



## 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA Ltd Internal Quality Assurance Sampling Strategy and Plan

### 1. Strategy Purpose

The purpose of the sampling strategy is to set out the key aims for ensuring end point assessments are carried out to a very high standard. It focusses on the 'how' and 'when' quality assurance takes place. It also includes 'who' is responsible for which activity. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Internal Quality Assurance Policy and IQA process documents.

Internal quality assurance (IQA) involves reviewing the quality of assessor's judgements for each assessment activity, each standard's criteria and for their overall summative assessment decision.

It includes checking the planning, preparation, reviews, assessments and feedback given to apprentices by assessors and will enable the IQA to evaluate the quality of guidance on assessment and to pick up any problems at an early stage. It will also highlight individual assessor needs, which in turn will be used to develop individuals and/or the assessment team. The IQA will achieve this by good planning, which must in part include observing assessor performance.

### 2. Sampling Strategy

Correct sampling entails reviewing the quality of the assessment judgement by evaluating how assessors have reached those decisions. The IQA must be able to follow an audit trail, which clearly demonstrates assessors have checked that the evidence presented meets the standard outlined in the respective apprenticeship assessment plan.

Evidence must be confirmed by assessors as:

- **Valid** – relevant to the standard and level for which competence is claimed.
- **Authentic** – produced by the learner and that ID checks were carried out.
- **Current** – recent enough for assessors to be confident that the same level of skills, understanding or knowledge exists at the time of the assessment.
- **Sufficient** – in content and meets in full all the requirements of the standard.
- **Reliable** – the evidence provided relates to the job role and sector, and if the assessment were carried out again by a different assessor or EPAO, the same grade would be awarded.

### 3. Sampling Plan

The IQA must complete a sampling plan and must record any variations made to it. It is important that the IQA looks at decisions of the assessment team in any given period. Every apprentice must be sampled to some degree. This may be either a full IQA sample activity or if it is not part of the sample percentage, a final check of Grading Report and the grade awarded, prior to issuing results.

The sampling will only take place once all assessment activities are carried out and the Grading Report has been completed. The IQA must sample the full range of assessment methods used, e.g. observation, witness testimony, professional discussion, reflective accounts, questioning, products, etc. It is imperative that the IQA knows the qualification



thoroughly and the likely range of assessment methods and evidence sources that could be used. The document below shows an example of the IQA plan (for tracking purposes).

Assessor	Standard	IQA	%	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Sample	HR Support	BA	100%	(date)	(date)	(date)	(date)	(date)	(date)
			100%						
			100%						
			100%						
			100%						
			100%						
			100%						

It may be necessary to complete some interim sampling, for example if there are any discrepancies in the assessment process or where there may be suspicion of malpractice or collusion during the assessment activity. This will be discussed between the assessor and IQA and any sampling will be conducted promptly to avoid any delays in carrying out the next assessment activity.

**Planning ahead**

The IQA will carry out the sampling as soon as the Grading Report is completed. The IQA should plan ahead and manage their workload accordingly. As the sampling size reduces, there will be a need to enter future dates into the sampling plan to keep on track with what sampling needs to be done, and when.

**4. The sample size**

The sample will be reduced after 6 months, or after 6 full assessments (whichever is the sooner), if the IQA deems that the assessor is competent and consistent with their assessment judgements. The IQA needs to use their judgement when deciding on what percentage to reduce the sampling to and this will depend on a number of factors, as outlined in section 4. The number should not fall below 20%. All assessments will be subject to a final IQA check to confirm the overall grade.

Assessors	Sample size (up to 6 months or after x6 assessments)	Sample size (after 6 months, or x6 assessments)	Sample size (after 9 months, or x9 assessments)
New Assessors with no experience	<b>100%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50-20%</b>
New Assessors with EPA experience	<b>100%</b>	<b>50-20%</b>	<b>50-20%</b>
Experienced EPA Assessors transferring between standards	<b>50%</b>	<b>50-20%</b>	<b>50-20%</b>

A similar percentage of sampling will be undertaken for invigilators. Although they are not required to make assessment decisions, it is still necessary to monitor how they invigilate the online tests and check that they are upholding good standards of practice in conducting these under exam conditions.



## 5. Factors IQAs need to consider

All assessors are to be included in the sample, but a number of other factors must be considered:

**Apprentices:** Ethnic origin, age, gender, other factors, particular assessment requirements, etc. Every apprentice's work must be sampled. Assessment locations, including the workplace, other assessment locations, who is invigilating.

**Assessors:** Experience and qualifications, workload, occupational experience, CPD, evidence of countersigning assessors supporting unqualified assessors. If assessors are qualified and experienced, the sample size can be reduced to between 50 and 20%. If assessors have less than 12 months' experience, are new to end point assessing or a particular standard, the IQA will need to sample substantially more of their decisions in months 6-12. The IQA needs to look at the workload of each assessor so that the total sample fairly reflects the number of decisions being made by individual assessors. Increasing ratios of learners to assessors may also indicate assessment problems.

**Methods of assessment:** Observation, professional discussion, interview, portfolio, written projects, assignments and other methods as defined by the relevant Assessment Plan. The IQA must sample the quality of planning, review, feedback, records and portfolio organisation in their sampling.

### Assessor Concerns

If the IQA has a particular concern regarding the assessment decisions of a particular assessor, then the ratio of sampling can be increased significantly. This decision is at the discretion of the IQA, who then makes a judgement about when to return to the previous sampling percentage. The IQA should convey their concern directly to the assessor, document it in the IQA Feedback form and inform the Managing Director in writing.

## 6. Policy Review

This policy was last updated 1 February 2021. It will be reviewed annually and as legislation requires.