Defence Awarding Organisation

DAO Internal Quality Assurance Policy

Ver 3.1 Oct 24

Recognising Quality and Competence:

Supporting Defence with accreditation and specialist bespoke qualification opportunities

Contents

Introduction

1. This document sets out the DAO Internal Quality Assurance policy and procedure and is aimed at DAO Awarding Centres, and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from the DAO.

Scope

2. This policy covers DAO Awarding Centres and provides direction on the requirements for the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system. After recognition, the Awarding Centre will receive regular assurance visits to support and monitor the implementation of the awarding process. These visits are conducted by the DAO's team of External Quality Assurers (EQAs) and will audit the Awarding Centres IQA system.

Awarding Centre's Responsibility

3. Awarding Centres should take all responsible steps to ensure that DAO Awarding Centre staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of DAO qualifications, and DAO Learners, are aware of the contents of this policy and that the Awarding Centre has a Internal Quality Assurance Strategy in place.

4. For each qualification which it makes available, the Awarding Centre must have in place effective arrangements to ensure that, as far as possible, the criteria against which Learners' performance will be differentiated are[1] -

    a. understood by Assessors and accurately applied, and

    b. applied consistently by Assessors, regardless of the identity of the Assessor, Learner or Centre.

5. As evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment for a DAO qualification is marked by an Awarding Centre, the Awarding Centre must have in place clear and effective arrangements to undertake internal quality assurance to comply with the Awarding Organisation's Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) strategy in respect of the assessment[2].

Review Arrangements

6. The DAO will review the policy and its associated procedures annually as part of the DAO self-evaluation arrangements, and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer, DAO Learner or Regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints process established by the Regulator(s)) and any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of complaints received[3].

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[1] This meets the requirement for Ofqual GCoR Condition: H1.1
[2] This meets the requirement for Ofqual GCoR Condition: H2.1
[3] This meets the requirement for Ofqual GCoR Condition: I2.1

7. If you would like to provide feedback about the policy, please contact the DAO using the details provided at the end of this policy.

Quality Assurance Requirements

8. Quality assurance is fundamental to all the DAO processes, products, and services and as an Awarding Organisation, it is the DAO's implementation of quality that is monitored by the Regulator. Quality assurance guarantees the integrity and value of qualifications and assessments throughout their life cycle. DAO ensures that quality assurance is embedded in the design and delivery of qualifications, programmes and will work with Awarding Centres to ensure this.

9. DAO supports the use of non-bureaucratic assessment methods and as part of this recognised Awarding Centre's can, where appropriate, use internally devised recording documentation, as long as the documentation supports the principles of sufficiency, validity, authenticity.

10. A clearly defined quality assurance strategy will help ensure quality in all aspects of delivery and assessment. To achieve this Awarding Centre's must ensure that quality assurance is factored in at the planning stage of programmes of learning.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

11. A requirement of the Regulatory process and a DAO condition for Centre Approval is that the Centre operates a robust internal quality assurance (IQA) system to maintain the consistency and accuracy of assessments.

12. The key features of an effective IQA system are that it must:

    a. Be planned, to cover a representative sample of assessments
    b. Include the monitoring of assessments and a way of standardising assessment judgements
    c. Sample assessments at various stages, from a 'formative', 'interim' and 'summative' basis, therefore giving feedback to assessors on an ongoing basis
    d. Support and develop the assessment team
    e. Be accurately recorded to provide a clear audit trail

13. To guide/support the assessment team in the Awarding Centre; it is essential that enough assessments are sampled. To sample all assessments is not practical in terms of resources and could undermine the trust and confidence of the assessors. Over a period, typically 6-12 mths, the IQA strategy must be based on sampling all:

    a. Assessors
    b. Learners
    c. Units
    d. Assessment methods
    e. Types of evidence
    f. Assessment records
    g. Assessment locations (this may be done in conjunction with Franchise monitoring programmes)

Roles

14. The key roles at an Awarding Centre are Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers, Lead Internal Quality Assurer (if Awarding Centre is large enough) and Centre Head. Roles of all Awarding Centre staff are defined in the DAO Awarding Centre Handbook. The roles of the Internal Quality Assurance Team are explained in the following paragraphs.

Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance Standards

15. With in the Defence System Approach to Training (DSAT) process there are embedded roles. These roles are:

    a. Defence Trainer (DT)
    b. Defence Trainer Supervisor (DTS)
    c. Defence Trainer Manager (DTM).

16. Though these roles are embedded in the DSAT process, within the Civilian Regulatory process there is a difference to those providing the training and assessment and reviewing the quality of the process of Recognised Qualifications. Within the regulated awarding process, during training a Learner will be required to undertake a process of assessment against the qualification specifications, which might be knowledge or skills based or both. The assessment is undertaken by an Assessor engaged at the Awarding Centre.

17. As part of the awarding process, there must be an element of internal quality assurance, which is undertaken by an IQA working in the Awarding Centre. Both the Assessor and IQA must demonstrate that they have attained or are working towards the relevant qualifications.

18. An assessor must hold:

    a. Level 3 Award Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement (AVRA) (or equiverlent qualification such as, A1, D32, D33, Level 3 TAQA)
    b. Have occupational expertise in the qualification specific area.

    NOTE: *In some circumstances (**with DAO authority**) they can assess without a Level 3 Assessing qualification if they have completed the Defence Trainer Course (DTc) and been awarded the Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3 AET).*

19. An Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) must hold:

    a. the Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (or equiverlent qualification such as, V1 or D34)

    NOTE : *In extreme circumstances (**with DAO authority**) they can conduct internal quality assurance without a Level 4 IQA qualification if they have completed the Defence Trainer Supervisiors (DTS) & Defence Trainier Manager (DTM), been awarded the Level 3 Award in Education and Training (L3 AET) and hold occupational expertise and qualification in the subject*

20. A Lead Internal Quality Assurer (LIQA) <u>must</u> hold:

    a. the Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice.

Internal Quality Assurers

21. Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) monitor the work of all Assessors engaged in the assessment of the Regulated Award, at both the Awarding Centre and, where applicable, any approved satellite/franchise locations. The IQA will ensure that assessment processes and practices have been adhered to and assessment decisions are consistent across assessors. Internal Quality assurers are responsible for:

    a. Ensuring that Assessors follow the assessment guidance provided.
    b. Advising and supporting Assessors to assist them in interpreting and applying the standards/ qualification assessment criteria correctly and consistently.
    c. Regularly sampling assessment activities, methods, and records to monitor consistency of assessment decisions as specified by qualification documentation.
    d. Providing Assessors with prompt, accurate and constructive feedback on their assessment decisions.
    e. Undertaking an active role in raising issues of good practice in assessment.
    f. Ensuring that equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices are upheld in the assessment process.
    g. Liaising with other Awarding Centre staff members and the External Quality Assurer (EQA) where required.
    h. Ensuring that all Learners' achievement records and Awarding Centre documentation are completed in accordance with DAO and Regulator requirements.
    i. Countersigning appropriate assessment documentation when sampled.
    j. Ensuring Assessors have opportunities for updating and developing their vocational and professional competence.
    k. Supporting, countersigning, dating assessments and quality assuring judgements by Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers not holding the appropriate Assessor/Internal Quality Assurer qualifications as approved and specified by DAO and Regulatory Authorities.

Lead Internal Quality Assurer

22. A Lead Internal Quality Assurer is recommended where more than one Internal Quality Assurer is involved in the internal quality assurance process at an Awarding Centre, or the assessment and internal quality assurance process is conducted with in the satellite / franchise location. The Lead Internal Quality Assurance is responsible for:

    a. Liaising with the Awarding Centre contact and/or the satellite/franchise lead.
    b. Maintaining regular contact with the Internal Quality Assurers whose work they co-ordinate.
    c. Ensuring that internal quality assurance is carried out efficiently and consistently across the range of qualification(s) with which they are involved.
    d. Sampling the internal quality assurance process and decisions of those IQAs across their Awarding Centre and/or the satellite/franchise locations to ensure standardisation of assessment

Overall Centre Rating (Risk Status)

23. As part of the post-approval external quality assurance activities, Awarding Centres are monitored and awarded an Overall Rating, using a risk-based assessment

strategy/confidence rating. There are 3 types of Overall Centre confidence ratings that can be assigned based upon the Awarding Centre's ability to meet the requirements, these are:

a. Red – High risk-rating
b. Amber – Medium risk-rating
c. Green – Low risk-rating

Planning, Operating and Evaluating Internal Assessment

24. The primary focus of an IQA is to ensuring that the Awarding Centre's internal processes demonstrably meet Awarding Organisations' and Regulators' requirements. This includes having the following in place:

a. Written procedures or a strategy for internal quality assurance.
b. Quality assurance systems that are 'fit for purpose' and monitor the quality of the Learner progression.
c. A sampling strategy that covers all stages of the Learner's progression.
d. Regular observation of Assessors carrying out their roles.
e. Recordkeeping that is maintained as required.
f. IQA practice which is in line with the current AO guidence.
g. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) being maintained by all members of the team.
h. Effective communication with DAO.
i. A documented appeals system that is accessible, transparent, and understood.
j. Standardisation activities that develop consistency between Assessors.
k. The IQA must be able to call meetings of the assessment team and have the support of the Centre Head to require attendance.

25. Thereafter, the IQA should maintain up-to-date information on:

a. Individual Learner progress across a programme(s).
b. Average timescales for the achievement of different qualifications.
c. Assessor availability (both current and projected).
d. Monitor Learner progress
e. Ensure quality in the assessment of DAO qualifications, including standardisation across delivery sites and/or franchises.

26. As such, their duties and responsibilities should be included as an integral part of the Awarding Centres quality procedures and manuals and should also have the responsibility for carrying out self-assessment of the Awarding Centre's performance against the requirements of the DAO Awarding Centre Handbook.

Centre Support

27. Policies for handling Enquiries, Appeals, Malpractice and Maladministration are available on the DAO website and the DAO Qualification Management System (QMS)

28. The DAO will work with Awarding Centres to deliver a customer-focused and professional service to DAO Learners. DAO policies are reviewed annually. Any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the DAO Compliance Team via:

DAO website
https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-awarding-organisation

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Defence Awarding Organisation (DAO)
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Recognising Quality and Competence:

Supporting Defence with accreditation and specialist bespoke qualification opportunities