



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Strategic Responsibility

Diane Pringle - Director

Next Review:

August 2016

This Policy presents Northern Management Development's policy on the quality assurance of its academic systems, along with details of the procedures, responsibilities, and guidance for implementation.

1 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Aim

1.1.1 Through its quality assurance policy and procedures, the organisation strives to achieve excellence in the quality of all aspects of its academic provision and services, to meet the commitments of its Learner Charter

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The QA policy, its framework, and its procedures relate to any course provided by, or organised by, the organisation, requiring the formal enrolment of participants (students, staff or organisations with whom the organisation has a contract, etc.)

1.3 The Approach

1.3.1 Within the over-arching themes of continuous improvement and self-evaluation, the principle is a three-tiered approach to quality, supported by other, specific, key strands.

1.3.2 The three tiers are as follows:-

- Tier One Having clear, specific standards and procedures for the organisation and delivery of courses;
- Tier Two Reviewing and self-evaluation procedures to improve practice;
- Tier Three Auditing and review of both the delivery and reviewing procedures to improve the systems.

1.3.3 The other key strands are:-

- adopting good relevant practice from external agencies;
- staff development and training, linked to the formal staff development and review policy;
- defined roles and responsibilities for all involved;
- having reviews and procedures in which the organisation is able to monitor its performance terms of its Equal Opportunities and inclusiveness obligations, policies, and targets;
- having complaints and appeals procedures.

Details are set out more fully in subsequent sections.

1.4 Primary Tier of Quality - Assurance of Course Delivery

1.4.1 This tier of quality relates to all aspects of the organisation and delivery of units/courses, where the actions directly affect an actual course outcome, eg, marks in assessments, student retention.

1.4.2 Elements in this tier, to be addressed for every element of provision, include:-

- business case for a proposed new award, including links to the organisation's Strategic Plan and Aims;
- application for approval;
- approval;
- learning/teaching scheme of work;
- assessment;
- resources;
- course organisation and staff responsibilities (directors, staff & associates – trainers, assessors & moderators);
- accreditation of prior learning;
- packs: curriculum, induction;
- entries/ registration/ results;
- reviews during the delivery, eg, Course Team Meetings, that may affect the outcome;
- moderation that affects, in principle, the outcome for the individual or group;
- standards of service in terms of support both internally and externally.

1.5 Secondary Tier of Quality – Review and Evaluation

1.5.1 This tier of quality is concerned with reviews and evaluations that improve the quality of provision.

1.5.2 Among the elements to be addressed in this tier are:-

- student/employer/ other stakeholder satisfaction surveys;
- surveys of support service delivery;
- quality assurance of data used in reviews;
- unit /course /subject evaluations;
- annual course reviews, performance review programme, etc;
- moderation events and sampling;
- self evaluation by all having responsibility for organisation and delivery:
- Trainers: learning and teaching in the classroom, by peers/students;
- Assessors

1.5.3 The key strands to be achieved in the second tier are:-

- making available valid, quality-assured and comprehensive data on what has taken place;
- open and honest self evaluation;
- establishing a common understanding of the significance of the review conclusions;
- taking action to improve practice where appropriate;
- sharing good practice;
- picking up the development issues as appropriate, through, for example, strategic planning, staff development and review; standardisation meetings
- Management review of outcomes.

1.6 Tertiary Tier of Quality – Auditing of the Systems in the Primary and Secondary Tiers

1.6.1 This tier is about reviewing and auditing the systems and procedures of the primary and secondary tiers.



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

1.6.2 Elements of this tier to be addressed, include:-

- self evaluation by those responsible for reviewing;
- monitoring moderation;
- auditing course documentation;
- auditing packs;
- auditing meeting documentation;
- surveys among stakeholders of the quality system;
- reporting internally and externally as appropriate.

1.7 Adopting Standards of Other Agencies

1.7.1 In general educational quality terms, the organisation is working towards IIE and other recognised quality standards. As new practice is developed by these bodies, the organisation will modify and improve its own practice.

1.8 Staff Development and Training

1.8.1 To ensure that all aspects of this policy are effective, appropriate staff development programmes are to be implemented. Some aspects of development are to be actioned through the Staff Development Review process.

1.9 Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Action

1.9.1 The Quality Assurance policy is one of the organisation's major instruments helping it to achieve its obligations and targets for ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities for learning.

1.9.2 All systems for delivery of provision within Tier One are to be designed to ensure that no discrimination exists.

1.9.3 In Tier Two, data needed for review and evaluation are to be acquired in terms of equal opportunities monitoring, ie analysis by ethnicity, disability, and gender. Reviews and evaluations are to address the issues emerging from the equal opportunities analysis of the relevant measure.

1.9.4 Tier Three level auditing is to ensure that the appropriate data and information inputs took place, that the reviews considered the issues arising therein, and that appropriate action was put in train.

1.10 Responsibilities

1.10.1 It is the responsibility of all staff and the directors to:-

- be aware of the requirements of this Policy in carrying out their duties;
- keep themselves abreast of changes and revisions to the Policy;
- ensure, when carrying out the formal duties of the Policy's procedures, that they have made themselves fully competent for those duties.

Specific roles and responsibilities are set out in Section 3.

1.11 Appeals and Complaints

1.11.1 Appeals and complaints are to be subject to the organisation's normal Appeals and Complaints Procedures

1.12 Changes in Externally Required Procedures

1.12.1 The organisation will comply with relevant changes in the requirements of external validating bodies (including any relevant changes in the law) as they occur. Thereafter, the organisation will amend this policy statement, its associated procedures, and its operational guidance as soon as is practicable, notwithstanding any review date contained in this document.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 The Context section includes:-

- relationship to the organisation's Strategic Plan, the Vision, the Strategic Aims, etc)

2.2 Relationship to Other Policies

2.2.1 The Quality Assurance policy is closely connected to other policy areas, notably:-

- access and flexible learning;
- curriculum;
- learner guidance and learning support;
- staff development and review.

2.3 The QA Policy – What it does and does not cover

2.3.1 This policy sets out the quality approach for how provision is to be organised and quality is assured, but it does not prescribe curriculum content or how the teaching and learning is to be achieved.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1.1 Effective quality is critically dependent on clarity as to whom is responsible for what at every stage. The scope for confusion is significant, since any one staff member may have more than one role.

3.1.2 Responsibilities are to be defined for every specific aspect of the quality system of every unit of provision, and are to cover:-

- trainers' for teaching delivery and learning;

The directors have accountability at both primary and secondary quality tiers;

- functional roles of assessor; moderator/verifier,
- For overall auditing and reviewing.

This is achieved by constant review and structured six weekly meetings of trainers, assessors and directors where all aspects of quality assurance and associated policies are discussed to maintain 'best practice' throughout the organisation. All assessment methods will be discussed – observation, Q & A, witness testimony (360°), candidate reflection, written essays and reports, professional and guided discussions, product evidence – ensuring that all evidence is valid, accurate, reliable, current and sufficient to meet the required assessment criteria for specific qualifications. This will ensure a standardised approach by all those involved in the assessment process.

4 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1.1 The external quality assurance system centres on the External Moderator (EM), who:

- monitors standards of qualification and/or programme provision, assessment, internal quality assurance and operations
- supports the centre to develop and establish effective programmes
- acts as a channel for information between the centre and any Awarding Body.



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

The EM has three main contacts with you through:

- the Annual Centre Review visit
- routine or additional visits
- remote monitoring.

4.1.2 The EM's role is to 'verify' – quality assure – course materials and programmes. So they are there to:

- monitor standards of qualification and/or programme provision, assessment, internal quality assurance and operations
- support your centre in establishing and developing effective programmes
- act as a channel for information between the centre and Awarding Bodies.

5. SAMPLING

The IM in the centre will sample a minimum of 20% at both interim and summative stages, (this process will be reviewed through all three tiers) and it is anticipated that the EM will summative sample a minimum of 15% as well as review the quality assurance process.