

# Internal Quality Assurance, Assessment, Appeals and Examination Policy



## **INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT POLICY**

The Link Training Academy is committed to ensuring a standardised approach to internal quality assurance practice, under a single, written quality assurance system, systematically reviewed in line with Awarding Organisations and OFSTED guidance. We strive to provide our customers with products and services which meet and even exceed their expectations. The internal quality assurance procedure for all provision must be open, fair and free from bias and have accurate and detailed recording of internal quality assurance decisions. An accredited, lead internal quality assurer for each subject area will ensure the internal quality assurance process will monitor and evaluate the quality, transparency and integrity of our quality of education, including Intent; Implementation and Impact; our behaviours and attitudes and that of our students; personal development of our students and our leadership and management inline with ESFA, awarding organisations, Matrix assessment, EIF, Ofqual and Ofsted.

### **The purpose of this policy is to:**

- Ensure that staff receive appropriate information regarding the internal quality assurance, observation, invigilation when conducting exams, actions and evaluation policy and process.
- Ensure that consistent and fair treatment of all staff in the application of this procedure
- To provide student centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that serves the stated learning objectives of the programmes we offer and facilitate the achievement and wider development of our students
- To assess students' work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in our assessment judgements and processes so that the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid following the most recent guidance for the awarding organisations we are working under.
- To register individual students to the correct programme within agreed time scales
- To claim valid student certificates within agreed timescales
- To construct a secure, accurate and accessible audit trail to ensure that individual student registration and certification claims can be tracked to the certificate which is issued for each student.
- To identify areas for improvement and development of all our processes and staff, including administration, teaching and learning, management and support staff.

This policy applies to all internal quality assurers, lecturers/trainers/assessors, the full range of qualifications and outcomes delivered with the centre.

## **1 - THE ROLE OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER (IQA)**

The Link Training Academy (TLTA) systems and methods must be effective, economic and sufficiently rigorous to ensure the validity of the decision made and the consistency of judgements.

In order to achieve this, we need to monitor the initial assessment, on boarding / inductions, attitudes and behaviours, personal development, safeguarding, planning, teaching, learning and assessment and destinations, including practices and procedures as well as inspecting the fairness and consistency of judgements.

This will be achieved through the following:

### **2 – Internal Processes**

To explore issues, concerns and share good practice as well as updating procedures, systems as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the lead IQA to ensure:

- All Ofsted and ESFA, EPAO and Awarding organisations' communication is channelled via the correct manner where there is an identified person who receives and spirals down the information in a timely manner.
- All external audits, quality assurance visits, confirmation sampling and quality review and development activities are organised and approved by the lead IQA for the subject area.
- A lead internal quality assurer for each subject is accredited by the awarding body and The Link Academy

### **3- Monitoring / Sampling / Standardisation**

- Each lead will oversee effective internal quality assurance in their curriculum area
- All staff are briefed and trained in the requirements for current internal quality assurance procedures.
- IQA roles are defined, maintained and supported
- Standardised internal quality assurance documentation is provided and used
- An annual IQA schedule, aligned to learner journey plans is in place
- Secure records of all IQA activities are maintained for 3 years
- The outcome of IQA is moderated and evaluated to enhance future practice and all data collection and recording, tutors / assessors and work products are subject to IQA sampling.
- Each sample will be appropriately structured to include all start information and ILR data, initial assessment, induction, IAG, progress and achieving milestones, teaching, learning and assessment for all outcomes, behaviours, attitudes and personal wellbeing along with British Values, Prevent and evaluation of feedback processes.
- A sample of assessment decisions made for every unit or outcome are moderated

#### **4 – Continued Professional Development**

- Evaluation takes place on a termly basis and all outcomes are cascaded into TLTA's ongoing quality improvement plan.
- Internal quality assurance is promoted as a development process between staff
- Staff performance is reviewed and personalised training plans are put in place to support improvements which are SMART.
- A sample of decisions from every tutor / assessor is quality assured so that within the sample the range of decisions made is included, the experience of the tutor / assessor is taken into account, the sample size is sufficient to assure the accuracy of the decisions for the whole group and the sampling process is planned and documented.
- New assessors will have 100% of their courses sampled until they reach competency. Experience assessors will have a minimum of 30% sampled.
- All tutors and assessors are expected to take charge of their own continual professional development with guidance from quality leads and line managers.
- All tutors, assessors and progress coaches are expected to record a minimum of 50 hours of CPD activity annually. This will include 30 hour of subject specialism CPD plus 20 hours of mandatory CPD planned by quality leads and directors. This will include safeguarding, ED&I, British Values and Prevent as a minimum.
- It is the responsibility of the individual team member to plan, monitor and record their CPD activities in their personal CPD tracking file. All CPD activities must be evaluated within the tracking file. CPD activities will be reviewed by the relevant IQA termly at standardisation meetings.
- Staff can undertake a range of activities to count towards their annual CPD including but not limited to:
  - Regulated qualification frameworks such as NVQ's
  - Attending webinars delivered through skills networks, awarding bodies, industry bodies etc.
  - Online training – particularly that on offer by the ETF for safeguarding, prevent and British Values
  - Workplace shadowing
  - Industry body conferences / trade shows.
- All staff can access funding for their CPD activities, to request CPD funding, please contact your direct line manager.

## Teaching, Learning & Assessment – Quality Cycle

Performance Development Activity	Red – A new teacher (<1year) or after the result of an IQA activity	Amber – A competent teacher –Consistently good level of teaching and assessment but may still require further developments	Green – An experienced tutor who consistently provides good teaching and assessment
Formal Performance Review	Bi-Annually in Feb and July	Bi-Annually in Feb and July	Bi-Annually in Feb and July
Formal OTLA	OTLA in each term, 1st between Sep-Dec, 2nd Between Jan and April, 3rd Between April and July (unless graded at 4 –then within 2 weeks)	OTLA twice per year, 1st Between Sep-Dec, 2nd Between April and July, (unless graded at 4 –then within 2 weeks)	OTLA once per year if maintaining high quality, 1st Between Sep – Dec (unless graded at 3/4 –then within 1 Month)
Themed Walkthrough	Once monthly	Once every half term	Once per term
Light-touch observation	Once monthly	Once every half term	Once per term
Progress Reviews – Quality Check	100% sample until standards met	3 learner sample termly	3 learner sample yearly
OTJ Hours – Data check	Termly	Termly	Termly
Reflective Logs – Quality check	5 learner sample termly	5 Learner sample termly	5 learner sample termly
Feedback – Quality Audit	Full sample until consistently hitting standards	5 Learner sample termly	5 Learner sample yearly
Assessments	Full sample until consistently hitting standards	50% Learner sample termly	10% Learner sample yearly
Learner / Employer interviews	5 Learners / Employers every half term	5 Learners / Employers every term	5 Learners / Employers every year
Session Planning Review	100% sample until consistently hitting standards	3 Session Plans every half-term	3 Session Plans every term
CPD Monitoring	Half-Termly each staff member to be checked. Must have done at least 1 reflection.	Half-Termly each staff member to be checked. Must have done at least 1 reflection.	Half-Termly each staff member to be checked. Must have done at least 1 reflection.

## INTERNAL QUALITY STRATEGY – CAMERA

Selecting a sample, based on CAMERA		
C	Candidates	A selection of candidates across all workplace/assessment locations (new and existing ones) and cohorts Throughout the assessment process including those candidates certificated, almost complete, mid-way and at the beginning of the assessment, increase in candidate numbers (planned or unplanned)
A	Assessors and IQAs	A selection of assessors and internal quality assurers (IQAs) across all workplace/ assessment locations over time. (3 years) Particular attention is always paid to the decisions of unqualified, working towards TAQA, new to centre or inexperienced assessors and internal quality assurers, qualifications, previous action plans, workload, caseload, occupational experience and continuing professional development (CPD). EQAs should always check for any Conflict of Interest amongst staff in a centre including assessors and IQAs. Where there is a conflict of interest the assessor/IQA must be sampled by the EQA and reported in the CAR3.
M	Methods of assessment	Questioning, observation, witness testimony, professional discussion, recognition of prior learning (RPL), use of simulation, product evidence, assignments, projects, centre devised assessments and tests.
E	Evidence	All types of candidate evidence, which must be selected throughout the assessment process and not just end loaded or on completion. Not all units need to be sampled in a single activity, but all units must be sampled over a period of time
R	Records	Assessor plans and assessment decisions CPD records Standardisation plans, activities and records Centres must have a robust IQA strategy, with evidence to support this has been implemented.
A	Assessment decision	Accuracy of centre assessment judgements across all assessors and IQAs (feedback, actions, recommendations, adjustments) Across all grade boundaries including pass/fails/referrals Marks must be scrutinised alongside the IQA records and assessor feedback reports A range of units should be sampled in every activity and all units must be sampled over time.

## THE ROLE OF THE ASSESSOR

Assessment is the interpretation and judgement of evidence put forward by the candidate as evidence of their performance. This performance evidence is accurately judged against elements of competence as defined by the performance criteria.

## **Fair, Reliable Assessment**

TLTA will provide at all times access to fair and reliable assessment by undertaking the following:

- The assessment is valid by judging performance against the elements of competence, the associated performance criteria and range statements, and ensuring that these are all satisfied, as well as the specified evidence requirements.
- Assessment methods which take account the special needs of candidates and which are appropriate to the performance being assessed are incorporated.
- All feasible sources of evidence will be considered. Where evidence is from sources other than the workplace, it is sufficient to make a judgement that the candidate is competent.
- The evidence can be reliably attributed to the candidate and where necessary, carry out a check(s) to establish authenticity.
- Prime consideration is given to the consistency of performance of both the candidate and the assessor.
- Our standard general assessment questions are applied to each candidate.
- Agreed systems and procedures are followed at all times.
- Credit accumulation and transfer is provided for.
- Confidentiality of evidence will be maintained and respected.
- Proper facilities will be provided for the assessment interview, and will be private. Where the interview is conducted on clients' premises, it is the responsibility of the assessor to liaise with the candidate to ensure facilities are provided.

## **Open Access**

Systems and procedures are free from discriminatory practice with regard to gender, race, creed, age and disabilities.

TLTA systems and methods must be effective, economic and sufficiently rigorous to ensure the validity of the decision made and the consistency of judgements.

In order to achieve this, we need to monitor the assessment process, including practices and procedures as well as inspecting the fairness and consistency of assessment judgements.

This will be achieved through the following:

### **Planned Assessor/quality/ standardisation Meetings**

To explore issues, concerns and share good practice as well as updating procedures, systems as appropriate.

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

Where an assessor has a particular problem, concern or borderline portfolio, then advice should be sought from the IQA or other assessors. If problems persist and cannot be resolved the advice must be sort from the External Quality Assurer.

### **External Quality Assurance**

The External Quality Assurance from the Awarding Organisation will select a sample of portfolios and will also review our systems and procedures. There will be a minimum of two visits per year. EQA will also take place in the form of internal and external audits, looking at E portfolio, quality of reviews, developmental 360 feedback, learner's progression, milestones, reflective logs, learner interviews, employer and learner feedback, tracking, induction, initial assessments, functional skills, additional learning support and reasonable adjustments, personal wellbeing, behaviours and attitudes. An EQA could also ask tutors / assessors / learners and employers what the intent of the programme is and how we are implementing the programme. They may also ask the employer how much contact and input they have on the programme and how effective the programme is supporting their apprentices.

### **Selection of Assessors/Advisers**

This will be based on our pre-determined selection criteria and using specified role specifications.

### **Training of Assessors/Advisers**

All appropriate staff will be required to demonstrate their competence as tutors, assessors and advisers using the relevant standards and to be assessed and accredited against. Ongoing training and support will be provided. All assessors will be observed teaching and assessing in the workplace or practical training environment to ensure standardisation across all sectors

### **Procedures/Documentation**

Our procedures and documentation will be adhered to at all times in accordance with Awarding Body requirements.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

### **The Link Training Academy assessment decision Appeals Process**

Individuals have the right to seek a review of decisions, which affect their lives. In respect of the assessment procedure. The candidate fully participates in the review process and it must be accepted that there may be times when the candidate and tutor / assessors perceptions, of whether agreed evidence meets the standards, are going to be different. TLTA has designed an appeals procedure covering the process for raising appeals against an academic judgement or assessment decision that has been made.

### **What is the procedure?**

If you have cause for concern regarding any decision made about you during the advisory or assessment stages of your programme, and you feel that proper processes have not been followed or that the academic judgements or assessment decisions have not been made in



accordance with the regulations or the programme of learning, then you have the right to appeal against that decision.

1. **Call** Head Office on **01484 425500** and ask to speak to the lead IQA for your qualification
2. **Email** [amanda@thelinktraining.org](mailto:amanda@thelinktraining.org) with your appeal concern
3. **Write** to: Amanda Lodge-Stewart at 19 Brook Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1EB.

The appeals procedure is split into 3 stages and they are as follows:

Stage 1 - Assessor and candidate

Stage 2 - Internal Quality Assurer / Lead Internal Quality Assurer

Stage 3 - Appeals panel (teaching learning and assessment team and governors)

Should you wish to appeal against a decision made after a complaint has been investigated, then please refer to our Complaints Procedure

When you contact us, please give your full name, contact details and a daytime telephone number along with:

- a full description of your appeal  
(including the subject matter and dates and times if known)
- any names of the people you have dealt with so far
- copies of any papers or letters to do with the appeal
- any other factors for consideration, such as any extenuating circumstances that the learner either did not address at the time or that they believe were raised but not taken into consideration when the decision was made

The Link Training Academy asks that you raise your appeal as soon as possible after the event so that we have the opportunity to investigate fully. We will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 10 working days.

Appeals will be investigated and a review panel may be formed to reach a decision. We aim to investigate and respond to appeals within 15 working days

This will be the final route of escalation within our company. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our own internal appeals procedure, please contact the awarding organisation directly. (links below)

### **Stage 1**

Where a candidate disagrees with the feedback given, S/He must explain the reasons for this with the assessor concerned, as soon as possible. In most circumstances this will be immediately after receiving the assessment decision. If not, the candidate(s) must write to the assessor within five working days of the assessment decision being given. If you wish to appoint another person to act as your representative, you may do so.

The assessor will consider the candidate's explanation and provide an immediate response through:

- A clear explanation/reiteration (as appropriate) of the assessment decision following a Reevaluation of the evidence.
- Documenting the outcome on the Appeals Form.
- Amendment of the candidate's assessment record (evidence record sheet), if appropriate.

If the candidate agrees with the decision provided then the appeal need not proceed further. Where the candidate remains unhappy with the decision reached, the appeal must proceed to Stage 2.

### Stage 2

The assessor concerned must forward:

- The original assessment record and, where appropriate candidate evidence,
- The Candidate Appeals letter
- To the nominated Internal Quality Assurer within 24 hours of the appeal being raised.

The Internal Quality Assurer must reconsider the assessment decision and this will normally involve and evaluation of:

- The candidate evidence and associated records
- The assessor's rationale for the decision
- The opinion of another assessor
- The opinion of the candidate

In doing so, the Internal Quality Assurer will provide the candidate with the reconsidered decision within 15 working days of receiving the appeal.

Where the candidate remains unhappy with the reconsidered assessment decision, the appeal must proceed to Stage 3.

### Stage 3

Where candidate(s) remain unhappy with the decision made at Stage 2, they will have the right to forward their case to the Appeals Panel. The Internal Quality Assurer concerned at Stage 2 must forward relevant details to the Centre Co-ordinator and these should include:

- The candidate appeals letter
- Assessment record sheets
- Any written comments of the Internal Verifier

The Co-ordinator must convene, within 10 working days of Stage 2, a panel comprising:

- The co-ordinator him/herself
- The Stage 2 Internal Verifier
- The candidate
- The original assessor

- A friend/colleague of the candidate, if wished for by that candidate(s)

The panel must reach a decision and inform the candidate of the result within 5 working days both orally and in writing.

**The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.**

Records of all appeals are to be logged and filed in the TLTA Centre Portfolio and made available as appropriate to the:

- External Quality Assurer
- Quality assurance group with responsibility for assessment.

**Examination policy and procedure**

During assessment weeks where candidates are sitting external exams and internally set tasks to complete functional skills in maths, English or ICT at levels 1 and 2, all centre staff will be aware of the protocol of behaviour regarding test papers and exam conditions. **THE EXTERNAL**

**EXAMINATION PROCEDURE**

- Online exams are planned and prepared for in advance.
- Paper based exam papers will be immediately stored in the locked cabinet in the top office
- During examinations the candidates will be seated and ready in designated area and a seating plan will be followed ensuring they have pens, paper and invigilators are following the invigilation guide lines set down by the AO. (All invigilators have a copy and been trained internally to follow guidelines)
- The exam papers will then be removed from the cabinet and opened. (The assessors, tutors and invigilators will not have access to see the papers before this time) Papers will be handed out to candidates face down.
- PC's will be turned on and the exam waiting on the front page for the learners to agree that it is the correct candidate and check the details.
- The time will be checked by the invigilator and the exam will start.
- On completion, the candidate will leave and paper/PC's after logging off on the desk and leave the room quietly.
- The invigilator will collect all papers and store them in the envelope provided.
- On line exams are automatically uploaded to AO's website

- The centre manager will collect the envelope from the invigilator and post then back to the designated AO address.
- Once results have been issued, resits will be organised if required and the same protocol will be followed.

Access to the top office is restricted to three locks: The first is the building lock with a secure alarm code, the second is a secure key pad, office staff only have the combination; the third lock is on the cabinete. The Director and office manager hold a key.

In the case of emergency access or staff sickness both key holders can be contacted.

### **INTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**

During internal assessment of speaking, listening and communication the candidates will have been informed of the task requirements. They will receive a hand out explaining what will be expected of them on the day. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify all requirements to ensure a good understanding.

The date and time will be agreed with the candidate. Opportunities will be available if they wish to practice the task using the equipment provided beforehand. This opportunity will be used a formative assessment by the assessor/tutor and the candidate.

During the assessment, all participants will be aware that assessment is taking place by the invigilator. All peers present will be aware of the protocol of assessment.

Both the invigilator and the assessor will be present during the formal discussion assessment.

Notes will be taken by the assessor throughout the formal discussion/presentation and the paperwork will be completed after the assessment. Feedback will be given to the candidate by the assessor after the assessment.

All recordings and evidence will be recorded and stored for the EQA to check on next visit.

### **ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

The Centre agrees to:

- Ensure that it will recruit with integrity with regard to both general and vocational qualifications
- Ensure that students will have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification will meet their needs. The recruitment process must include the centre assessing each potential student and making justifiable and professional judgements about the student's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification.
- The centre assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the student to facilitate access to examinations/assessments
- Ensure that where a student with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of their needs, they are assessed by an appropriately qualified assessor.

- Assist the awarding bodies in the discharge of their duty to make reasonable adjustments by requesting access arrangements, where required and effectively implementing those arrangements once approved.
- Submit any applications for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments ensuring that appropriate documentary evidence is held on file to substantiate such an arrangement and is open to inspection.
- Recognised its duties towards disabled students as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled student.

## **Process for Collecting, Monitoring, and Using Learner and Employer Feedback**

### **Purpose**

This policy outlines the procedures for collecting, monitoring, and utilizing feedback from learners and employers to enhance the quality of education and training provided by The Link Training. We are committed to continuous improvement and believe that feedback is essential for achieving excellence in our services.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all learners and employers engaged with The Link Training. It covers feedback collection methods, monitoring processes, and the application of feedback to improve operations.

## **1. Feedback Collection from Learners and Employers**

### **1.1 Methods of Collection**

Feedback is collected from learners and employers at several key stages throughout their learning journey with The Link Training:

- **IAG Feedback** - Feedback on the effectiveness of initial information, advice and guidance is collected at a 4-week progress review. At this review, both the learner and employer are asked to provide feedback on how they found the on-boarding process and if they have received the required information to start their programme smoothly.
- **Termly Formal Feedback** – Learner and Employer surveys are sent out termly utilising online, anonymised survey services. This survey looks at the learner and employer experience with The Link Training across a broad range of facets.
- **Tri-partite Progress Review Feedback** – Learner and employer feedback is collected at regular intervals throughout the learning programme. As a minimum, the learner will have a progress review every 10-weeks where they have the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning programme and their experience with the employer. Similarly, the employer will also be able to provide feedback on the learners development and their experience with the training provider.

- **End-of-Course Surveys:** Anonymous online surveys will be sent to all learners upon completion of their course. These surveys will include questions related to course content, delivery, instructor effectiveness, and overall learner satisfaction
- **Focus Groups:** Select learners may be invited to participate in focus groups to provide more in-depth qualitative feedback on their experiences. The format of these focus groups will be in-line with the OFSTED 'Deep Dive' topics and may include, awareness and readiness for EPA, behaviours and attitudes within the training organisation, safeguarding and the prevent strategy etc.
- **Informal Feedback Sessions:** Instructors will hold informal feedback sessions during the last week of the course, encouraging learners to share their thoughts on the programme in a supportive environment.

## **2. Monitoring and Analysis**

### **2.1 Data Management**

All feedback will be recorded and stored in a secure database. Data will be anonymised to protect the identity of learners and employers.

### **2.2 Regular Review**

Feedback will be reviewed monthly by the Quality Assurance and Senior Leadership Team. Trends, themes, and areas for improvement will be identified and reported in Senior Leadership meetings. Feedback is shared with delivery teams monthly within the scheduled learner update meetings.

## **3. Using Feedback for Continuous Improvement**

### **3.1 Internal Improvement Processes**

Feedback will be utilised in the following ways:

- **Curriculum Development:** Insights from learner and employer feedback will inform curriculum updates and the development of new courses to ensure alignment with industry standards and learner and employer needs.
- **Training Plans:** Feedback relating to the quality of education or service provided will be used to tailor professional development opportunities for staff to enhance teaching effectiveness.
- **Operational Changes:** Suggestions from feedback will be assessed for feasibility and may lead to changes in operational procedures, such as scheduling, resource allocation, and support services.

### **3.2 Reporting to Stakeholders**

The outcomes of feedback analyses will be shared with stakeholders, including staff, learners, employers and the governance board to maintain transparency and demonstrate the value placed on their input.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

- Quality Assurance Team: Responsible for collecting, analysing, and reporting feedback.
- Teachers, Assessors and Progress Coaches: Responsible for encouraging feedback and engaging with learners during feedback sessions.
- Senior Management: Responsible for reviewing feedback outcomes and supporting improvements in business operations.
- Board of Governors: Responsible for holding the senior management team to account on the improvements agreed upon based on the feedback received.

#### **Awarding organisations contact details:**

- **City and Guilds / ILM:** <https://www.cityandguilds.com/-/media/cityandguilds-site/documents/what-we-offer/centres/centre-document-library/appeals/appeals-for-qualifications-pdf.ashx?la=en&hash=583BFCD2BCC6AD6AA452336F019238B780E420B0>
- **Highfields:** <https://www.highfieldqualifications.com/> or contact 01302 363277
- **VTCT/Skills First:** <https://www.vtct.org.uk/>
- **TQUK:** <https://www.tquk.org/resources/>

Signed/Position: *Amanda Lodge-Stewart: Director*

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