







**Meeting Title** Quality Assurance Committee (4 October 2017)  
**Date of Issue** 19 October 2017

## Attendance

Dame Asha Khemka	Committee Chair, IfA Board member
Paul Cadman	Committee member, IfA Board member
Isabel Sutcliffe	Independent Committee member, Director of Isabel Sutcliffe Consultancy Ltd
Professor Jim Iley	Independent Committee member, Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, The Open University
Ben Blackledge	Independent Committee member, Director of Education and Skills Competitions at WorldSkills UK
Richard Guy	Deputy Director, Quality, IfA
Nikki Christie	Deputy Director, Assessment & Quality Assurance, IfA
Ana Osbourne	Deputy Director, Approvals, IfA
	
	

## Apologies

None

### 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed members of the Quality Assurance Committee to its third meeting.

## 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

- 2.1. The Chair asked members of the Committee whether they had any comments on the minutes.
- 2.2. The Committee asked how officials were doing in their discussions with Ofqual on our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with them. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance confirmed that she has made Ofqual aware of the work that the Committee will be undertaking in terms of quality assurance and the need for us to work closer with them [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- 2.3. The Chair asked whether any further amendments had been made to the Terms of Reference for the Committee. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance confirmed that no further comments had been received. The Chair agreed to inform the Board that the Terms of Reference are still a work in progress and are a living document. The Chair asked Committee members to provide The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance with any comments/changes they may have on the Terms of Reference.
- 2.4. The Committee asked for paragraph 5.3 of the minutes to be updated to reflect that at the previous meeting the Committee raised concerns about the length of time it takes from getting an Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation (AAO) registered to the assessment materials being ready and that this length of time should be defined so that the Institute could understand what was acceptable/good.
- 2.5. The Committee asked for a workshop to be set up in November to take a strategic view on the quality issues that the Institute needs to address going forward. This would result in the creation of an issues log which could then be shared with representatives from the Quality Alliance, Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) for their input and views. The Committee confirmed, that subject to the changes outlined above, that they were happy to approve the minutes.

**Action 1 – The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance to continue to work with Ofqual to progress the MOU, with the views of Committee members.**

**Action 2 – Committee members to provide The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance with any comments/changes they may have on the Terms of Reference.**

**Action 3 – A workshop to be set up in November to take a strategic view on the quality issues that the Institute needs to address going forward, and create an issues log from this.**

### **3. Quality Statement and Quality Strategy**

- 3.1. The Deputy Director for Quality informed Committee members that the Quality Statement has now gone live on GOV.UK for consultation. The consultation period will last for three weeks and at the last count we had received 125 responses so far. The closing date for the consultation is 18 October 2017. Responses will then be separated out by employers and other interested parties so they can be analysed and the Quality Statement revised with feedback received in time for the next Quality Assurance Committee and Institute Board meeting on 15 November.
- 3.2. The Committee agreed to circulate the link to the consultation to young people through World Skills so they could comment as well.
- 3.3. The Deputy Director for Quality informed the Committee that the Quality Strategy will now be developed. The Strategy is built on the Quality Statement, but will include an assessment of where we are/issues and actions. He invited Committee members to provide him with any comments.
- 3.4. The Committee asked what the timeframe was for switching off apprenticeship frameworks. The Deputy Director for Approvals agreed to find this out for the next Committee meeting, and The Deputy Director for Quality highlighted that there is an issue with this. Funding for frameworks has been reduced and as a result providers are withdrawing from them, but there is not necessarily an equivalent standard to replace them.
- 3.5. The Committee flagged a concern about the Approvals process at pages 2 and 3 of the Quality Strategy that it will be very difficult for employers/providers to create training programmes from some of the standards and hard for the Institute to check for overlap, low skills content etc. The Deputy Director for Quality and The Deputy Director for Approvals explained that this was a legacy issue, and that the Institute will help Trailblazers to write and review better standards, develop them further and then Route Panels are scrutinising proposals and providing constructive feedback on how they can be better articulated.

- 3.6. The Deputy Director for Quality asked Committee members to provide him with any further comments they may have on the Quality Strategy after the meeting.

**Action 4 – Committee members to provide The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance with any further comments they may have on the Quality Strategy.**

**4. Update on Approvals**

- 4.1. The Deputy Director for Approvals provided the Committee with an update on approvals of Standards, and shared with them the latest data table. The Approvals team received 47 submissions in August, a mix of Expressions of Interest, Standards and Assessment Plans, which is an average amount for the month. These submissions have been through the Institute’s internal triage process, and those able to proceed have been scrutinised by the Route Panels and will be considered by the Approvals and Funding Committee later today. The Deputy Director for Approvals confirmed that the Approvals Team are running quite a high number of submissions where the recommendation is to “approve with conditions”. The team will be doing more work with Trailblazers to address some of the minor issues that crop up in submissions that will alleviate conditions being made. The relationship managers’ role in this will be key.
- 4.2. The Deputy Director for Approvals reassured the Committee that work is underway to improve and streamline the Approvals process so that proposals, standards and assessment plans are considered a lot closer together over a shorter timeframe in order to reduce any time lag. This will enable the Institute to be more responsive to getting standards and assessment plans approved more quickly and in parallel.
- 4.3. The Chair raised a concern that standards can be approved by the Institute, but it does not necessarily mean that the assessment plan has been approved as well, and that we are saying that it is ready for delivery, when that is not strictly true. The Deputy Director for Approvals reassured the Committee that this issue will be addressed as part of the improvements being made to the Approvals process, and that work is underway to tease out more of the issues around the timing of Approvals.

## 5. Assessment Process

- 5.1. The Chair set the scene for The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance's presentation on the Assessment Process. She explained how the presentation would set out where we are in terms of quality since the Institute was established six months ago, where we need to move forward and the issues we need to address.
- 5.2. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance then talked the Committee through her presentation. She explained how the Institute's Assessment and Quality Assurance team has three main responsibilities which includes reviewing and making recommendations on the approval of End Point Assessment (EPA) plans, overall responsibility for External Quality Assurance (EQA) via the Quality Assurance Committee; and ensuring the direct delivery of EQA for those standards where the Institute has been nominated as the provider. The team is also working with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) and issuing of certification.
- 5.3. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance explained that each EPA must involve the apprentice undertaking two separate assessment methods and outlined those that are commonly used. The types of assessment methods used are more rigorous than previous modular approaches.
- 5.4. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance outlined the Institute's process and role in approving assessment plans, explaining how the Assessment team are increasingly supporting the Institute's relationship managers support Trailblazers with the development of their assessment plans, and how these plans are then triaged by the Institute assessment team to confirm policy compliance. Those plans that pass the triage stage are then reviewed by the Route Panels who in turn make a recommendation to the Approvals and Funding Committee who then approve or reject the assessment plan. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance confirmed that any assessment plans where Ofqual has been selected as the EQA provider are only taken forward to Route Panel and Committee stage once Ofqual has agreed them.
- 5.5. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance also provided the Committee with the latest statistics on the number of assessment plans that have

been submitted to date and what proportion of these have been approved. The statistics show a clear upward trajectory of the number of assessment plans being reviewed and approved but that there is no way of forecasting how many plans will be received each month.

- 5.6. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance outlined for the Committee some of the common issues her team are coming across with assessment plans which lead to them not being approved. These include poorly articulated assessment methods, invalid assessment methods, incorrect grading, lack of independence and necessary details about EQA. She explained that her team are working through the bulk of the first four of these issues, which will enable them to move forward a large number of assessment plans that wouldn't have been approved in the first place.
- 5.7. The Assessment and Quality Assurance team have made a number of improvements to the process over the last six months such as clarifying guidance to Trailblazers in a constructive way, increasing and improving the support they give to Trailblazers, improving the team's own internal processes and making better use of the freelance pool of education advisors.
- 5.8. The Chair asked whether there was a need for more resources in the Assessment and Quality Assurance team. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance confirmed that it was tight, the situation was being monitored and may need to be considered further going forward.
- 5.9. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance went on to outline the EQA process for the Committee. EQA is the process by which the Institute will gain assurance that EPAs undertaken by different assessment organisations are being delivered fairly, robustly and consistently. It also allows the Institute to check that standards and assessment plans are fit-for-purpose on the ground.
- 5.10. Latest statistics show that employers are choosing a range of EQA providers which include employer-led bodies, professional bodies, Ofqual, QAA or the IfA. There are currently 20 standards that have not yet decided on an EQA option. These will primarily be older standards where there was not a requirement to stipulate an EQA option. Relationship managers are working with Trailblazers to ensure these standards have an EQA option selected, and prioritising those which have apprentices nearing EPA.

5.11. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance also outlined for the Committee the Institute's own EQA approach. The Institute has contracted out delivery of its EQA service for 2017-18 to Open Awards. Open Awards are an Ofqual-regulated awarding body that operate nationally, they are also a charity and so are operating the EQA service on a not-for-profit basis in line with DfE policy. [REDACTED]

5.12. The Deputy Director for Assessment & Quality Assurance concluded her presentation by highlighting that the Institute has made good progress to date, but there is still more to do. Assessment and quality assurance is a continuous improvement process which is getting better over time and the team is working with over 26 partners to achieve this.

## **6. External Quality Assurance (EQA) update**

6.1. The Assessment & Quality Assurance team provided the Committee with an update on EQA. They confirmed that there are over 26 bodies involved in EQA and that the Assessment and Quality Assurance team has made contact with each of these, asking them for their proposals on how they plan to deliver EQA. The team will then scrutinise these proposals and provide feedback. Some EQA providers are at quite an advanced stage with their proposals. Once this process is complete and the Institute is happy with their proposal, EQA providers will receive official recognition in the form a letter from the Institute outlining which standards the provider will do EQA for. The letter will also be uploaded to the Institute's website.

6.2. The Assessment & Quality Assurance team also explained that going forward the Assessment and Quality Assurance team will continue to monitor and observe EQA providers and obtaining feedback from them on their progress.

## **7. Future meetings and next steps**

7.1. The next meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee will be on Wednesday 15 November 2017 from 09:00-10:30am at Cheylesmore House, Coventry, CV1 2WT. The next meeting would focus on issues and plan for the workshop later in the month. Papers and reports for the next meeting should be circulated to the Committee one week in advance.

## 8. AOB

8.1. None.



**Date created** 5 October 2017

**Version** Cleared by Deputy Director, Assessment & Quality Assurance, IFA  
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### Agreed Actions

Action	Owner	Completed (Y/N/ In progress)	Date updated
1 – Nikki Christie to continue to work with Ofqual to renew the MOU, with the views of Committee members.	Nikki Christie	In progress (for November Quality Assurance Committee)	5 October
2 – Committee members to provide Nikki Christie with any comments/changes they may have on the Terms of Reference.	Nikki Christie	In progress (for November Quality Assurance Committee)	5 October
3 – A workshop to be set up in November to take a strategic view on the quality issues that the Institute needs to address going forward, and create an issues log from this.	Nikki Christie	In progress	5 October
4 – Committee members to provide Richard Guy with any further comments they may have on the Quality Strategy.	Richard Guy	In progress (for November Quality Assurance Committee)	5 October