Internal Quality Assurance Strategy

# Introduction

The core business of CT Training is providing consistently high quality delivery, learning experience and achievement of goals for every learner managed by the Centre. It is critical that CT Training Companies maintains systems to ensure the standard of delivery meet the standards set by the Centre and that these continually improve and develop. The Internal Quality Assurance strategy forms a vital element within the company’s Quality Assurance Strategy

## Key Elements of the Internal Quality Assurance Process

The key elements of the Internal Quality Assurance strategy link together to form a single approach to support Compliance, Consistency and Continuous Improvement within the business. These key elements are included as:

**Key Elements are**:

* Team structures (3.1)
* Ratios (3.2)
* Sampling strategies (3.3)
* Internal Quality Assurance visits with Assessors (3.4)
* Countersigning arrangements (3.5)
* Standardisation (3.6)
* Senior Internal Quality Assurance and monitoring (3.7)
* Senior Internal Quality Assurance rotation (3.8)
* Targets and objectives (3.9)

## Internal Quality Assurance Policy

The Internal Quality Assurance Policy is an integral component within the CT Training Quality Policy.

The quality of our service and maintenance of standards are central to our Mission and Strategic Business Plan. We are committed to providing the highest quality of service to all our customers and aspiring to our goal of becoming the provider of choice for quality training and professional development in the industries with which we deal.

CT Training aims to provide the highest quality provision and achievement rates for its learners in its endeavour to achieve compliance, consistency and continuous improvement.

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| **CT Training Quality Policy Statement** |
| Through an approach of continuous improvement we aim to ensure that we achieve the highest standards in the delivery of the provision. We aim to equip our learners with the skills, experience and knowledge to meet their personal and regulatory needs within the ever-changing environment of the industries with which we deal.  It is intended that the expectations of all our clients be met or exceeded through the application of best practice operations and practices.  We will aim to provide our services through employing well qualified, experienced staff. Those who enter our employment without qualifications or experience in our sector will be highly supported to ensure that they gain the required qualifications and experience quickly, in a well mentored and supported approach.  We will adopt a commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring that we continuously develop our processes and practices to enhance our delivery. We will monitor our work and outcomes to support our continuous improvement process.  We aim to deliver our services to meet all the standards, specifications, regulations and Code of Practice of the governing organisations, funding bodies and awarding bodies that we work with. |

# Internal Quality Assurance within CT Training

## Purpose

Internal Quality Assurance forms an essential ingredient within the delivery process within CT Training. The process aims to ensure that CT Training maintains high quality, efficient and effective assessment which meets the quality standards as laid down by the relevant sector skills council and Awarding Body. CT Training Internal Quality Assurance practices use as a core foundation the following 3 key documents, which should be read in conjunction with this strategy document.

* The NVQ Code of Practice (reference only)
* Standard 11 (V1) (or equivalent)
* The Joint Awarding Bodies guide to Internal Quality Assurance (reference only)
* Sector Skills Assessment strategy
* Awarding Body assessment guidance documentation

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Internal Quality Assurance Officer - Internal Quality Assurance

The role of the Internal Quality Assurance Officer is to ensure that the assessment of Learners is of a consistent high quality. The role is one of a senior manager within CT Training who contributes not only to the verification and quality requirements of the Centre but also as a manager within the business, responsible for members of staff, their performance, personal development and achievement levels.

The role is a predominantly a field based role in order to support Assessors effectively, with appropriate administration time applied. The following items form key elements within the Internal Quality Assurance Officer‘s role:

* Team manager
* Quality assurance and Internal Quality Assurance
* High level support and guidance
* Communication

Internal Quality Assurance Officers are responsible for the verification and quality of learning delivered throughout the NVQ assessors and learner award process. To continually improve the quality of the learning experience and ensure the validity of the achieved qualification.

Internal Quality Assurance Officers are responsible for coordinating and managing a team of assessors to ensure that quality requirements, company performance requirements and activity are met and those assessments conform to the Awarding Body Assessment Strategies.

Internal Quality Assurance Officers are responsible for ensuring that CPD of their individual teams is carried out; this should be done in relation to assessment and management of work practices, not just their occupational skills. In all cases CPD activities should be agreed between the assessor and IQA and have clear objectives and outcomes.

The CPD log should reflect on how the CPD has influenced any changes to their work practice or confirm and validate current practice. CPD must cover a minimum of 30 hours per year.

### Senior Internal Quality Assurance

The Senior Internal Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for ensuring consistency and coherency within the Internal Quality Assurance team. They hold responsibility for their own team of Internal Quality Assurance Officers and Assessors in addition to forming the company’s main link with the Awarding Body Senior Verifiers and the Centre Coordinator. The Senior Internal Quality Assurance is responsible for ensuring that appropriate documentation is used within the team, that verification and assessment decisions are consistent and meet the external and internal quality controls required.

The role is predominately a field based role although additional administration is required in order to monitor Internal Quality Assurance activity and actions. The following items form key elements within the Senior Internal Quality Assurances role:

* Ensure Internal Quality Assurance officers work to standard 11 (V1 or equivalent)
* Assessors are working to standard 9 (A1 or equivalent)
* Monitoring decisions and work of Internal Quality Assurance officers
* Standardisation of Verification procedures
* Establishing appropriate practices and procedures for Internal Quality Assurance
* High level support and guidance
* Communicating with external bodies

The Senior Internal Quality Assurance is responsible for Leading the Internal Quality Assurance function within the Centre, and ensuring that the company adopts and maintains high quality standards which meet with both the Awarding Body Assessment Strategies and the company’s internal quality standards.

The Senior Internal Quality Assurance officer is responsible for ensuring that the Centre maintains a consistent approach within the Internal Quality Assurance team.

The Senior Internal Quality Assurance is responsible for maintaining and carrying out external liaison with relevant external bodies including Awarding Body Assessment Strategies etc.

The Senior Internal Quality Assurance team are responsible for ensuring that CPD takes place; this will be done by a structured format and individually. Individual CPD should be done in relation to Internal Quality Assurance and management of work practices. In all cases CPD activities should be agreed between the IQA and the S/IQA and have clear objectives and outcomes.

The CPD log should reflect on how the CPD has influenced any changes to their work practice or confirm and validate current practice. CPD must cover a minimum of 30 hours per year.

# Quality Control System

The Internal Quality Assurance team are a critical quality assurance tool within the company and are the link between the Assessors, external verifiers and the Awarding Body. Whilst organisationally the overall team is structured within a number of smaller teams, headed by a Senior Internal Quality Assurance Officer, all Internal Quality Assurance officers are required to work as a single team within CT Training to ensure consistency whilst operating on a national and often remote basis.

## Team Structures

Each Senior Internal Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for a group of Internal Quality Assurance Officers and their Assessors. Each Internal Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for an identified team of Assessors who are directly lined managed by the IQA. The teams will, wherever possible, be arranged regionally although it is expected that Assessors and IQA’s will need to work outside of their local regions to meet Learner needs and business demand.

The IQA will be responsible for the quality assurance of each of their Assessors, although if an Assessor is working in an area outside of their usual region, the IQA may request a more local IQA to provide support and quality assurance with the assessor to meet economic requirements.

Team structures will be revised on a regular basis to ensure that cross sampling is carried out and to support consistency across the Centre.

## Ratios

Each Internal Quality Assurance Officer will coordinate and manage approximately 8 Assessors. Additional support with Internal Quality Assurance may be held within the team with a qualified or “working towards” Internal Quality Assurance Officer working in the team, whose work will be coordinated by the Internal Quality Assurance Officer. Learner ratios for each Assessor will meet guidelines set by the Awarding Body. In the case these are not laid down, Learner ratios will be as follows:

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|  | **Maximum caseloads** |
| Qualified experienced assessor | 40 – 50 Learners in total |
| “Working towards” assessor | 10 – 20 Learners in total |
| Assessor undertaking both assessing and Internal Quality Assurance duties | 20 --30 Learners in total |
| Internal Quality Assurance undertaking some assessing duties | 10- 20 Learners in total |
| Assessors working with New Entrant Learners | 20 – 20 Learners in total |

## Sampling

Systematic sampling of assessors work is a key element within the Internal Quality Assurance s role. All Internal Quality Assurance Officers must record sampling carried out using the standard CT Training documentation.

### Planning of Sampling

**Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy**: An Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy will be established for each assessor. This strategy will be developed based on the skills, experience, and length of time assessing the specific qualification, quality and historic performance of each assessor. This strategy will be reviewed quarterly as a minimum, but may be reviewed at any time to increase or decrease sampling activity for the assessor.

The Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy will identify particular focus areas for review by the Internal Quality Assurance Officer , including items such as assessment planning, questioning, RPL, Review / feedback etc. Priority support will be assigned to these areas during the quarter. The Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy will determine the sample size which will take into consideration items such as whether the qualification or scheme has recently been introduced, experience of the assessor and any problems that have already been identified.

**Sample Characteristics:**  Internal Quality Assurance Officers will produce a quarterly sampling plan for each assessor and qualification / route. IQAs will aim to sample all units indicated on the sampling plan, from Learner cohorts, assessment methods and assessment sites within the plan. The plan will include formative, interim and summative sampling.

**Summative Sampling:**  Internal Quality Assurance Officers will prepare and maintain summative sampling plans by use of assessors’ weekly and daily progress reports. Weekly progress reports will enable Internal Quality Assurance Officers to ensure that all Learners are included within the sampling plan. Sampling plans may be kept by the Internal Quality Assurance Officers in either electronic and / or paper format. Paper copies will be kept within each assessor’s individual sampling portfolio, and updated / reviewed on a weekly basis subject to the Assessors Learner cohort. Assessors will maintain a daily record of assessment activity by using a daily progress report which details names of Learners being assessed, assessment methods being used and units that are being assessed.

**Formative / Interim Sampling:** Daily progress reports will be submitted to CT Training head office by close of business every Friday by each assessor. Copies of both daily and weekly progress reports will then be given to the IQA responsible for each assessor in their team. This will enable Internal Quality Assurance Officers to formulate an interim sampling plan for their regular visits with their assessors. Daily and Weekly Progress reports will be used to establish which Learners will be sampled during visits. This could also take the form of dip-inn sampling.

**Documentation:** All Internal Quality Assurance Officers will use the standard CT Training documentation to record sampling plans, activity and decisions. These documents include:

* Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy
* Individual Sampling Plan / Record
* Internal Quality Assurance Report

**Individual Assessors Sampling Files:** An individual file will be maintained for each assessor by the Internal Quality Assurance Officer. Assessor files will be held by the IQA either in a secure way locally by the IQA, or held at the company’s main office in Derby. In either case the files must be maintained to ensure they are up to date and made available to the Senior Internal Quality Assurance Officer for review and monitoring regularly. The assessor file will contain the following:

* Individual Sampling Plans / Records
* Assessors Daily Progress Reports
* Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy
* Internal Quality Assurance Sampling Reports
* Assessor weekly progress reports
* Training Needs Analysis and Performance Appraisals

**Learner Contact:** The Centre is to ensure that the high quality support and delivery is maintained and monitor the following:

* Monitoring to ensure that the initial visit and assessment planning has taken place within 10 weeks of registration.
* Monitoring of contacts made by a visit each 12 weeks, during the first year of learning, which is documented appropriately.
* Monitoring of contacts made by visit or telephone each 10 weeks, for the remaining part of the Learner’s programme, which is documented appropriately.

## Internal Quality Assurance Visits with Assessors

A key role held by the Internal Quality Assurance is to provide support and guidance to their assessors. CT Training considers this responsibility of great importance to enable assessors to develop their skills effectively and to ensure that they are confident in making accurate and effective assessment decisions. The frequency of Internal Quality Assurance visits to each assessor will be dependent on the experience and competency of the assessor, as determined by the Individual Assessor Sampling Strategy, but will be carried out at a minimum of 1 visit every 3 months, with an aim of holding a personal visit with each assessor each month. During these visits the following activities may take place:

* Review actions from previous sampling – where applicable
* Review daily and weekly progress reports
* Carry out observations of the assessor as determined by the sampling plan
* Conduct interim sampling of Learner portfolios as determined by the sampling plan
* Conduct interviews with Learners
* Carry out summative sampling as determined by the sampling plan
* Ensure CPD is taking place
* Provide support and guidance to assessors
* Complete all required documentation
* Disseminate information from SMT meetings and Awarding Body QA Visits

Details of all visits to assessors and subsequent Internal Quality Assurance activities to be documented on the Internal Quality Assurance – Daily activity report. All portfolios that are signed off by the Internal Quality Assurance Officer are to be documented on a weekly basis on the Internal Quality Assurance Officer – IQA: Weekly sign of report.

Details of Internal Quality Assurance activity (formative, interim and summative assessment and Learner interviews) are documented and recorded by the Senior Internal Quality Assurances and held on the database.

## Countersigning Arrangements

All decisions made by unqualified staff who is working towards the required qualification will be carried out in line with requirements of the NVQ Code of Practice 2006, paragraph 42.

Assessors who are working towards their TAQA (standard 9) qualification will be nominated a “mentor” assessor who will provide additional support to that provided by the Internal Quality Assurance Officer. The mentor will be responsible for countersigning decisions made and documented within Learner portfolios.

Internal Quality Assurance s who are working towards their TAQA /CAVA (Standard 11 or equivalent) qualification will be mentored by a nominated Internal Quality Assurance Officer. All decisions made will be scrutinised and accepted decisions will be signed and dated on the relevant sampling report and also on the Internal Quality Assurance section of the Summary of Achievement form within the Learner portfolio. No documentation will be signed until any disagreements have been resolved and documented advice and guidance provided to the TAQA/CAVA (Standard 11) Learner. This advice and guidance is documented on the Nominated Mentor Report Form.

## Standardisation

CT Training considers that effective standardisation is key to maintaining a high quality provision. Opportunities to allow the assessment team to standardise across the company are maximised wherever possible through a number of formal meeting structures including:

### Internal Quality Assurance Officer – Meetings

Internal Quality Assurance Officer Meetings are held each month, and each meeting should be followed by a standardisation event in which IQAs review current practice and procedure.

### Individual Assessment Team Meetings

Formal Assessment Team meetings are held on regional basis at a minimum of every 6 months. All members of the Assessment Team are required to attend. The meetings are led by the Internal Quality Assurance Officer and include opportunities for training, review and sharing good practice. Meeting Notes and actions are made and circulated along with copies of key documents made available at the meeting. Topics covered within the meetings may include the following:

* Training
* Briefings
* Continuous improvements made
* Business updates
* Occupational working groups
* Workshops
* Documentation changes
* CT Training Assessment practices
* Sharing best practice
* External Verification / Moderation feedback.

### Occupational Working Group meetings

Small groups of assessors meet with an Internal Quality Assurance to discuss specific occupational matters in association with the National Occupational Standards. Good practice is shared and assessment methods discussed. Meetings are not minuted, although key issues discussed and attendance are recorded and kept in the centre file.

## Senior Internal Quality Assurance and Monitoring

A key quality control mechanism within the company’s strategy is the monitoring of Internal Quality Assurance practice. To complete this quality control mechanism the Senior Internal Quality Assurance Officer will carry out reviews of the verification practices carried out by each Internal Quality Assurance Officer within their team. This will be carried out by the Senior Internal Quality Assurance Officer on a regular basis and will be documented on the S/IQA –Sampling Report. This review and monitoring will include the following activities:

* Review of each assessor sampling file
* Observation of the Internal Quality Assurance
* Undertake audits of sampling completed by Internal Quality Assurance Officer

Reviews and audits will be documented on the S/IQA Report Form and held in the Senior Internal Quality Assurance file.

## Mentoring Programme

The CT Training Mentoring Programme has been developed in order to ensure that Assessors employed by CT Training are capable of Assessing in full compliance with the NVQ Code of Practice and Awarding Body requirements. The Mentoring Programme consists of an initial period based at CT Training Head Office with instruction and guidance given by the dedicated company mentors. Assessors then spend a short period with their IQAs before commencing assessment of registered Learners. Assessors working toward the Assessor award are given additional mentor support. Follow up support is readily available and given on a continual basis. (Full Mentoring Programme and details held in Mentoring Programme document).

# Targets and Objectives

The company holds the quality of delivery as its highest priority. Whilst additional business targets are held by staff at various levels within the company, these targets must not compromise the quality targets that the company must achieve. Quality targets for Internal Quality Assurance are held as a central and combined element with all other targets and objective schemes.

# Timescales

This strategy was updated in February 2016. It will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, by the Internal Quality Assurance team, Senior Internal Quality Assurances, Director of Operations and Managing Director to ensure that goals are being met and that the strategy is maintaining the high quality standards required.

**6 New Entrant Strategy:** A separate strategy will be developed for each assessor working with New Entrant Learners within the Centre to ensure that the high quality support and delivery is maintained. This strategy will include planning to incorporate and monitor the following:

* An individual and discrete strategy will be developed for each assessor working with New Entrant Learners
* Monitoring to ensure that an initial visit and assessment planning has taken place
* Monitoring of contacts made by visit or telephone each 12 weeks, during the New Entrant’s first year of learning, which is documented appropriately
* Monitoring of contacts made by visit or telephone each 10 weeks, for the remaining part of the Learners programme, which is documented appropriately
* Monitoring of the additional support given to each Learner by the Learner Liaison/ Placement Officer throughout the Learner’s duration on their programme
* Internal Quality Assurance will be carried out as described previously within section **3.4** of this document
* Senior Internal Quality Assurance will be carried out as described previously within section **3.7** of this document