

Safety Training Awards Approved Training Centre (ATC) Manual

Version 19.1



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Safety Training Awards Limited, registered office as above, is a company registered in England and Wales (No. 05544759) and is a subsidiary of The Swimming Teachers' Association, a registered charity (No. 1051631 in England and Wales and SC041988 in Scotland) whose objective is: "The preservation of human life by the teaching of swimming, lifesaving and survival techniques."

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Introduction

Safety Training Awards is the Awarding Organisation of the Swimming Teachers Association (STA) which is a membership organisation and a registered charity.

Safety Training Awards specialise in qualifications for the leisure industry and are regulated by Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales, CCEA (Northern Ireland) and accredited by SQA Accreditation (Scotland). Further information relating to the qualifications awarded and the specific requirements for delivery and assessment are detailed within the qualification specification documents which can be downloaded from the website www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk.

This manual has been designed to support current and prospective centres to meet Safety Training Awards requirements for delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications. Our aim as an awarding organisation is to promote consistency, high standards and learner / public confidence in the qualifications we make available. To achieve this, it is essential that all centre co-ordinators, and those responsible for the assessment and internal quality assurance processes familiarise themselves with the contents of this manual. The ability of the centre to meet these requirements, along with our approval requirements shall be assessed before approved centre status is granted, and our external quality assurers will check ongoing adherence during each quality assurance activity. It is important that at any time if as a centre you are unable to or are going to become unable to meet the obligations of your centre approval as outlined in this manual, Safety Training Awards are informed immediately. Failure to adhere to our approval requirements may result in sanctions being applied in line with our sanctions policy.

Definition of an Approved Training Centre (ATC)

Safety Training Awards defines a centre as any tutor, business or organisation who have the required resources and competence to deliver, tutor, assess and quality assure qualifications whilst meeting our approval criteria. This organisation could be an educational establishment such as a school or college, or a private training provider.

Contact Information

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How to Gain Centre Approval

Applying to become a Safety Training Awards Approved Training Centre (ATC) is an easy process.

Centres simply need to provide us with evidence that they have the resources, policies and procedures in place to ensure continuous adherence to the relevant regulations and requirements. This is assessed by our centre management team through the centre application process.

Each centre wishing to offer Safety Training Awards qualifications must first familiarise themselves with our approval criteria and ensure that the resources and requirements of Safety Training Awards can be met by the organisation. Please feel free to contact our centre management team for advice and support at this stage. Once the prospective centre is satisfied that they are able to meet our approval criteria an ATC application must be completed.

This can be done by contacting our centre management team who will take some basic details from you to start the application process. Shortly after you will receive an email from a third-party company called 'Creatio Green', follow the instructions and the link within this email, this will give you access to our ATC online administration system called 'Synergy'. Once you have created your Synergy account you may complete the 'Approved Training Centre (ATC) Agreement' which you will find on the home screen on the right-hand side. Each section must be fully completed prior to submission to Safety Training Awards, any supporting evidence may be uploaded via this system. For further guidance on how to use Synergy can be found in the user guide book, this can be found on the home screen of Synergy on the right-hand side or via the Safety Training Awards website within the ATC resource section.

At the initial application stage, each prospective centre must seek approval to deliver at least one qualification. Further qualifications can be added to the centre approval at a later date, see the section 'Qualification Approval'.

Each application will be reviewed by our centre management team, who may be in touch to request additional information or ask further questions. Once the centre application has been submitted, the progress of the application, and if any additional information is required can be viewed via the Synergy account.

Following a remote desk-based review at this stage, the new centre will be able to register their first Safety Training Awards course and learners. The centre will be assigned a dedicated External Quality Assurer (EQA) who will provide guidance and support at this stage of the process.

The assigned EQA will conduct a full quality assurance monitoring visit at this stage, for more experienced centre personnel, tutors, assessors delivering Safety Training Awards qualifications the EQA may choose to conduct the quality assurance monitoring activity through a remote desk-based activity. If centre personnel, tutors, assessors are new to delivering Safety Training Awards qualifications the EQA will conduct an 'Approval Visit' on the first course that is registered after the application stage. This will ensure that the appropriate resources, such as suitably qualified, experienced staff and the facilities are in place to be able to deliver Safety Training Awards qualifications, in accordance with the various qualification specifications.

For more details relating to the visit format please see section 5 'Quality Assurance'.

Centre Approval Application

Once an organisation is familiar with Safety Training Awards approval requirements and meet the approval criteria that is documented within this manual, a completed application may be submitted to Safety Training Awards via Synergy.

Below is a list of the information that must be included within the application:

- ATC Details - Centre details seeking approval;
- Site Details - Contact details for sites used for the delivery and assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications;
- Centre Personnel - Provide details of key contacts within the ATC, centre co-ordinator, site contact, accounts / finance contact, tutor / assessor and IQA;
- Third party and contracting arrangements - Provide details of any third party, sub-contracting, satellite centre arrangements that are / or intend to be in place;
- Approval Information - Provide details of any approved centre status with other awarding organisations;
- Qualifications - Provide information of which qualifications the centre is seeking approval to deliver and provide an estimation of registration numbers for the first two years.

The centre co-ordinator must complete a tutor agreement and Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) agreement via the Synergy account to add their centre personnel for approval by Safety Training Awards.

In addition to the above the centre co-ordinator must submit copies of the following documentation to the Synergy account via the documents section:

- Evidence supporting the tutors, assessors, IQA's qualifications and experience;
- All necessary insurance policies;
- Equality and Diversity policy;
- Health and Safety policy;
- Safeguarding policy;
- Complaints policy;
- Appeals policy;
- Internal quality assurance policy.

Once the ATC manual and agreement have been read and understood, the centre co-ordinator must accept the final declaration at the application stage to confirm that the information provided is true, accurate and that all the centre personnel agree to adhere to Safety Training Awards policies, procedures and approval criteria.

Qualification Approval

At initial approval, centres are required to select a minimum of one qualification they wish to offer, additional qualifications can be added to the centre approval at any time by completing an additional qualification approval request form via the Synergy account. It is advisable to become familiar with the qualification specification and ensuring that all the delivery, assessment and quality assurance requirements can be met before completing the form.

It is a recommendation that if you are requesting approval for aquatic qualifications you may need to apply for more than one, this is due to a pre-requisite requirement for specific qualifications. Please refer to the qualification specifications for more information.

Any additional qualification requests will be submitted to our centre management team who may be in contact with you to request additional information or ask further questions, wherever possible this will be the EQA who has been assigned to the centre at approval. New qualifications approved will be subject to quality assurance monitoring activity prior to certification of learners.

Approval with Another Awarding Organisation

Centres that have approval with another awarding organisation and wish to gain approval to deliver Safety Training Awards qualifications must provide all relevant information on the approval application.

Once the application form is received at Safety Training Awards we will contact the relevant awarding organisation to identify if the centre has had a successful EQA visit recently and request a copy of the EQA report form. We may also ask the awarding organisation to provide a reference for the centre. The centre management team will identify an appropriate risk rating from the information provided, this will determine if an EQA visit or a desk-based monitoring activity is required.

Centre Management, Policies, Procedures and Legislation

In order to meet our regulatory requirements, Safety Training Awards has a number of policies and procedures that our ATCs, their assessors, tutors, quality assurers and learners must be familiar with and adhere to, copies of all policies and procedures are available at www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk, they cover the following:

Equal Opportunities	A policy statement relating to ensuring our qualifications are accessible to all those who wish to complete them.
Complaints	Covers the process for making a complaint to Safety Training Awards. Learners must be made aware of the Safety Training Awards complaints procedure and how and when they are able to make a complaint relating to Safety Training Awards qualifications.
Malpractice, Maladministration and Whistleblowing	Sets out the process we follow to investigate potential malpractice, maladministration and whistleblowing.
Enquiries and Appeals	Outlines the process for enquiring about results and appealing the results of assessment. This procedure must be made available to learners at registration.
Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations	Covers the process for requesting reasonable adjustments and applying special considerations to our delivery or assessment process, enabling all learners to access our qualifications. This procedure must be made available to learners at registration.
Privacy Policy	The privacy policy for the Swimming Teachers Association, which includes Safety Training Awards.
Conflicts of Interest	Sets out our requirements for the identification and management of conflicts of interest.
Sanctions	Describes the sanctions we may apply when centres are not able to demonstrate they are adhering to our approval criteria.

In addition, we require our ATCs to have in place a number of policies and procedures to support the effective delivery of Safety Training Awards qualifications. Centres may choose to have additional policies and procedures in place at their discretion, but the following is an overview of the minimum requirement:

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity policies must ensure that they reflect current legislation and describe how the centre will ensure learning and assessment is accessible to all.

Appeals

Centres must have in place an appeals procedure which is transparent and available to all learners which covers as a minimum:

- The situations under which learners are able to appeal;
- The process to be followed if a learner has an enquiry or appeal about the results of their assessment;
- How and when appeals should be submitted;
- Ensuring that appeals are dealt with impartially and fairly;
- Timescales for submitting and dealing with appeals;
- The process to be followed if a learner is not satisfied with the results of their appeal and appealing to Safety Training Awards.

All appeals should be recorded, along with suitable evidence and the outcome, as the external quality assurer may wish to review these as part of their visit.

Complaints

Centres must operate a fair and transparent complaints system for the benefit of learners, which covers as a minimum:

- The situations under which learners are able to make a complaint;
- To whom their complaint should be addressed;
- The timescales for dealing with their complaint;
- How the complaint is escalated / what the learner can do if they are not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint and under what circumstances they are able to complain to Safety Training Awards.

Any complaints received by the centre should be logged along with action taken as appropriate. Complaints that relate to malpractice of centre personnel must be dealt with in line with the malpractice policy. Any complaints which relate to the design of qualification products and resources should be forwarded directly to Safety Training Awards.

Malpractice and Maladministration

Centres must have a procedure for dealing with allegations of potential malpractice and maladministration, which covers as a minimum:

- Procedure and timing for notifying Safety Training Awards;
- How and when any investigations will take place;
- Co-operation with and following direction of Safety Training Awards;
- Ensuring investigations, where sanctioned by Safety Training Awards are undertaken by individuals of appropriate competence who have no interest / involvement in the outcome;
- Timescales for the investigation;
- Reporting to Safety Training Awards.

Further information on Safety Training Awards requirements surrounding the management of suspected or actual malpractice within our centres is detailed in Safety Training Awards Malpractice, Maladministration and Whistleblowing policy.

Safeguarding

Each centre is required to have a safeguarding children and vulnerable adult's policy and procedure which meets the requirements of relevant legislation and best practice and covers as a minimum:

- The designated safeguarding contact within the organisation;
- Action to take in case of an allegation or disclosure;
- Good practice in the care of children and vulnerable adults.

Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment Procedures

Centres should ensure that they operate within current legislative and best practice requirements. Further information and guidance can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive, procedures should cover as a minimum:

- Responsibilities for health and safety within the centre;
- Suitable training and instruction;
- Reporting and recording of concerns, accidents and near misses;
- Process for identification of hazards and assessing risks;
- Maintenance of premises and equipment;
- Risk reduction.

Evidence to support the risk assessment process, accident reporting, and near misses must be maintained within the centre.

Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

- Training, qualification, professional development and experience of internal quality assurers;
- Responsibility for undertaking quality assurance activities;
- An appropriate sampling methodology for the qualifications being delivered covering whole population over time;
- Frequency of quality assurance activities;
- Improving the assessment standards and action planning.

Further details relating to Safety Training Awards internal quality assurance requirements can be found in Safety Training Awards Internal Quality Assurance Policy.

Policies and procedures must:

- Be provided to Safety Training Awards and their representatives upon request;
- Be effectively communicated and understood by all centre personnel and learners where appropriate;
- Be applied in the day to day operations of the centre by all personnel;
- Be kept up to date through review and revision (new legislation / requirements new equipment, technology or ways of working).

Requirements for Delivery of Qualifications

In addition to our approval requirements, each qualification Safety Training Awards makes available has a qualification specification which details the minimum requirements centres must meet in order to deliver each qualification. It is essential that everyone involved in the delivery, assessment, quality assurance and organisation of our qualifications is familiar with the contents of these documents. As the requirements vary from qualification to qualification, approval to deliver one qualification does not guarantee approval for further qualifications. At application, Safety Training Awards will examine each centres capacity to deliver, assess and internally quality assure. Our external quality assurance team will check ongoing adherence to these requirements as part of their quality assurance activities. Centres approved shall be able to demonstrate:

- They have at their disposal the required facilities, equipment and resources for the number of learners they propose to deliver and assess for the required learning hours. Facilities and equipment must be safe and conducive to good teaching and learning. Equipment must be maintained in line with manufacturers recommendations. All training and assessment activities must comply with legislation and industry best practice guidance. Risk assessments and first aid arrangements must be in place, including recording and reporting of accidents and near misses. For aquatic courses, this includes the provision of learner swimmers of the correct quantity and standard;
- Their tutors, assessors and quality assurers have the requisite knowledge, skills and competence to perform their roles effectively. There is appropriate induction to centre and Safety Training Awards policies and procedures;
- They are able to provide the required conditions for assessment.

Centres should also be familiar with sector skills / professional body requirements for their sector. Including National Occupational Standards, Professional Standards and associated assessment strategies.

Centres must ensure that all relevant legislation is adhered to in the country they are operating.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Centres must ensure that they adhere to legislation surrounding GDPR and DPA 2018. Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Information Commissioners Office.

Insurance

All centres must have adequate insurance that is appropriate to their business. The level of insurance needed will depend on the size of the business. Safety Training Awards will request a copy of the centres insurance certificate to add to the records and we will require an updated copy annually within 3 months of the renewal date. If this information is not provided Safety Training Awards will notify the EQA to request this information from the centre co-ordinator and may be added as an action point on the centres EQA report.

Centre Resources and Staffing

The organisational structure of each centre will depend on the size and the business model; however, Safety Training Awards requires personnel to fulfil certain roles as part of the approval process, they are as follows:

- Centre co-ordinator;
- Accounts contact;
- Internal quality assurers;
- Tutors and assessors.

In certain cases, one person may undertake a number of roles, however the centre must clearly identify who will fulfil each role on the application. Please note centres do not have to change the internal role names to reflect the above titles.

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

Included below is an outline of the responsibilities of all parties involved in the Safety Training Awards accreditation system. This includes Safety Training Awards ATCs and their key staff, internal quality assurers, tutors and learners. We have included a brief explanation of how everyone may fulfil their responsibilities, please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

Who	Responsibility	How this may be fulfilled
Safety Training Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and develop qualifications to provide centres with a sufficient range to meet their needs; • Set high quality standards for centres that meet the requirements of the regulators for our qualifications; • Ensure all centres delivering qualifications under Safety Training Awards accreditation continue to meet the quality standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued market research to ascertain what qualifications are required; • Robust approval application process ensuring centres meet initial requirements; • Adequate information for use of the centres to ensure they meet the required standard; • Ongoing regular monitoring of centres to ensure continued adherence to quality assurance standards; • Provision of centre support ensuring all requests and queries are dealt with promptly and effectively.
Approved Training Centres (ATC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Safety Training Awards requirements to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure key staff are in place, are aware and

	<p>deliver and assess accredited qualifications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and promote training courses delivered at suitable venues by approved tutors; • To provide adequate training equipment and materials to tutors and issue pre-course information to learners; • Will maintain accurate records of courses, learners and IQA processes for the lifetime of the qualification to comply with regulatory and legislative requirements. 	<p>understand Safety Training Awards requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that robust organisational structures, policies and procedures are implemented that meet Safety Training Awards requirements; • Provide information and evidence to fulfil Safety Training Awards application criteria for each qualification; • Ensure all trainers and IQA's hold the relevant qualification as detailed by the qualification specification and associated assessment strategies and have been approved by Safety Training Awards; • Ensure all training materials provided are suitable for the activities.
<p>Named Point of Accountability - Centre Co-ordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main point of accountability for all requirements laid down by Safety Training Awards; • Responsible for ensuring the centre meets the approval criteria on an ongoing basis, and informs Safety Training Awards immediately if at any time it is unable, or it will become unable to comply; • Liaise with Safety Training Awards to arrange an EQA visit / request for sampling and make any necessary arrangements in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have the authority to make decisions and answer queries on behalf of the centre; • Ensure record keeping, quality assurance and all other requirements are met; • Ensure full co-operation with Safety Training Awards, its representatives and regulatory authorities relating to all monitoring activities and investigations; • Keep Safety Training Awards informed of all changes, conflicts of interest and any other

	<p>accordance with the verification plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available during the visit and ensure that all evidence related to learners' portfolios and assessment, the internal verification and quality assurance processes is available; • Receive feedback at the end of the visits; • Receive the report of the visit and disseminate its findings to responsible persons within the centre. 	<p>information that they expect to be made aware of.</p>
<p>Site Contact (for single site contacts this will be the centre co-ordinator)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This person will be a point of contact between Safety Training Awards and each site used / operated by the centre; • This person could be contacted by Safety Training Awards in respect of visit or access arrangements; • Each site utilised by the centre requires a site contact, if the centre uses a single site this person would be the centre co-ordinator. 	
<p>Accounts Contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main contact for purchase order numbers, invoices, payment and accounts queries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all requests for information are responded to in a timely manner; • Assist with all account, invoice and payment queries.
<p>External Quality Assurers (EQA)- appointed by Safety Training Awards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct on site visits to centres to monitor and ensure the IQA and the centre are adhering to all requirements set out by Safety Training Awards; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the centre on a risk based approach as and when instructed by Safety Training Awards; • Report to the quality assurance manager at

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate any areas for concern raised by complaints and / or desk-based monitoring activity by Safety Training Awards; • Maintain records of your continual professional development (CPD). 	<p>Safety Training Awards with any findings and / or recommendations.</p>
<p>Internal Quality Assurers (IQA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have relevant experience in delivering and / or assessing the subject they are internally quality assuring or be occupationally competent in that area; • Have a working knowledge of the requirements of the qualification; • Knowledge and understanding of the role of tutors / assessors and internal quality assurance; • Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place; • Develop an internal quality assurance process and prepare sampling plans to implement the support for new and experienced assessors in line with the assessment strategy; • Keep accurate and up-to-date records of the internal quality assurance process including standardisation activities; • Advise and standardise assessors on the appropriateness of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete regular quality assurance activities on all trainers using Safety Training Awards approved documentation; • Ensure the consistency of the delivery and assessments are in line with Safety Training Awards qualification specifications and assessment guidance documents; • Complete audits of record keeping and assessment security processes by tutors, assessors and administration personnel to ensure they continually meet the requirements; • Observe assessors carrying assessment activities with learners and providing feedback and Interview learners; • Sample assessments to verify assessors' judgements, ensuring that they are impartial, consistent, fair and reliable; • Provide standardisation activities for assessors to ensure consistency in the assessment process,

	<p>assessment evidence regarding the level, validity, authenticity, reliability, consistency and sufficiency;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in the formal stages of any appeal; • Liaise with the centre co-ordinator to arrange the EQA sampling / visit request and provide samples for external quality assurance, as required by Safety Training Awards; • Provide the centre co-ordinator and Safety Training Awards with feedback as and when appropriate; • Monitor external quality assurance reports and undertake any remedial action as required; • Share good assessment practice between all tutors / assessors; • Ensure resources are available that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately; • Maintain records of your continual professional development (CPD). 	<p>ensure that any appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any findings to the centre co-ordinator, to Safety Training Awards quality assurance manager.
<p>Tutors and Assessors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors / assessors must be qualified for their role and suitably occupationally competent and must maintain their continual professional development (CPD) as specified in the assessment requirements or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Safety Training Awards qualification assessment guidelines using documentation provided by or approved by them; • Maintain the security of assessment papers both prior to and after assessments have been completed;

	<p>assessment strategy for the sector;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and assess learner’s evidence using only the published assessment criteria set out by Safety Training Awards and the regulators; • Ensure that your assessment activity meets the occupational standards for assessment; • Use sector knowledge and experience to assess learner’s evidence against the requirements of the qualifications provided by Safety Training Awards; • Engage in standardisation activities to ensure consistency in the assessment process; • Keep accurate and up-to-date records of your assessment activity; • Engage learners in the planning of assessment and the assessment process; • Provide feedback to learners at both formative and summative stages on the suitability of assessment evidence with regard to level, sufficiency, validity and consistency; • Support learners to take appropriate corrective action where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record and evidence all knowledge, experience and qualifications.
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Learners

- Generate assessment evidence under the required conditions which is authenticable;
 - Provide accurate information to facilitate course registration;
 - Be aware of opportunities for special considerations, reasonable adjustments, complaints and appeals and submit any of these in line with Safety Training Awards procedures;
 - Attend courses of learning for the requisite number of hours.
- Attend a training course and successfully complete the assessment.

Continual Professional Development (CPD) Requirements

It is a requirement, that tutors, assessors and IQA's maintain their competency to deliver and assess Safety Training Awards courses. This can be achieved through keeping relevant qualifications up to date, as detailed within the qualification specification, and also through engagement with a programme of continual professional development (CPD).

It is an ongoing and planned development process that:

- Contributes to work based and personal development;
- Increases knowledge, experience and understanding;
- Covers all types of training;
- Increases confidence and self-esteem;
- Ensures continuing competence (competence refers to having the relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes to do a certain job in a particular way to an agreed standard).

CPD can take many forms:

- Course attendance;
- Seminars / workshops;
- Shadowing peers;
- Reading newspapers;
- TV documentaries;
- Research;
- Supervision;
- Accredited learning;
- Secondments;
- Mentoring;
- Formal learning leading to recognised awards;
- Membership of appropriate professional bodies;
- Informal learning (experience in life and work);
- Reflection on what's been learnt through planned / unplanned experiences at work;
- In-house courses;
- Study days / undertaking specific training;
- Standardisation meetings;
- Feedback from others to improve performance;
- Distance learning courses.

Appropriate recording of CPD is good practice and will demonstrate to the EQA that competence is being maintained. It should detail 'when' the activity took place, 'how' it was relevant to professional development and reflect on what was learnt, ensuring it highlights any skills or knowledge learnt. Centre personnel may use the following form to record evidence of professional development.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Record



Name:	
From:	
To:	

Key Dates	What did you do?	What did you learn from this?	How will you use this? Any further action?

Conflicts of Interest

All centre personnel who are involved in the administration, delivery and / or assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications are required to complete a conflicts of interest disclosure form via Synergy if there may be a potential and / or actual conflict of interest in place.

Conflicts of interest are a high-risk area to regulators, so therefore it is vital that all centres disclose any conflicts whether they may be potential or actual cases to Safety Training Awards when they are recognised. Please refer to Safety Training Awards conflicts of interest policy for further guidance, this is available on our website or you can request a copy by contacting us.

It isn't possible to provide a definitive list of examples of conflicts of interest that could compromise the integrity of Safety Training Awards assessments and qualifications. However, the following situations could lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest (this list is not exhaustive):

- Assessors / internal quality assurers assessing / quality assuring members of their own family;
- Tutors / assessors quality assuring their own work
- Personal relationships with family members or friends linked to centre personnel and/or learners that could influence decision making and qualification outcomes
- Assessors or IQAs assessing/quality assuring their own work and/or members of family and friends
- Subcontracting tutors, assessors and IQAs from another Approved Training Centre (ATC)
- Agreeing to fulfil the mandatory roles in more than one Approved Training Centre (ATC)
- Business or commercial interests linked to a centre and/or Safety Training Awards that may affect professional judgement
- Mutually beneficial arrangements with centre and Safety Training Awards personnel which may compromise an individual's ability to make reliable and professional judgements
- Where favourable arrangements have been negotiated, for example supplying information to certain individuals and/or groups who are preparing for or carrying out an assessment
- A person connected with a centre and/or Safety Training Awards who are engaging in some capacity or have a material financial interest in a business or enterprise that compete with Safety Training Awards
- A centre has an interest in any activity which has the potential to lead it to act contrary to its interests in the development, delivery and award of qualifications in accordance with the conditions of the centre.

The existence of interests such as those above does not necessarily imply conflict but is likely to give an appearance of conflict and as such should be declared to Safety Training Awards by completing and submitting the conflict of interest disclosure form which is available via the ATCs Synergy account.

Malpractice / Maladministration

It is the intention of Safety Training Awards to work closely with our ATCs, learners, tutors, assessors and quality assurers to ensure that any potential malpractice or maladministration is identified promptly.

On occasions, someone making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. In these instances, we will follow our whistleblowing policy, please refer to our Safety Training Awards whistleblowing policy for more information.

Below are some definitions of malpractice and maladministration, please refer to our Safety Training Awards malpractice and maladministration policy for further guidance, this is available on our website or you can request a copy by contacting us.

Malpractice is defined as any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and / or validity of certificates of a qualification awarded by Safety Training Awards. It covers the deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise the following:

- The assessment process
- Integrity of a regulated qualification
- The validity of a result or certificate
- The reputation and credibility of Safety Training Awards qualifications
- The qualification of the wider qualification's community.

Malpractice may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

Maladministration is defined as any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the centre, tutor, assessor, learner or quality assurer not complying with Safety Training Awards' requirements, Safety Training Awards' tutor and IQA agreements, the general conditions of recognition, or regulatory principles.

Maladministration is in effect any activity or practice which results to non-compliance with administrative requirements and regulations, this includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within the centre including inappropriate learner records.

Centre Records, Data and Access

Administration and Record Keeping

Each centre must have a robust system in place to ensure accurate administration and record keeping, ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements, facilitate effective quality assurance and provide a safeguard against erroneous certificate claims.

It is a requirement that all records of training are stored for a minimum term of the lifetime of the qualification to comply with Safety Training Awards data retention requirements and legislative requirements.

They must be made available on request to Safety Training Awards. The records must include:

- Qualification course dates, including names of tutors / assessors and quality assurers;
- Course delivery records including tutoring and assessing covering the requisite training hours and assessment strategy in line with Safety Training Awards policies and procedures;
- Names and details of learners;
- Assessment evidence which is current and authenticated- including portfolios, worksheets and practical marking sheets for each learner covering all assessment criteria, signed by the learner, tutor / assessor and quality assurer (as required);
- Details of any reasonable adjustments and / or special considerations which have been approved by Safety Training Awards;
- Records of complaints, enquiries or appeals;
- Records of any accident / incident that occurs during tutoring or assessing;
- Evidence that effective internal quality assurance has taken place, including sampling plans, report forms, action plans and feedback given to the delivery and assessment teams;
- External quality assurance report forms and associated action plans;
- Evidence of approval from Safety Training Awards for all tutors / assessors / IQA's prior to them delivering and / or assessing including evidence of relevant qualification, professional development, in-service training and insurance;
- Conflicts of interest disclosure forms giving details of any potential and / or actual cases.

Please note: The EQA that is assigned to a centre will have access to the data on the ATCs Synergy account and can view all the reports and information that is held for quality assurance purposes.

Centre Quality Assurance

Qualification Standards, Requirements and Regulation for Delivery and Assessment

The requirements for delivery and assessment for each qualification can be found within the qualification specification and assessment guidance. External quality assurers will assure that these requirements are being consistently met. Centres will be required to demonstrate:

- They have access to appropriate facilities for the required learning hours. These should have been risk assessed to ensure it meets the requirements for health and safety;
- They have the appropriate amount of the required equipment to deliver and assess the qualification, it is in an appropriate condition and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations. For aquatic qualifications, the required number and ability of learner swimmers must be provided;
- That tutors, assessors and quality assurers are appropriately qualified and up to date in the specific discipline, in line with the requirements laid down in the qualification specification
- Standardisation takes place to ensure the consistency of assessment decisions;
- They are able to provide the required conditions for assessment.

Standardisation

The internal quality assurer is responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are consistent across all sites and all assessors within the centre. The external quality assurer will want to see how this has been achieved in practice and will sample assessment decisions to ensure consistency is maintained. External quality assurers will be able to provide support with devising and delivering standardisation activities.

Qualification specifications and assessment guidance issued by Safety Training Awards should always be used as a starting point.

Records must be kept of all activities and / or meetings that are used for standardisation purposes. In general standardisation is an opportunity for assessors and internal quality assurers to:

- Share ideas;
- View each other's practice, compare work and completed documentation;
- Reach a common understanding about the centre requirements;
- Consider approaches to delivery and assessment;
- Consider and compare others judgement decisions.

Below are some examples of standardisation activities that could be used:

Standardisation activity	What is involved.
Discussing requirements and agreeing on expected outcomes	IQA's, assessors and tutors discuss the contents of a unit to identify what and how they need to be delivered, what are learners asked to do to meet their learning outcomes and what results are expected.

Assessing other learners	IQA provides two assessors with a unit from one learner to discuss the outcome.
Observation of a recorded activity to provide feedback	IQA records an activity being assessed by an assessor and provides other assessors with the recording to assess the activity and complete the relevant documentation. Assessors can compare their judgements and feedback that would be delivered to the learners. This needs to be conducted in line with centre procedures in relation to use of recording equipment and all participants need to give their consent.
Observation of a recorded training session to provide feedback	IQA records a training session, centre personnel observe the recording, completes an observation checklist and give feedback to the tutors. This needs to be conducted in line with centre procedures in relation to the use of recording equipment. All participants need to give their consent.
Assessors judging evidence together	Assessors to examine and discuss evidence, agree on the assessment decisions and produce feedback for the learner.
Observations	Centre personnel can observe others planning with learners, making assessment decisions and providing feedback to learners. The observer may complete an IQA observation form and use this to provide feedback that can be discussed and agreed upon.

The Structure of Internal Quality Assurance

Safety Training Awards have laid down the requirements that centres must adhere to covering the delivery and assessment of all qualifications within the qualification specification.

In addition to the information above the following areas are also included in our quality assurance expectations:

- Policies and procedures;
- Qualification standards, including requirements and regulation;
- Venues and equipment;
- Learner registration and identification checks;
- Making claims for certification.

Centres working together with Safety Training Awards share an organisational responsibility for quality assurance. The ultimate success of this process depends on the individuals who implement it. This means that everyone involved in the quality assurance of qualifications must be clear:

- What their role and responsibilities are in relation to quality assurance;
- Why they should be doing it;
- How they should be doing it;
- When they should be doing it;
- What standards they should be achieving; and;
- Who is responsible for different parts of the quality assurance system.

An internal quality assurance strategy should be developed to ensure that quality assurance is maintained not only in the standards of assessment but also the administration procedures and systems in place within the centre. The monitoring of all aspects of the assessment process through the strategy will allow the centre to be pro-active and progressive in continually improving standards.

Monitoring of assessment provides a quality assurance process which allows the IQA to ensure that assessment strategies are being utilised in accordance with Safety Training Awards requirements. This monitoring will vary between assessor's dependant on experience. The amount of contact will be determined from the results of the risk rating assessment.

The purpose of monitoring of assessment will be to:

- Check the progress of the learner;
- Ensure that there is consistent interpretation of the standards and assessment strategy;
- Directly observe part of the assessment process;
- Identify and resolve any problems;
- Carry out informal training where required in particular with the completion of documentation;
- Identify any training needs and refer on;
- Review risk rating and learning needs analysis (LNA);
- Sign off completed units not identified for sampling.

The Structure of External Quality Assurance

The External Quality Assurer's (EQA) prime function is to provide advice, guidance and support to centres who deliver our qualifications, or who wish to deliver our qualifications to maintain the quality of assessment and internal quality assurance practice within their centre, and ensure our requirements are being met.

Role of EQA

- Provide centres with up-to-date information, advice, and support in line with awarding organisation and regulatory authority guidance and requirements;
- Provide advice and support to centres in respect of awarding organisation requirements and procedures, including assessment arrangements, appeals, reasonable adjustments, special considerations, and complaints;
- Monitor the internal quality assurance process through effective sampling to ensure that assessment decisions within the centre are valid, authentic and sufficient evidence is available to confirm achievement;
- Sample assessment decisions to confirm that they are valid, authentic and sufficient evidence is available to confirm achievement and that agreed standards are being consistently maintained;

- Confirm that assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally competent assessors;
- Check that claims for certification are authentic, valid and supported by auditable records;
- Monitoring centre action plans ensuring that corrective actions as required by the awarding organisation have been completed within the set time frame;
- Recommend the imposition of appropriate sanctions on centres that fail to meet the requirements.

The EQA will liaise with the centre co-ordinator to identify themselves and notify the centre of their contact details, this information may also be found within the Synergy account – ‘AO Contacts’ section.

The EQA will arrange a date and time for the initial visit, this will be communicated via email and the ATCs Synergy account by completing an ‘EQA Visit Requirements Plan’. Once the centre co-ordinator has agreed the date and time within the ‘EQA Visit Requirements Plan’ this will outline the requirements for the visit, which will include any particular requests the centre may have. If the assessments have been conducted over several sites, the EQA is required to monitor all the different assessment sites, over time. It is important that the information provided to the EQA is checked and correct in preparation for any quality assurance activities, particularly if there are any changes to the IQAs / tutors / assessors. The centre co-ordinator must ensure all requested documentation is available and if there are any concerns this should be communicated immediately to the EQA.

Safety Training Awards expects each centre to have a minimum of one external quality assurance visit per year, but an increased number of visits may be required, for centres that operate from a range of sites and are new to delivering Safety Training Awards Qualifications. The external quality assurance activities will be dependent upon the risk rating of the centre.

Additional visits are not permitted without prior consent from Safety Training Awards Head of Compliance and Assurance. Any requests for additional visits or remote sampling should be directed to your allocated EQA, who will then make contact with Safety Training Awards on your behalf. A charge may be applicable for additional visits.

If a pre-arranged visit is cancelled at short notice, there must a legitimate reason and provided in writing to the EQA. The cancellation can result in the withholding of any claims for certification until a verification visit has been completed. Safety Training Awards reserves the right to charge for visits that have been cancelled at short notice.

The EQA will:

- Agree a visit requirement plan with the centre co-ordinator and / or IQA;
- Agree a schedule for the visit which will normally include reviewing Internal quality assurance plans, reports and records, including records of standardisation meetings, assessment records and the validation of assessment judgements through sampling learner portfolios and evidence;
- Review the internal quality assurance for the qualification – checking the internal verification sampling strategy, IQA records, records of standardisation meetings and feedback to assessors;
- Review the occupational competence and qualifications including the assessment and quality assurance qualifications of the centre team, including professional development plans for assessors and IQAs;
- Ensure that centre personnel have all the necessary current documentation;
- Check assessment practice against the requirements of the overarching assessment strategy and validate the quality and consistency of assessor’s judgements against Safety Training Awards qualification specification criteria;

- Sampling assessment decisions
- Inform the centre co-ordinator / IQA promptly of any areas of weakness and agree an action plan for improvement;
- Provide positive feedback and encouragement when good practice is identified;
- Make full use of retrospective sampling where necessary. You must retain portfolios for all learners certificated between verification visits in order to allow the EQA to undertake retrospective sampling;
- Recommend access to certification or actions to be undertaken by the centre, as appropriate;
- Where necessary, recommend limitation or suspension of certification, or suspension of registration.

In exceptional circumstances, if it is considered that an ATC is low risk because it has good quality assurance history then it is possible to arrange for verification of programmes to be conducted remotely. The EQA will verify samples of learners' evidence, reviewing assessor and IQA's records and possibly contacting learners.

Pre-Visit Information for EQAs

The EQA, particularly if newly appointed to the centre, may ask to see materials and documentation before finalising the visit plan, so that they can familiarise themselves with the organisation and highlight any matters for discussion. This information may include:

- A list of designated assessors and IQAs for each programme;
- Any changes to the designated assessors and IQA's for each programme since the last EQA visit;
- CV's and authenticated copies of assessor and / or IQA qualifications;
- Registered learners for each programme (and their locations if provision is dispersed);
- Details of the assessment methods used;
- Records of learners certificated since the last standards verification visit.

Types of External Quality Assurance Visits

The main types of external quality assurance visits are as follows:

Approval Visit

This visit is completed by an EQA assigned by Safety Training Awards, it will be completed by an observation visit. For experienced tutors and assessors, the approval monitoring activity may be completed via remote sampling. The type of monitoring activity chosen will depend upon the centres experience of delivering our qualifications and the initial risk rating that is determined following the application stage of the process. At the approval stage it is the intention to provide support and guidance to the centre co-ordinator, to ensure that all the information that was provided at the application stage is accurate and all internal quality assurance systems are in place. This visit will focus on the following areas:

- Personnel - To verify there are appropriate human resource in place to adequately deliver and assess Safety Training Awards qualifications, also to fulfil the required roles for an efficient internal quality assurance system;
- Course administration - To verify that aspects of training course administration can be adequately managed;

- Training venues - To verify that the training venues meet regulatory requirements and are fit for purpose;
- Maintenance of standards - To verify that the centre has appropriate monitoring systems in place to maintain Safety Training Awards ATC status;
- Training outcomes - To verify that the centre has appropriate systems in place to assess the effectiveness of its training courses.

Approval Visit for Newly Approved Qualification

The EQA's first visit to a newly approved qualification will include a review of the Safety Training Awards recognition and approval criteria to confirm that the centre is meeting the requirements.

The centre co-ordinator or IQA should have a copy of the recognition and approvals submissions available for the EQA. If it is found that there are serious discrepancies between the submissions and current practice, the EQA will notify Safety Training Awards Head of Compliance and Assurance.

Monitoring Visit

All monitoring visits are completed by the centres assigned EQA and the focus will be on the following areas:

- To verify compliance with Safety Training Awards centre approval criteria;
- To verify the centre has adequate systems in place to meet regulatory requirements in the delivery and assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications;
- To monitor and verify an adequate internal quality assurance system is in place which maintains standards and develops training and assessing within the organisation;
- Verify that there are adequate internal training arrangements in place for centre personnel, these arrangements will support CPD, satisfy pre-requisites where appropriate for renewal learners and maintain standardisation procedures;
- Monitor and verify that there are appropriate systems in place to adequately assess learners;
- Monitor and verify that any previous agreed action points have been appropriately actioned;
- To ensure any changes of circumstances within the centre have been updated and submitted to Safety Training Awards.

For Remote Desk Based EQA Verification:

An EQA and / or quality assurance team may conduct additional remote monitoring activities within a twelve-month period, the frequency will depend upon the centres risk rating.

- The EQA agrees the units, learners, portfolios and other related records required in the sample and confirms arrangements with you in writing;
- The centre co-ordinator should never send original evidence or records unless specifically required, always send copies and keep originals for the centres records;
- The outcome for remote sampling is likely to be restricted to limited certification.

External Quality Assurance Monitoring for ATC's who are new to STA Regulated Qualifications

All ATC's who are new to registering and delivering Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications are subject to external quality assurance monitoring activity on the first three courses. The assigned EQA will carry out an approval visit on the first registered course to ensure Safety Training Awards requirements have been met, in line with the qualification specifications and regulatory requirements. Following the

approval visit the second and third course will be subject to external quality assurance desk-based activity. Once it has become clear there is no risk to the delivery and assessment of the regulated qualifications and learners the new centre may be granted Direct Claims Status (DCS), please refer to the 'making claims for certification' section of this manual for further information.

External Quality Assurance Monitoring for ATC's who have a third party and / or subcontracting arrangement in place

ATC's who have any third party, subcontracting arrangements and / or conflicts of interest in place, delivering Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications will be subject to additional external quality assurance monitoring activities within a twelve-month period. This can be conducted by additional face to face observations and remote sampling, the frequency will be dependent upon the centres risk rating. The centre co-ordinator will receive a notification from the assigned EQA prior to any additional EQA monitoring activity taking place.

Arranging the Visit and the Visit Schedule

The EQA will confirm which courses are running, and whether there are learners registered. EQA's are not allowed to visit centres to look at courses without registrations unless given prior permission from Safety Training Awards.

The EQA will then agree a date for the visit and timings for key activities. The date of this visit should be appropriate for when learners require certification. The EQA will send you a monitoring visit plan setting out what you have agreed.

You should structure activities so that the best use is made of the EQA's time. The visit must be of sufficient duration for the EQA to complete all necessary verification activities in order to make recommendations on certification.

The visit should include time to cover the:

- Programmes to be verified;
- Internal verification plans and their implementation;
- Records of standardisation meetings;
- Assessors and IQAs to be seen;
- Evidence to be made available on the day, or in advance;
- Follow up of action points from previous reports;
- Observation of assessment practice;
- Sampling of learner work and interviews with learners;
- Named sites to be visited, where provision is dispersed;
- Review of the assessment strategy requirements and their implementation;
- Feedback to the centre co-ordinator / IQA and, in some cases, the assessment team.

In some cases, it may not be practical for the EQA to complete their report during their visit, but the main action points are discussed and agreed with you during the visit and feedback will be given. The EQA will submit the completed External Quality Assurance monitoring visit report via the Synergy account within 10 working days following the visit.

Preparing for the Visit

Preparation for the EQA visit is important so that best use is made of the time available for both the centre personnel and EQA. For each visit, the following information should be available although there may be minor variations.

For the Qualification

- The current version of the ATC manual;
- Internal quality assurance sampling strategy, including proposed and actual sampling;
- Copies of assessment planning, assessment instruments or assignments and the internal quality assurance records for these;
- Appeals / complaints / malpractice / maladministration records relevant to Safety Training Awards qualifications;
- Equality and diversity policy;
- Complaints policy
- Appeals policy
- Malpractice and maladministration policy
- Safeguarding policy (where applicable)
- Health and safety policy and procedures, including monitoring of satellite sites;
- Internal Quality assurance policy.

For Learners

- Start date and membership number;
- Initial assessment, including learning needs and recognition of prior learning (RPL);
- Workplace location, including details of supervisor / manager / mentor (if applicable);
- Assessor allocation;
- Progress review dates, including latest action agreed;
- Records of assessments and summative decisions;
- Unit progress and completion.

For Assessors

- Details of any changes to the assessment team since the last visit;
- Up-to-date CV's, relevant to the qualifications assessed;
- Assessment qualification certificates or validated copies of the originals;
- Personal development plans for assessors showing professional updating / development on a rolling basis;
- Learner workload including assessment sites (if provision is dispersed);
- Records of monitoring assessor performance including feedback;
- Specimen signatures of assessors.

For IQAs

- Details of any changes to the IQA team since the last visit;
- Up-to-date CV's, relevant to the qualifications assessed;

- Quality assurance qualification certificates or validated copies of the originals;
- Personal development plans as IQAs, showing ongoing professional updating / development;
- Assessor locations;
- Learner locations;
- Records of monitoring assessor performance including feedback;
- Specimen signatures of IQAs;
- Monitoring of assessment practice records and feedback;
- Sampling of assessment decisions and feedback;
- The previous quality assurance report;
- Certification claims for current learners and those made since the last visit;
- Records of assessor meetings and standardisation activities;
- Records of internal quality assurance meetings, where there is more than one IQA;
- Specimen signatures of any “expert witnesses”, validated by the IQA (if applicable).

Much of the above is sensitive information and should be held securely and restricted to named personnel. Where information is stored electronically, access to the system should be password protected and accessible only to those authorised to make amendments. It should be kept up-to-date, preferably by a named officer, and be easily retrievable. It is a requirement that all records of training are stored for a minimum term of the lifetime of the qualification to comply with Safety Training Awards data retention requirements and legislative requirements. This includes all learner records; internal quality assurance and assessment evidence reports.

The Visit

The visit should follow the agreed schedule and enable the EQA to make a decision whether or not to recommend certification and direct claims status (DCS). The EQA will make decisions based on the centre recognition and approval criteria and our requirements listed within the external quality assurance monitoring visit report.

As the IQA, you have responsibility to provide evidence to demonstrate that these requirements are being met.

The EQA verification will begin by the reviewing the quality of internal quality assurance system to confirm that it is rigorous and robust. The EQA needs to be sure that all IQAs:

- Understand centre systems and procedures;
- Are knowledgeable about the standards and sector assessment requirements / strategy;
- Are knowledgeable about the learners;
- Understand their own role in quality assurance and standardisation of assessors;
- Copies of all internal quality assurance activities must be available;
- Sampling plans;
- Internal quality assurance records for any written, structured evidence generating opportunities, assessment instruments or assignments;
- Sampling records, including feedback to assessors;
- Records of standardisation meetings;
- Records of monitoring assessment practice, including feedback to assessors.

Sampling Learner Evidence

The sampling of learners is central to quality assurance. The evidence may be portfolio based or in alternative formats, for example work place evidence, video, CD / DVD, audio tape, e-portfolio. The EQA will sample learner work at every visit to determine whether the assessment criteria are being consistently maintained, with a view to either defer or confirm direct claim status (DCS). If a learner's work is not available when requested, the EQA report will make a record of this and any reasons, if no work is sampled at the visit then certification is not usually allowed and DCS may be removed.

The sample will:

- Be carefully planned to ensure that the EQA can reach a judgement on standards;
- Ensure it includes formative (interim) and summative (final) stages, particularly for new centres or inexperienced teams and where qualifications methodology have changed;
- Will include the support and guidance offered to learners.

The number of learners that need to be sampled depends on the total number of learners registered on the units of the respective qualifications. The selection of the sample for each centre will vary according to the requirements of the EQA's sampling strategy. EQA's will also select independently some of the learner's evidence which will be sampled to ensure the validity of the sampling process.

The EQA will select their sample based on:

- Separate verification of different Safety Training Awards qualifications;
- Reliability (to be sure sufficient learner evidence and assessors have been seen);
- Different assessment methods;
- Assessors / IQAs – changed personnel, number, experience, workload and location;
- Number of assessment sites and satellites;
- Learner range, for example full-time / part-time, different employers;
- Introduction of Safety Training Awards qualifications or additional units;
- All units and, in particular, any challenging units;
- Inclusion of IQA verified and non-verified assessment decisions;
- Any special requirements of the assessment strategy;
- Retrospective sampling of learners for whom certification has been claimed between EQA visits.

Meeting the Team and Learners

During a visit, an EQA will normally want to meet persons involved in the qualification process but will also want to review evidence of learner performance relevant to the qualification(s) being quality assured. The EQA may suggest that it is appropriate for some sampling of learner portfolios to take place outside visits, for example, sampling of knowledge only qualifications.

The EQA will check details such as:

- Learner enrolment and registration dates;
- Access to assessment and to unit achievement;
- Assessment and quality assurance dates.

The EQA will want to see evidence of continuous professional development (CPD) for all assessors and IQA's to confirm that they meet the occupational competence requirements for the qualifications they are assessing / quality assuring. These requirements are usually set out in the assessment requirements / strategy.

Your centre should review and agree personal development plans with staff, which will support them in their roles. If you have staff, who are no longer actively working in the qualification sector in which they are assessing and verifying, you need to consider how their occupational competence remains current.

The EQA will check the qualifications for assessors and IQAs. Where assessors or IQAs are qualified with D units or A and V awards, they must operate to the new standards for assessment and quality assurance. They do not need to achieve the new awards, but evidence of an updating session should be available that indicates their understanding of the new requirements, particularly with regard to assessment requirements / strategies and independent assessment.

The EQA may want to witness assessment practice by observing an assessment taking place.

A crucial part of the EQA's role is to advise and support the centre. The EQA will factor in time to discuss concerns or to answer queries. Where issues are outside the EQA's remit or experience they will obtain the relevant information directly or refer you to the appropriate person / department at Safety Training Awards.

Conclusion of the Visit

The EQA will discuss the findings of the visit with you at the end of the visit and advise on any actions for improvement.

Any action points will be directly related to the non-compliance with the relevant centre recognition and centre approvals criteria and the qualification requirements for the delivery of assessment, which will be indicated on the report for each component qualification.

The centre co-ordinator / IQA will need to fully understand any actions required and clarify any issues before the end of the visit. It is important that the actions and target dates agreed are clear and realistic. Failure to complete the actions within the timeframe may lead to limitation or suspension of certification or suspension of registration.

Reporting Outcomes

- The EQA will submit the external quality assurance monitoring visit report to the centre co-ordinator via Synergy within 10 working days of the quality assurance monitoring activity;
- The report will show whether each of the centre recognition and approval indicator continues to be fully met (i.e. consistently throughout), or not met. Where evidence has not been seen, an explanation will be given. For example, if requested information is not available either before, or at the visit.
- When an indicator is marked as "Requirements not met", the comments box in the appropriate section will be used by the EQA to explain the reason why. Any indicator marked as "Requirements not met" will trigger an action point;
- Where the EQA identifies quality issues in significant failings in the delivery of qualifications, i.e. assessment process is found to disadvantage learners we will exercise the right to:
 - Direct you to take action;
 - Limit or suspend certification;
 - Suspend registration.
- The report will also identify any issues, this may result in limitation or suspension of certification or suspension of registration. The EQA will inform you as the IQA / centre co-ordinator that they intend to recommend suspension of certification or suspension of registration and explain the next steps.

Making Claims for Certification

Pre-requisites

All pre-requisites must be checked by the centre co-ordinator before confirmation is submitted to Safety Training Awards via STA Online, they must be valid to enable learners to complete the qualification and be certificated once all requirements have been met (please see our qualification specifications on the website for more information for the required pre-requisites).

Results

At the end of a course the assessor must confirm all the pass / refer outcomes of the learner's achievement's and this must be submitted to Safety Training Awards via STA Online within 28 days of the course end date.

Provided that the centre co-ordinator has submitted all relevant information and that all requirements have been satisfied by Safety Training Awards, successful learner's will receive an automated email to login or create an STA Online account to gain access to their certificate.

All replacement certificates can be downloaded via the learners STA Online account. For a paper copy please contact Safety Training Awards centre management team to request a replacement certificate, this service is subject to a reprint charge.

Duplicate certificates will be printed on the most current certificate layout and may not be an exact copy of the original certificate. Where a lost certificate is being replaced, the issued certificate will be marked as a duplicate.

Certification Claims Status and Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Certificates for all newly approved qualifications are automatically refused until Safety Training Awards and / or the EQA are satisfied that the qualification standards are being consistently met, determined by the risk rating and that the internal quality assurance is robust.

Centre personnel, tutors, assessors who are more experienced delivering Safety Training Awards qualifications, the assigned EQA will conduct a monitoring visit on the first completed course following approval. If no issues are identified the EQA may recommend direct claim status.

Centre personnel, tutors, assessors who are new to delivering Safety Training Awards qualifications, the assigned EQA will conduct a quality assurance visit and recommend the appropriate status for certification depending on the risk rating awarded.

Registration only and / or Limited Certification Status

For registration only, status the assessment decisions would need to be verified by the EQA prior to certification of learners to ensure the assessment criteria has been met throughout the course, confirming the validity and authenticity of the qualification. This status is also determined on the risk rating of the centre on approval of the application.

Where there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate consistency in the application of the assessment strategy or to reflect other circumstances at a centre, EQAs may recommend 'limited certification' to release certification for specified learners.

Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct claim status (DCS) is awarded when a centre has been approved by Safety Training Awards to register and certificate learners without verification by the EQA, this status is awarded when a centre has a low risk rating. The EQA will recommend DCS when the centre:

- Has a good track record of delivering and assessing qualifications;
- Previous EQA's have not identified any significant issues relating to the delivery and assessment of qualifications;
- No sanctions have been made against the centre during any previous EQA visit;
- There is evidence that the centre personnel have consistently shown integrity in the delivery and assessment of qualifications.

For qualifications that have DCS, the portfolios of those learners for whom certification is claimed between EQA visits must be retained for inspection by the EQA when requested.

Recommended Suspension

If an area of concern has been identified with delivery and assessment of a qualification, the EQA may recommend suspension of certification and / or suspension of registration depending on the risk, authenticity and validity of the qualification.

If a suspension of certification or registration is confirmed:

- The EQA will inform you directly and provide you with access to the verification report;
- The EQA will work with you to address the issues;
- If additional training is required, the assigned EQA can support the centre to secure appropriate expertise to provide this;
- A charge may be made to the centre for additional EQA monitoring activity, arising from a quality assurance issue.

Withdrawal of Qualifications and / or Approval Status

Safety Training Awards Qualification Withdrawal

Safety Training Awards reserves the right to withdraw or make changes to the qualifications we offer, we may withdraw a qualification due to the following reasons:

- There is a lack of demand for the qualification;
- A change to the skills required which leads to the qualification no longer being fit for purpose;
- Safety Training Awards ceases to deliver or award a qualification to learners;
- Safety Training Awards surrenders its recognition in respect of the qualification;
- Regulators withdraw recognition of a qualification.

On occasions Safety Training Awards may redevelop a qualification to ensure the content is current and fit for purpose. In this situation, a replacement may be introduced, and Safety Training Awards will make arrangements for the transfer of learners to a revised version.

Safety Training Awards will consider the interests of our centres and learners as we manage the withdrawal of any qualification. We will ensure we give centres sufficient notice to deal with registrations and certifications and can offer guidance on alternative qualifications where necessary.

Approved Training Centre Status Withdrawn by Safety Training Awards

When a Safety Training Awards ATC has approval removed, they must not offer any Safety Training awards qualifications, products or services or continue to use the Safety Training Awards logo in any capacity.

In these situations, the centre co-ordinator will be contacted by Safety Training Awards to notify them of the withdrawal of approval status.

Safety Training Awards aim to protect the interest of learners at all times. We will work alongside the centre to support any current and / or perspective learners who may be affected by this decision, we will ensure there are opportunities for reassessments where necessary.

Where approval status has been removed due to non-compliance or malpractice reasons Safety Training Awards are obliged to inform the relevant regulatory authorities.

If a centre wishes to appeal the decision to withdraw approval status they should follow Safety Training Awards appeal process, please refer to the appropriate policy for further guidance.

Centre Approval Status Withdrawal

Where a centre wishes to withdraw its approval status with Safety Training Awards they must inform us by giving us one months' notice in writing.

Safety Training Awards aim to protect the interest of learners at all times. We will work alongside the centre to support any current and / or perspective learners who may be affected by this decision, we will ensure there are opportunities for reassessments where necessary.

Partnerships

It is a requirement that centres notify Safety Training Awards of any formal agreements, third party and / or subcontracting arrangements and / or satellite centres. If a centre is in a partnership with another organisation and / or personnel, they must provide details and documentation showing the roles and responsibilities for each additional partner. These agreements and any procedures must be documented to protect the interests of learners.

If any of the above may cause any potential and / or actual cases of conflicts of interest, then this must be disclosed to Safety Training Awards using the conflicts of interest disclosure form via the ATCs Synergy account.

Centre Learner Registration and Support

It is the responsibility of the centre co-ordinator to ensure that all learners are registered correctly on their chosen qualification. Learners must be registered within 48 hours of the course commencing, using the STA online system. At the point of registration, learners must provide evidence of:

Any required pre-requisite qualifications - originals must be seen by the course tutor and copies uploaded to STA online. Learners who have changed their name since their pre-requisite qualifications were issued must provide evidence of the name change.

Their identification, which is verified through provision of photographic ID. Acceptable forms of ID are:

- Passport;
- Driving Licence (with photograph);
- Student ID Card (with photograph);
- Company ID Card (with photograph);
- Travel Pass (with photograph).

The pre-course application form must be completed in full, the form of identification must be recorded on the bottom of the form and signed by the course tutor. To prevent personation, all practical mark sheets, portfolios and examination papers must include the learner's full name as it appears on the ID, this is the name that will be recorded on the learner's certificate. In addition, once registered, each learner will be issued an identification number which should be utilised when registering learners for subsequent courses.

Centre Promotion

Safety Training Awards expect ATCs to seek permission to use our logos within marketing and communication materials, for example on promotional material, stationary, signage and on any exhibition stands or press adverts promoting courses leading to Safety Training Awards qualifications.

Please refer to STA's Branding Guidelines and Logo Permission Form for guidance or contact our marketing team for more information.

Our logo must be used in line with our brand guidelines.

For any queries about the usage of our logo then please contact us at marketing@sta.co.uk.

Glossary of Terms

Below is a list of words (a glossary). Meanings and explanations of the words are given to the right.

Word	Meaning / Explanation
Action Points	Any action points will be directly related to areas that need improving or are non-compliant with the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre approval criteria • Regulatory / legislative requirements • Qualification requirements for the delivery of assessment.
Approval Criteria	Set requirements that must be met and adhered to in order to gain and maintain approval status.
ATC	Approved Training Centre - Safety Training Awards defines a centre as any tutor, business or organisation who have the required resources and competence to deliver, tutor, assess and quality assure qualifications whilst meeting our approval criteria. This organisation could be an educational establishment such as a school or college, or a private training provider.
ATC Co-Ordinator	The main point of accountability for all requirements laid down by Safety Training Awards. Responsible for ensuring the centre meets the approval criteria on an ongoing basis and informs Safety Training Awards immediately if at any time it is unable, or it will become unable to comply.
Awarding Organisation	An Awarding Organisation designs, develops, delivers and awards the recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and / or competencies) of an individual following an assessment and quality assurance process that is valued by employers, learners or stakeholders.
Centre Personnel	Key contacts within the ATC, centre co-ordinator, site contact, accounts / finance contact, tutor / assessor and IQA.
Conflict of Interest	A situation in which a person or centre is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another. Typically, this relates to situations in which the personal interest of an individual or centre might adversely affect a duty owed to make valid assessment decisions, having a negative impact on learners.
DCS	Direct claim status (DCS) is awarded to a centre when they have been approved by Safety Training Awards to register and certificate learners without verification by the EQA.

DPA 2018	<p>The Data Protection Act (DPA) is a United Kingdom Act of Parliament which was passed in 1988. It was developed to control how personal or customer information is used by organisations or government bodies. It protects people and lays down rules for how data about people can be used.</p> <p>The Data Protection Act was replaced in May 2018 by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).</p>
EQA	<p>External quality assurance must take place on behalf of an Awarding Organisation (AO) in an approved centre. This is to ensure the learners who have been registered with them have received a quality service, and that the assessment decisions are valid and reliable.</p> <p>External quality assurer (EQA) also seeks to ensure that assessment and internal quality assurance activities have been conducted in a consistent, safe and fair manner.</p>
Equality Act	<p>The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.</p> <p>The act is in place to ensure everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.</p>
GDPR	<p>The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union (EU).</p>
IQA	<p>Internal quality assurance can be defined as a system to monitor and evaluate a product and / or a service.</p> <p>It should identify and recommend measures to make improvements to standards and performance, or at least maintain the status quo if everything is working well.</p> <p>Internal quality assurance (IQA) relates to the monitoring of all the teaching, learning and assessment activities which learners will undertake. The activities should form part of an organisation's overall quality assurance system.</p>
Lead EQA	<p>The lead external quality assurer (EQA) seeks to ensure that assessment, internal quality assurance and external quality assurance activities have been conducted in a consistent, safe and fair manner.</p> <p>The Lead EQA is the main point of contact for external quality assurers. They are also responsible for performance, training and standardisation for quality assurance activities.</p>

Maladministration	Maladministration is in effect any activity or practice which results to non-compliance with administrative requirements and regulations, this includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within the centre including inappropriate learner records.
Malpractice	Malpractice is defined as any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and / or validity of certificates of a qualification awarded by Safety Training Awards.
Monitoring Observation / Activity	A face to face review of delivery and / or assessment methods.
Non-Compliance	Failure or refusal to comply, as with a law, regulation, or term of a contract.
Quality Assurance	It is the process of verifying whether a product meets required specifications and customer expectations.
Reasonable Adjustments	A reasonable adjustment relates to any actions that help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which may place the learner at a disadvantage during the delivery of a qualification or an assessment situation.
Regulation	Rules or directives made and maintained by an authority.
Regulators	Regulators are an organisation appointed by the government to regulate an area of activity such as qualifications.
Remote Desk Based Review / Activity	A review / monitoring activity being completed from another location (office based) using a variety of communication methods (telephone, skype, email) to verify evidence.
Sanctions	This is an official order to suspend certification status or suspension or registration status. The level of sanction is dependent upon the severity of the non-compliance within the centre.
Site Details / Site Contact	The site is a venue used by a centre. The site contact will be a point of contact between Safety Training Awards and each site used / operated by the centre. This person could be contacted by Safety Training Awards in respect of a visit or access arrangements.
Special Considerations	A special consideration is a post assessment adjustment to the marks of a learner's assessment paper or rearrangement of an assessment time and / or date. A special consideration can be granted after an assessment has taken place if a learner may have been disadvantaged.

Sub-Contracting Arrangements	<p>When ATC's subcontract other suitably qualified personnel to carry out duties that they feel they are not the best suited and / or qualified to do.</p> <p>This may relate to the delivery and assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications or concerning the marketing, advertising, recruitment or enrolment of learners to such qualifications.</p>
Third Party Arrangements	<p>A 'third party' is any party that provides services on behalf of the ATC. This definition does not include a contract of employment between an ATC and an employee.</p> <p>Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners.</p>
Whistleblowing	<p>Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual discloses information relating to a case of malpractice, maladministration or wrongdoing.</p>

Additional Information

Please refer to the Safety Training Awards website <https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/news/> to keep up to date with any news, updates, guidance and support regarding ATC processes and requirements. For any queries regarding the administration activities within your ATC please contact your allocated centre administrator or you can email your questions to atc@safetytrainingawards.co.uk.