



Internal Quality Assurance Policy

1. Purpose of Internal Quality Assurance

The purpose of internal quality assurance is to monitor assessment activities and ensure that the principles of assessment are met, in line with the relevant regulatory requirements.

1st for EPA Ltd is committed to ensuring there is a standardised approach to internal quality assurance practice. The IQA process will be open, fair and free from bias and there will be accurate and detailed recording of all internal quality assurance decisions.

The IQA process monitors and maintains the quality, transparency and integrity of end point assessment, in line with the requirements of Ofqual and the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education.

2. Internal Quality Assurance Responsibilities

Karen Carroll, Operations Manager, is responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of this policy. The IQA policy will be communicated to all staff and contractors involved in the operation of end point assessment, all of whom have a responsibility to respect and follow the IQA procedure.

The role of an IQA (Internal Quality Assurer) is of paramount importance to the overall success, achievement and positive outcomes for any qualification. This policy also applies to any Lead Internal Quality Assurer/s who may be in post.

The internal quality assurance process is covered by seven main areas:

- 2.1 Support the preparation of assessment activities, ensuring there are sufficient resources in place to carry out the assessment.
- 2.2 Advise, support and develop assessors.
- 2.3 Verify and confirm assessment decisions.
- 2.4 Provide action points and developmental feedback.
- 2.5 Carry out regular monitoring and standardisation activities.
- 2.6 Maintain accurate and timely records of assessment and internal quality assurance activities.
- 2.7 Preparing for external quality monitoring visits.

It is important to note that in the context of this Policy, 'assessors' also refers to invigilators.

2.1 Support in the preparation of assessment activities, ensuring there are sufficient resources in place to carry out the assessment.

The IQA will:

- Work closely with those responsible for developing assessment documentation to review this prior to any end point assessment delivery; ensuring it is fit for purpose. For example, assessment materials and activities are relevant to the level of knowledge and competence for that standard.
- Support the review and update of any guidance documents and toolkits; to ensure clarity for the apprentice, employer and training provider.
- Ensure that assessors use appropriate documentation and follow the relevant standard procedures correctly.
- Check that documentation and systems are meeting regulatory, External Quality Assurer (EQA) and Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) requirements.
- Ensure assessors have access to secure online portals and have the relevant software installed, in order to carry out the assessment activities.



2.2 Advise, support and develop assessors

The IQA is required to:

- Have a broad overview of quality assurance across their standard.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the assessors.
- Give advice and guidance on assessment best practice.
- Support development for assessors where necessary.
- Be at hand to answer queries, resolve technical issues and provide support.
- Give advice about ongoing professional development and external training opportunities.
- Maintain their own professional development and keep up to date with trends and developments in the sector.

2.3 Verify and confirm the assessment decisions

The IQA will:

- Sample assessment evidence provided by the apprentice, in line with the Sampling Strategy and IQA Process.
- Verify the assessor's assessment decisions.
- Check that the assessor has made the correct grade decisions for each criterion.
- Confirm that the grade for each assessment component is correct.
- Confirm that the final grade is correct.
- Ensure that the assessor has provided robust feedback that justifies the grade decision given.
- Check that the assessor has not given developmental feedback for any assessments marked a Fail grade.
- Review the summative comments to ensure they are a true reflection of the assessment activities and indicate the level of knowledge and competence of the apprentice.
- Ensure that assessments meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standard.
- Keep the "*IQA - Assessor RAG Rating Tracker*" up to date after each IQA activity.

2.4 Provide action points and developmental feedback

The IQA is required to:

- Provide the assessors with appropriate and sufficient feedback to support their development.
- Ensure feedback confirms if the assessment is valid, authentic, sufficient, current and reliable.
- Confirm if the assessment decisions are agreed and/or set action points where decisions and feedback need to be reviewed.
- Work in collaboration with the assessors, where there are discrepancies, to agree how a grade decision is reached.
- Provide feedback in line with the sampling strategy requirements, ensuring the correct percentage of IQA sampling is carried out.
- Provide suggestions to assessors for feeding back to the apprentice.
- Be supportive of assessors and provide positive developmental feedback.
- Follow up to check actions have been carried out and development points are acknowledged.
- Ensure assessors have delivered assessments at the required level.
- Keep the "*IQA - Assessor RAG Rating Tracker*" up to date after each IQA activity.

2.5 Carry out regular monitoring and standardisation activities

The Lead IQA will, in liaison with the Operations Manager:

- Plan for how and when IQAs and assessors will be monitored.
- Carry out Quality Assurance monitoring activities in line with the Sampling Strategy and IQA Process.
- Provide regular opportunities for standardisation.
- Ensure standardisation activities cover all standards, all assessment activities, all criteria within the standard.
- Monitor troublesome elements of the end point assessment activities and work, that may have been identified by the apprentice, assessor or IQA.



- Work closely with the Operations Manager and Managing Director to find appropriate solutions to issues.
- Be prepared to engage in ad hoc monitoring as required.

2.6 Maintain accurate and timely records of assessment and internal quality assurance activities

The Lead IQA / IQA will:

- Carry out timely Quality Assurance / IQA sampling activities in line with the Sampling Strategy and IQA process.
- Produce written Quality Audit reports for IQAs / IQA reports for assessors, which cover all assessment activities for the apprentice.
- Ensure records are stored securely and safely and for the times specified by an awarding organisation, whilst also complying with GDPR regulations.
- Make records available for external audits and verification.
- Ensure electronic records are kept up to date in a timely manner.

2.7 Preparing for external visits

The Lead IQA is required to:

- Work with the Operations Manager / Managing Director to ensure all documentation is available for auditing and external quality visits.
- Have up to date data available for regulatory visits.
- Be available to meet with external auditors and representatives from regulatory bodies.

3. Quality Assurance Management

1st for EPA is committed to managing the end point assessment process to a high standard and ensuring the management processes are robust and transparent. This includes the management of staff and allocation of IQAs to the standards we offer.

3.1 Allocation of Internal Quality Assurers

Internal Quality Assurance staff ideally should have significant experience of quality Assurance and assessing within the relevant subject/standard. The IQA must also hold a relevant quality assurance qualification, e.g., TAQA, V1, D34. The Operations Manager is responsible for allocating IQAs to the relevant standard.

3.2 Management and Staff Induction

An appropriate IQA will be appointed before any new standard begins. Each assessor new to the standard must have an induction that explains assessment, Ofqual, IfATE and 1st for EPA requirements. The Operations Manager / Business Improvement Officer will deliver the induction (or 'on-boarding') session with sufficient time in advance of their first assessment activity. This enables both IQA and assessors to clarify any matters and prepare for the assessment activities.

Before assessment begins, the Quality Team will provide assessors with:

- An opportunity to discuss their hopes, fears and expectations for the job role.
- A copy of the most recent apprenticeship standard, Assessor Handbook and associated guidance documents.
- A copy of the appropriate assessment, verification and quality assurance regulations.
- All associated 1st for EPA policies and procedures, including this document.
- All assessment documentation, e.g., Statement of Results, Question Banks and guides.
- Advice on how to work towards an appropriate assessor and verifier qualification, if appropriate.
- Information on how to access the online portals and software required to carry out the assessment activities.



4. Our Commitment to Quality

1st for EPA is committed to providing a high-quality service. We will continuously monitor, review and update our service as we identify areas for improvement, receive user feedback and work with our EQA provider. The IQA works closely with the Lead IQA and Operations Manager to achieve these objectives.

4.1 Our commitment

1st for EPA will ensure that our end point assessment tools are designed appropriately to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan. Our primary aims are to ensure that:

- Our end point assessment tools will be designed to be fit for purpose. They will be designed to achieve results that are valid, reliable, and comparable should the assessment be undertaken again at a different time, with a different assessor or with a different EPAO.
- Our tools are current to the latest industry and regulatory requirements.
- End point assessment tools are subject to regular review.
- Delivery is apprentice- and employer- centred, and clearly communicates key information such as assessment requirements and schedules.
- Each end point assessment activity is monitored and reviewed throughout its lifecycle.

4.2 Our assessors and IQAs

Our assessors and IQAs are occupationally qualified to support delivery. We value our assessors and IQAs and acknowledge the role they play in delivering high quality assessments for apprentices. All our assessors and IQAs:

- Receive ongoing feedback, support and development.
- Receive training on the relevant standards and regulatory requirements.
- Are provided with a copy of 1st for EPA policies.
- Engage in regular communications (via email, team meetings, and individual 1:1s) to enable the dissemination of timely and up to date information which is key to quality and efficacy.
- Have submitted a CV and relevant certificates, which will be held securely on file subject to data protection requirements and our Data Protection Policy.
- Only conduct assessments where there is no conflict of interest, whether existing, potential, or perceived.
- Are approved for the delivery of their sector specific end point assessment activities.

4.3 Our delivery

We ensure our delivery is effective and meets employer and apprentice expectations of the end point assessment and certification process, in addition to our regulatory requirements.

To do this, we:

- Use standardised documentation for gateway, end point assessment activities, audit and issuing results.
- Require all assessors to declare and complete confidentiality and conflict of interest declarations where appropriate.
- Provide guidance for apprentices and employers on the end point assessment specific to the standard being assessed.
- Provide guidance documents and training to all those involved in end point assessment.
- Use risk assessments and monitor assessors to ensure compliance, high quality delivery and a standardised approach.
- Survey apprentices and employers after completion of the apprenticeship.
- Ensure our end point assessment judgements are consistent and transparent so that the outcomes are valid, authentic, sufficient, current, and reliable.



4.4 Our ongoing improvements

We are committed to self-monitoring and continuous improvement.

To do this, we:

- Carry out statistical analysis of grade awards by standard, by training provider and by assessor as part of standardisation activity.
- Carry out evaluations throughout each end point assessment and on a bi-annual basis (standardisation), reporting to the relevant bodies as required.
- Use employer surveys, apprentice surveys, EQA feedback and monthly review meetings to identify areas for improvement.
- Have a secure, accurate and accessible audit trail for apprentice registration, end point assessment, documentation, and final grading decisions.
- Store documentation securely, accessible only to 1st for EPA staff who need access in the course of their duties.
- Hold information on file to enable a full audit trail. For full information on the types of data, how we use it and how we store it securely, see the Data Protection Policy.

5. Responding to Complaints and Appeals

1st for EPA's Complaints and Appeals Policy allows for complaints and appeals to be lodged and investigated appropriately. Please refer to this policy should there be a complaint or appeal relating to assessment decisions.

6. Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed 11th September 2023. It will be reviewed annually and as legislation requires.