherwise the observer will arrange an appropriate time to have a discussion.

6. Feedback following the Observation

- 6.1. The observer must provide verbal feedback at the earliest opportunity following the observation. If it is not possible to do so immediately, verbal feedback must be given within 48 hours.
- 6.2. A written observation report must be provided within 5 working days. At this stage a formal grade must be awarded to support the evidence recorded on the report.
- 6.3. Both the observer and the staff member will agree targets for ongoing development and sign and date the observation report. For tutors this may be trying out different materials or making adaptations to teaching methods. The staff member may decide to 'shadow' another tutor in their curriculum area or enrol for a teaching qualification. The observer will discuss the possibilities and agree the actions. Targets will be supported through ongoing staff reviews and observations.
- 6.4. Based on the grade awarded, the appropriate timeframe for the next observation will be agreed with the staff member.
- 6.5. If a staff member is awarded a grade 4, they will be revisited at an early stage, potentially within 4 weeks and a development observation will take place. After completion of the developmental observation the staff member should prepare for a graded observation by continuing with agreed development activities. The grade observation will take place within a further 4 weeks.
- 6.6. All documentation from observations will be sent to the Quality Manager and Lead IQA and the observation schedule updated.

7. Appeals

- 7.1. Staff members who wish to appeal an observation must do so initially with the observer. It is envisaged that immediate discussion will help to justify the grade and therefore reach a resolution.
- 7.2. Where a staff member is still not satisfied, a written appeal must be submitted to the Quality Manager. The written appeal must outline the rationale for appealing and include a copy of the observation documentation. The correspondence must also confirm that an initial meeting has taken place with the observer.
- 7.3. The observation will be moderated by the Quality Manager and a response will be given in writing, within 1 month of the appeal submission.
- 7.4. If the member of staff is still not satisfied, a further observation will be conducted by a member of the Quality Assurance Team following the same process.

8. Moderation

- 8.1. Following completion of observations, reports and related documentation will be sent to the Quality Assurance Team. A sample of 10% of monthly observations will be moderated and feedback will be provided. Feedback will comment on the quality of documentation, evidence provided and the overall grade given.

9. Feedback

- 9.1. General feedback from staff members about their experience of the observation can help to improve and develop the process, as well as highlighting areas for further development of observers. A Feedback Form will be sent to all staff members who are observed, completion of the document is optional.

Authorisation & Document Control

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| Authorisation | Responsible Person or Body |
| Document Owner | Barbara Turner |
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| Version | Author | Issued | Summary of Changes |
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| Draft | Barbara Turner | May 2017 | Rewrite of Policy & Procedure (to replace existing strategy) |
| V.1 | Barbara Turner | June 2017 | Approved and issued |