



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

SCCU LIMITED
VERSION 1.1

Version Control

VERSION	REVIEWER NAME	DATE	NEXT REVIEW	COMMENTS
1.0	Katrina Greenshields	February 2022	03/07/2023	New Policy
1.1	Katrina Greenshields	17/07/2023	July 2024	Updates Completed

Introduction

SCCU ensures a standardised approach to quality assurance and assessment practice, under a single documented quality assurance and assessment strategy. This is reviewed regularly and systematically, and we act on the findings of those reviews, taking all reasonable steps to protect the interest of learners.

Effective systems of standards verification are crucial to continued success as judged against the key areas of Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework. A strong system robustly evaluates provision for fitness of purpose and ensures that tutors and managers alike are empowered to operate with due regard for high standards of teaching, learning, assessment, and leadership and management within SCCU.

Quality assurance is fundamental to SCCU and is embedded in all processes, products, and services. It guarantees the integrity and value of our qualification offer and assessments throughout the learner's journey. Quality is embedded in the delivery of qualifications, programmes, and resources, and SCCU ensures that this is maintained through regular updates and support.

This document specifies the quality assurance and control requirements that must be followed within SCCU.

Quality Assurance Principles

The principles of quality assurance and standards verification reflect SCCU's values and are established to ensure that we meet our obligations to the funding agencies, Awarding organisations, employers, and learners. Our primary focus is on the experience and impacts for all learners whilst undertaking their programme with SCCU with the intention that we help to move them towards positive progression routes such as further education, further training, or career development. Our quality assurance systems are set up to focus on the Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. We also pay close attention to how we execute our duties towards safeguarding, equality, and diversity, Prevent, British values and overall learner welfare.

SCCU's Quality Assurance Framework supports:

- Effective on-going improvement
- Focus on the impact on learners
- Recognising the importance of responding to stakeholder needs
- Being fair, consistent, and proportionate in scope
- Allowances for people to challenge and seek clarification
- Making a positive contribution to learner success and progress

There are measurable benefits for all from this approach as it can:

- Improve the learner experience
- Raise learner achievement rates
- Increase learner retention rates
- Ensure regulatory requirements are met
- Support other planning and monitoring processes such as self-assessment

Quality assurance measures are built into all processes that affect the 'learner journey'. This includes:

- The recruitment processes
- The induction processes
- Initial assessment
- Learning plans
- Teaching and delivery
- Assessment
- Processes to facilitate learning
- Reviews of progress
- Learner achievement
- Progression planning

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Strategy

The IQA procedure for SCCU is developed and monitored by the Quality Manager to ensure that IQA procedures are standardised throughout SCCU. Each IQA is responsible for working to agreed documentation that allows for robust reporting systems.

This IQA procedure outlines the process and record keeping requirements agreed with the IQA team. Each IQA must follow the IQA process as outlined within the IQA Procedure Document. They must check with the Quality Manager if unclear about the procedures and / or recording requirements.

The Role of the IQA

The IQA is 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, IQA activity is a key factor in managing 'risk' and ensuring that the requirements of the standards are being reliably met.

There are four main aspects to the IQA role:

- Plan, operate and evaluate internal assessment and quality assurance systems
- Support and develop tutors
- Monitor and improve the quality of assessment practice

- Apply policies, procedures, and legislation to meet external /regulatory requirements

IQA Responsibilities

SCCU ensures that IQA's are competent to perform their role and have sufficient time to fulfil their duties. We provide appropriate training, support and / or development opportunities to ensure that IQA's meet the requirements set out in the IQA Procedure and that auditable records are kept.

SCCU ensures that the decisions of unqualified Tutor's/IQA's are checked, authenticated and countersigned by an IQA who is appropriately qualified. SCCU records evidence of IQA's and Tutor's development activities and qualifications.

IQA's may carry out assessments, but only if they have the qualifications and occupational expertise appropriate for assessment of specific qualifications and / or documentation. IQA's may only quality assure evidence they did not assess.

IQA's are responsible for:

- Regularly planning sampling activities, and sampling (before EPA/Certification) the evidence of support and feedback given by all tutors across all assessment methods.
- Regular sampling and being present at practical assessments including carrying out moderation of assessment decisions.
- Maintaining up-to-date records of IQA interventions and sampling activities, ensuring that these are available and stored in the correct locations.
- Establishing procedures to ensure that there is standardisation between Tutors.
- Monitoring and supporting the work of Tutors.
- Facilitating appropriate staff development and training for Tutors
- Providing feedback to the allocated Tutors, IQA Team and EQA (where applicable) on the effectiveness of assessment
- Ensuring that any action that Awarding Organisations or SCCU require is carried out, within the agreed timescales.
- The IQA will monitor learner progress against initial equal opportunities information provided by the learner. Where it is found that learners are not progressing as expected, a plan and then a record of actions taken to support the learner/tutor, will be made.

IQA Criteria

The quality assurance process requires

- Initial sampling
- Interim sampling
- Final/Completion sampling
- Monitoring of tutor practice (including observation)
- Standardisation activities
- Tutor support documentation

SCCU operates and maintains an explicit IQA procedure to ensure:

- The accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions between Tutors
- That Tutors are consistent in their interpretation and application of the assessment/standard criteria / requirements specified in the qualification/assessment plan and / or assessment documentation.

Authentication of Internally-Assessed Work

The IQA's are responsible for ensuring that internally-assessed work is conducted in accordance with Awarding Organisation requirements.

SCCU requires evidence to be submitted and completed on the Bud/Equal system ensuring Learners confirm that any work submitted is their own and Tutors are able to confirm that the work assessed is solely the Learners. This must be checked for plagiarism and copywrite with any concerns documented and raised with the tutor.

For all qualifications, SCCU has developed a sampling strategy with sampling plans that are implemented by all those undertaking the IQA role across all provisions.

Planning

The lead IQA is responsible for creating sampling plans for the Tutors, 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 and take into consideration the risk factors within the delivery teams.

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
- Experience and confidence of tutors
- Changes to the qualifications
- Known problem areas / units / learning outcomes / modules
- Current RAG ratings

The information found from the sampling exercise can then form the basis of team planning

for the IQA and how they can support and develop team members to improve their quality assurance practice.

IQA Reporting

The IQA checklist must be completed for every IQA sample. A copy of the checklist should be attached to the bud sampling report for the tutor and uploaded to the google drive IQA folder. Learners should not be given copies of IQA forms as they are written to address tutor practice and may therefore contain comments that might undermine learner confidence in team members.

The IQA must ensure that their written feedback to tutors is recorded on the correct forms.

The IQA is required to check all functional skills, any exams taken and full coverage of the qualification/standard to 100% on the final sample. The unit sampling is undertaken in accordance with the SCCU sampling strategy (for AEB and Traineeships) and as identified in the sampling plan. The IQA should indicate the actual items of work or evidence sampled within the online portfolio to show what has been reviewed. The IQA must record the unit and learning outcomes sampled on the report form (for AEB and Traineeships) to ensure that an auditable system is in place and the reporting supports this.

Where necessary, the IQA will check that assessments are countersigned and that the appropriate records are made on the countersigning form. If a standardisation issue is identified, the IQA will need to record and discuss this at the IQA meeting and report this immediately to the Quality Manager. On action plans for tutors, the IQA will record what action is required and by what date it must be completed. Once this action has been completed, the IQA should also record this within Bud or as an update to the IQA sampling checklist for Equal learners.

When observation of tutor practice is undertaken, the outcomes should be recorded following the SCCU observation of teaching, learning and assessment strategy. On completion of the portfolio / qualification, the IQA final checklist form should be completed.

Occasionally, the IQA may have serious concerns which need to be brought to the attention of the Quality Manager. In this situation, the IQA should firstly report all concerns in writing via a direct email. Any further actions required will be documented in line with the relevant SCCU procedure.

Full certification requests should be recorded on the certification request excel document and emailed to the MIS manager and relevant Department Manager. A copy of the Certification claim must be added to the IQA folder on Google Drive.

On completion of qualifications or periods of assessment, all original IQA records will be stored on the learner's portfolio and within the Google Drive IQA folder. If required a written

declaration that the evidence is authentic, and that the assessment was conducted under the specified conditions or context should be recorded on the relevant Awarding Organisation paperwork.

Sampling Strategy

The IQA needs to select a representative sample of:

Candidates	-	A selection of all candidates (gender, age, ethnicity etc.)
Tutors	-	Experience and qualifications, workload, occupational experience
Methods of assessment	-	Questioning, discussion, observation, testimony, recognition of prior learning (RPL), use of simulation, product evidence, assignments, projects, and tests
Evidence	-	All types of evidence
Records	-	Plans, reports from tutors, correct assessment practices, IQA records, learner and assessment records
Assessment	-	Workplace assessments, other assessment locations

Initial and Interim Sampling

In order to enable the IQA to evaluate the quality of guidance given to learners, it is vital that the IQA participates in the process at different stages in their work. This will include reviewing learner work:

- Early on in the programme shortly after registration
- Midway through the learner journey
- Sampling evidence once the units or requirements are completed
- It will also include checking progress reviews

Initial and Interim internal sampling enables the IQA to pick up problems at an early stage and avoids the potential situation of disagreeing with tutor practice or assessment judgements. It can also highlight individual tutor needs for support or development which in turn may be used to develop the team as a whole. Similarly, it provides an opportunity to identify and share good practice within the delivery team, particularly where one or more of the tutors have wider or more extensive experience.

Final/Gateway Sampling

Final sampling includes reviewing the quality of learning completed and assessment judgements taken in their entirety. The IQA must be able to follow an audit trail which clearly demonstrates that tutors have covered all the relevant requirements and checked that all work presented meets the rules of evidence, whatever format it is presented in.

Evidence must be confirmed by tutors as:

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Valid | - | relevant to the standards for which competence is claimed |
| Authentic | - | produced by the learners |
| Current | - | sufficiently recent for tutor's to be confident that the learner still has that same level of skills or knowledge |
| Reliable | - | genuinely representative of the learner's knowledge and skills |
| Sufficient | - | meets in full all the requirements of the standards/qualification |

Sampling Plans

To help monitor the overall sampling strategy, SCCU produces and maintains sampling plans which are implemented by the IQA team. The IQA must sample the full range of delivery and assessment methods used for any qualification e.g.

- Learning delivery
- Observation of performance
- Use of witness testimony
- Professional discussion
- Oral and written questioning
- Assessment of learner's work
- RPL
- Examination of work products
- Reflective accounts
- Learner reports
- Assessments of projects
- Assessment of case studies

All tutors are included within the required samples; however, a number of other factors are also considered when the sample is selected. For example.

a) Experience

This can be judged from the RAG rating spreadsheet and will ensure that the IQA reviews sufficient activity and decisions in any qualification. This is particularly important where there are 'problem' units. These might be where specifications require very particular work or evidence or where the standards are often misinterpreted.

b) Workload

The IQA needs to look at the workload of each tutor so that the total sample also fairly reflects the amount of work and number of decisions being made by individuals. Increasing the ratio of learners to tutors needs to be carefully planned and managed as it can result in an increase in problems. Sampling may need to be increased where workloads have been raised to ensure that quality is not compromised.

Supporting and Developing Tutors Continuing Professional Development

The role of the IQA is to guide, support and ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of tutors. This CPD must include updating of occupational competence in line with relevant regulatory and professional requirements and ensuring that good practice is maintained in relation to facilitating learning and assessment. There are a number of points where this is particularly important:

- Tutors are new – either to the team or to the qualifications
- Programmes or qualifications change, or guidance is revised
- Following external quality assurance activities or other inspections.

New tutors should complete an induction process. What this induction process involves will depend on their previous experience.

The IQA must ensure that all tutors have access to:

- Copies of the relevant qualification handbook(s)/standard criteria or requirements for the qualifications they are delivering
- The Awarding Organisation Centre Manual (AEB and Traineeships)
- EPA toolkit and assessment resource
- Copies of any qualification updates / alerts
- A set of all required tools e.g. training sessions, assignment / assessment requirements, observation records, questions, mapping documents, report forms, guidance notes
- Copy of the appeals procedure and relevant organisational procedures e.g., equal opportunities and diversity policy, health and safety policy, lone worker safety policy, safeguarding, Prevent etc.
- Information about available support resources for learners
- Information about the relevant Awarding Organisation and the EQA(s)
- Information about their learners including:
 - existing achievements
 - initial assessment results
 - any learning or assessment needs, access arrangements etc.
 - contact details of workplace supervisors / managers (where applicable)

The Quality Manager must also check and hold on file the following information for team members:

- Personal profiles or CVs demonstrating skills, knowledge, experience, and competence (where required) at an appropriate level and update the tutor skills matrix regularly.
- CPD records demonstrate that all team members have completed development activities required by the relevant assessment strategies.

Monitoring and Improving the Quality of Assessment Practice

It is the responsibility of the IQA to monitor and improve the quality of assessment practice. However, ensuring the quality of the entire learner journey means that the quality of the entire process must also be monitored. This includes the delivery of learning and the validity, safety, and reliability of assessment practice. Where possible, this should include the IQA carrying out observations of both learning delivery and assessment practice following the observation process.

The aims of this are to:

- Ensure that high standards of learning delivery are maintained
- Ensure that the national standards for are adhered to by all tutors
- Identify problems or areas where tutors require advice or development
- Ensure that learners are aware of, and satisfied with, the assessment process.

Monitoring Assessment Practice

This will involve observing tutors delivering live learner sessions, looking at how they conduct the assessment process and giving them feedback on their performance. It also includes reviewing the IQA records completed with all tutors and evaluating every aspect of their performance.

The IQA should observe the individual tutor's assessment and interpersonal skills, with a view to identifying any areas which would benefit from advice or further development. The IQA must also note any problematic areas e.g. within the qualifications, which could create difficulties for other tutors. Identifying such trends and areas for development is a crucial part of improving the practice of tutors.

Following the observation, it is important that constructive and positive feedback is given to enable development. These discussions should be held in private and should not be relayed to the learners or tutors. The IQA should keep a record of this and ensure that it forms part of the tutors development plan.

Monitoring Quality Processes

Monitoring creates the opportunity to liaise with learners to ensure that their learning and assessment needs are being properly met through learner interview.

In particular the IQA should check that learners:

- Know which qualifications they are working towards and have a copy of the relevant standards
- Are aware of the roles of everyone involved in delivery and assessment
- Understand the programme of learning that they are following
- Understand the assessment process

- Know who, besides the tutor, contributes towards the assessment process
e.g. mentor/manager
- Know what progress they have made towards achievement and when this will next be reviewed
- Understand their role in completing work as planned, attending sessions and generating evidence.
- Have confidence in their tutor
- Understand the appeals process
- Have no learning needs that are not currently being met.

It is extremely important that the quality of the entire learning delivery and assessment process is monitored. Therefore, the IQA needs to consider how they will monitor learning materials used by tutors throughout the programme. In addition, they must establish a realistic timescale for doing this. This might include monitoring the quality of:

- Training Sessions
- Handouts
- Online learning
- Information, Advice and Guidance given to learners
- Reviews
- Marking and assessments
- Feedback records

Applying Policies, Procedures and Legislation to meet External / Regulatory Requirements

All IQAs are required to implement the policies and procedures of SCCU and those of the relevant Awarding Organisation. This may be in relation to areas such as secure storage of learner work, maintaining confidentiality to implement the requirements for data protection and GDPR. In addition, IQAs are responsible for ensuring that all tutors carry out their responsibilities in relation to relevant legislation. In particular, this includes requirements for health and safety and welfare and equality issues. IQAs should check that all requirements continue to be met as part of their on-going monitoring.

Procedures must be followed in the event that a tutor raises a concern/appeal around any IQA activity/decisions. The process to be followed in this event is highlighted within the IQA procedure and within the SCCU tutor induction.

The IQA also has a supporting role by creating and maintaining complete and up-to-date records of information. When an organisation is inspected, audited, or monitored by an external agency, the following information will need to be available upon request:

- The written IQA procedures including the internal quality assurance sampling strategy
- Numbers of current registered learners per qualification and level
- Learner centre enrolment and Awarding Organisation registration details
- Tutor details – specifically CVs, CPD records, Tutor/Assessor qualifications (D units, A1, V1, TAQA, CAVA), development plans and workloads
- Learner progress reviews and achievements, any access arrangements requirements including equal opportunities monitoring information
- Training programmes, assessment records, plans and reviews
- Available learner support resources
- Details of all learning and assessment sites
- IQA records including feedback to tutors, discussions with learners, records of claims for certification
- Learners work and / or portfolios
- Minutes of internal quality assurance meetings
- Records of standardisation activities
- Procedures for storage and retention of documentation.