

Safety Training Awards Approved Training Centre (ATC) Manual

Version 20.3



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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;
- Internal Quality Assurers (IQA);
- Tutors and Assessors;
- Site and accounts contact.

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 key responsibilities of all parties involved in the Safety Training Awards approval system. This includes Safety Training Awards ATCs and their key staff, Internal Quality Assurers (IQA), Tutors, Assessors 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 deliver and assess accredited qualifications; • Plan and promote training courses delivered at suitable venues by approved Tutors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure key staff are in place, are aware and understand Safety Training Awards requirements; • Ensure that robust organisational structures, policies and procedures are

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>implemented that meet Safety Training Awards requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and evidence to fulfil Safety Training Awards application criteria for each qualification; • Ensure all Tutors, Assessors 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 and all centre personnel meet 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 External Quality Assurance (EQA) visit / request for sampling and make any necessary arrangements in accordance with the external quality assurance monitoring visit plan; • Liaise with the allocated Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) to arrange suitable IQA monitoring activities to meet Safety Training Awards requirements and make any necessary arrangements in accordance with the internal quality assurance strategy and sampling plan; • Be available during quality assurance visits and ensure 	<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 information that they expect to be made aware of.

	<p>that all evidence related to learners' portfolios and assessment, the internal verification and quality assurance processes is available;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive feedback at the end of IQA / EQA monitoring activities; • Receive the report of the IQA / EQA monitoring activity and distribute its findings to responsible persons within the centre. 	
<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. 	
<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; • 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). 	<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 Head of Compliance and Assurance at Safety Training Awards with any findings and / or recommendations.
<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; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete regular quality assurance activities on all Tutors / Assessors using Safety Training Awards approved documentation;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a working knowledge of the requirements of the qualification; • Knowledge and understanding of the role of Tutors / Assessors and internal quality assurance procedures; • Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place; • Work with the Centre Co-ordinator to develop an internal quality assurance process and prepare sampling plans to implement the support for new and experienced Tutors / Assessors in line with the qualification assessment strategy; • Keep accurate and up-to-date records of the internal quality assurance process including standardisation activities; • Advise and standardise Tutors / Assessors on the appropriateness of assessment evidence regarding the level, validity, authenticity, reliability, consistency and sufficiency; • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Tutors / Assessors carrying assessment activities with learners and providing feedback and Interview learners; • Sample assessments to verify Tutors / Assessors' judgements, ensuring that they are impartial, consistent, fair and reliable; • Provide standardisation activities for Tutors / Assessors to ensure consistency in the assessment process, ensure that any appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary; • Report any findings to the Centre Co-ordinator and the Quality Assurance Team at Safety Training Awards.
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	<p>performed accurately and appropriately;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain records of your continual professional development (CPD). 	
Tutors and Assessors	<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 assessment strategy for the qualifications; • Deliver and assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment criteria set out by Safety Training Awards and the regulators; • Ensure that all assessment activities meet 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"> • 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; • Record and evidence all knowledge, experience and qualifications.
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate assessment evidence under the required conditions which is authenticable; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend a training course and successfully complete the assessment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.	
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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 perceived 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 perceived 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 / IQA 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 ATC
- Agreeing to fulfil the mandatory roles in more than one 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 perception 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 record.

We require all ATCs that may have a perceived or actual conflict of interest to disclose this to us by completing the 'Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form' via the ATCs Synergy account. Please refer to the Synergy resources area on our website for additional guidance on completing this form.

Failure to declare a perceived or actual conflict of interest may be deemed as a high risk to STA regulated qualifications, which can affect the risk rating that is awarded to an ATC. This may lead to additional External Quality Assurance (EQA) monitoring activities. If additional EQA monitoring is required due to the ATC being rated as high risk, the ATC is responsible for the additional EQA fees.

Failure to declare a perceived or actual conflict of interest may also be deemed as a perceived case of non-compliance of the Approved Training Centre (ATC) Agreement, in these cases sanctions may be applied to the ATC. For further information please refer to the Safety Training Awards Sanctions Policy, this is available on our website or you can request a copy by contacting us.

We would encourage all ATCs to monitor any perceived or actual conflicts of interest on an ongoing basis as and when there are any staff changes / additions to the ATC. If you are unsure of any circumstances that would be deemed as a conflict of interest, please do not hesitate to contact the allocated Centre Administrator or the Compliance Team for more information.

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 perceived 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 record. Please refer to the conflicts of interest section for further information.

Franchising within an Approved Training Centre

What is 'Franchising an ATC', this is where an ATC Centre Co-ordinator has agreed for a Tutor / Assessor to register an STA course under their ATC name but allows the Tutor / Assessor to take responsibility of the organising of the STA course and are not ensuring the ATC requirements are being adhered to.

Safety Training Awards follow a robust validation method upon application ensuring all centre personnel are suitably qualified to deliver, assess and carry out internal quality assurance monitoring activities for STA regulated qualifications. This validation process ensures the authenticity of regulated qualifications and protects the interests of learners.

Anyone who wishes to register and deliver STA regulated qualifications must apply in their own right to become an ATC or sign the relevant agreements to operate under an ATC to fulfil the mandatory roles such as Tutor, Assessor, IQA. To operate as an ATC, you may choose to allow other Tutors, Assessors and IQA's to work within your centre to deliver STA regulated qualifications. This may arise if a Tutor does not wish to become an ATC in their own right but wishes to continue delivering and assessing STA courses. In this instance the ATC Centre Co-ordinator is responsible for notifying Safety Training Awards of their centre personnel by adding them to the ATCs Synergy record, they must ensure all relevant Safety Training Awards Agreements and conflict of interest disclosure forms have been completed.

ATC Centre Co-ordinators are responsible for the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance monitoring activities and the learner journey for STA regulated qualifications. The responsibility is from organising STA courses through to quality assurance monitoring activities and data retention for the lifetime of the qualification.

Safety Training Awards do not permit franchising of ATCs, if STA courses are organised and registered within an ATC there is a responsibility to follow the requirements as stated above. Any franchising cases may be deemed as malpractice.

If a potential case of franchising is identified by Safety Training Awards we will carry out an investigation to identify if this is a case of malpractice. If it is proven that an ATC is franchising out to others, these actions are a breach of the ATC Agreement and the regulatory requirements. This is deemed as a very serious matter and would be a breach of Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration policy. Please refer to 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.

Any proven cases of breaching Safety Training Awards requirements as noted above will result in sanctions being applied to the ATC, please refer to Safety Training Awards Sanctions policy for further guidance, this is available on our website or you can request a copy by contacting us.

Third Party and Sub-Contracting Arrangements within an Approved Training Centre

A 'Third Party' arrangement is any party that provides services on behalf of the ATC. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners.

A member of centre staff may operate for the ATC on a self-employed, freelance, casual basis or may be ad hoc as and when needed to support the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance of an STA course, this arrangement would be deemed as a 'Third Party'. This definition does not include a contract of employment between an ATC and an employee.

A 'Sub-Contracting' arrangement is when an ATC sub-contracts sites / venues and / or other suitably qualified personnel to carry out a service that they feel they are not best suited and / or qualified to do. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to STA regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the marketing, advertising, recruitment or enrolment of learners.

As part of the centre approval, it is a requirement that ATCs notify Safety Training Awards of any formal agreements, third party and / or subcontracting arrangements. If a centre is in a partnership with another organisation and / or personnel, they must provide details of the roles and responsibilities for each additional partner. Please provide this information in writing via email to the ATCs allocated Centre Administrator so these agreements and any procedures may be documented within the ATCs Synergy record.

If any of the above may cause a perceived and / or actual case of a conflict of interest, then this must be disclosed to Safety Training Awards using the conflicts of interest disclosure form via the ATCs Synergy record. 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.

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 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 IQAs
- 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 IQA (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: Centres are required to allow Safety Training Awards, EQAs and Regulators access to sites, training venues / rooms including swimming pools as and when required.

It is recommended that any Tutors, Assessors or IQA's who operate within an ATC remain on the ATCs Synergy record for a minimum of 12 months due to quality assurance purposes that may take place.

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.

Data Retention Requirements

Please refer to the Safety Training Awards Data Retention Requirements for the current guidance, this is available on our website within the ATC and Synergy Resources section, or you can request a copy by contacting us.

Please note: STA course documentation and assessment evidence may be stored either in hard copy or electronically, however you choose to retain this information is down to the individual ATC.

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 (EQA) 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 IQAs 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 ATC Centre Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are consistent across all sites and all Tutors / Assessors within the centre. The EQA will want to see how this has been achieved in practice and will sample assessment decisions to ensure consistency is maintained. The EQA 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 Tutors, Assessors and IQAs 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	Centre Co-ordinator, 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	Centre Co-ordinator provides the centre staff with assessments from a unit from one learner to discuss the outcome.
Observation of a recorded activity to provide feedback	Centre Co-ordinator / 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 activity to provide feedback	Centre Co-ordinator / IQA records a training session, ATC staff 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 staff 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 and sampling plan must 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, the monitoring activities will vary between Tutor / Assessor's experience. The amount of contact will be determined from the results of a 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
- Sign off completed units not identified for sampling.

The Structure of External Quality Assurance

Safety Training Awards Moderation Procedures

Safety Training Awards carry out moderation monitoring activities on course paperwork to support our external quality assurance strategy, we identify the frequency of moderations for all ATCs using a risk based system.

These quality assurance activities ensure all centres maintain a level of consistency and high standards, it also enables Safety Training Awards to monitor that the assessment process is being carried out correctly and the IQA is completing internal quality assurance monitoring activities in line with Safety Training Awards requirements.

Newly approved centres are subject to the moderation monitoring activities on the first three courses. Once it has been established there is no risk to the delivery and assessment of the regulated qualifications and / or any risk to the learners, the new ATC may be granted Direct Claims Status (DCS).

When an ATC submits an application to deliver and assess additional qualifications, once they are approved and added to the ATCs Synergy record, the first three courses that are delivered will be subject to the moderation monitoring activities as stated above. Once it has been established there is no risk to the delivery and assessment of the regulated qualifications and / or the learners, the new ATC may be granted Direct Claims Status (DCS).

For international STA courses, moderation of paperwork will be completed for all courses until we are satisfied that there is no risk to the assessment process. As international courses are deemed as high risk, DCS may be granted where evidence shows the assessment process is being adhered to and there is no risk to the assessment process or the learners.

For more details relating to certification, please see section 'Making Claims for Certification'.

External Quality Assurance Activities and the Role of the EQA

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.

- 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 record – '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 record 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 internal 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 by the Centre Co-ordinator for additional visits or remote sampling should be directed to the Quality Assurance Team at Safety Training Awards, who will then make the decision and notify the EQA to make contact and confirm the necessary arrangements.

Please note: 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 quality assurance strategy and sampling plan, IQA records, records of standardisation meetings and feedback to Tutors / Assessors
- Review the occupational competence and qualifications including the assessment and quality assurance qualifications of the centre personnel, 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 Tutor, Assessor and IQA's records and possibly contacting learners.

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

All centres who are new to registering, delivering and assessing Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications are subject to external quality assurance monitoring activities on the first three courses. The assigned EQA may 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 activities. 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 a Sub-Contracting Arrangement in place

Centres who have any third party, sub-contracting arrangements and / or conflicts of interest in place, delivering and assessing 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 moderations, 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 Safety Training Awards and / or the assigned EQA prior to any additional EQA monitoring activities taking place.

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 Tutors, Assessors and IQAs for each programme
- Any changes to the designated Tutors, Assessors and IQA's for each programme since the last EQA visit
- CV's and authenticated copies of Tutor, 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 external quality assurance 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 Safety Training Awards 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 is 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 or 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.

Remote Desk Based EQA Monitoring Activities

An EQA and / or the 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 **must provide original paperwork**, evidence or records when the EQA, Centre Management Team and / or the Quality Assurance Team request this information for monitoring purposes. This may be scanned and sent electronically or paper copies may be posted. We would highly recommend that the ATC retains copies of all paperwork prior to submission
- If the Centre Co-ordinator wishes to send the original paperwork via post, we would highly recommend it is sent recorded delivery.

Arranging the Visit and the Visit Schedule

The EQA will confirm which courses are running, and whether there are learners registered. 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 quality assurance strategies, IQA sampling 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 record 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 strategy and sampling plan, 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);
- Tutor / Assessor allocation;
- Progress review dates, including latest action agreed;
- Records of assessments and summative decisions;
- Unit progress and completion.

For Tutors / Assessors

- Details of any changes to the assessment team since the last visit;
- Up-to-date CV's, relevant to the qualifications assessed;
- Tutor / Assessment qualification certificates or validated copies of the originals;
- Personal development plans for Tutors / Assessors showing professional updating / development on a rolling basis;
- Learner workload including assessment sites (if provision is dispersed);
- Records of monitoring Tutor / Assessor performance including feedback;
- Specimen signatures of Tutors / 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;
- Tutor / Assessor / IQA locations;
- Learner locations;
- Records of monitoring Tutor / 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 Tutor / 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 Tutors / Assessors;
- Copies of all internal quality assurance activities must be available;
- IQA strategy and IQA sampling plans;
- Internal quality assurance records for any written, structured evidence generating opportunities, assessment instruments or assignments;
- Sampling records, including feedback to Tutors / Assessors;
- Records of standardisation meetings;
- Records of monitoring assessment practice, including feedback to Tutors / 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;
- Tutors / 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 the people 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 Tutors / Assessors and IQA's to confirm that they meet the occupational competence requirements for the qualifications they are tutoring / assessing / quality assuring. These requirements are usually set out in the assessment 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 Tutors / Assessors and IQAs. Where Tutors / 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 met prior to completing a qualification and must be checked by the Centre Co-ordinator before confirmation is submitted to Safety Training Awards via STAOnline. 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).

Please note, it is the Centre Co-ordinators responsibility to ensure all learner pre-requisites are complete and this must be done prior to submitting learner results to STAOnline and / or submitting paperwork for moderation.

Results

At the end of a course the Tutor / Assessor must confirm all the pass / refer outcomes of the learner's achievement's and this must be submitted to Safety Training Awards via STAOnline within 10 working days of the assessment date.

Provided that the ATC has been granted Direct Claim Status (DCS), 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 STAOnline account to gain access to their certificate.

All replacement certificates can be downloaded via the learners STAOnline account. For a paper copy please contact Safety Training Awards Centre Management Team to request a copy, this service is subject to an administration fee.

Replacement 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 'replacement'.

Certification Claims Status and Direct Claim Status (DCS)

Safety Training Awards grant Direct Claims Status (DCS) to centres on a risk based approach. When centres have been granted DCS for approved qualifications they are responsible for claiming certificates. The Centre Co-ordinator must ensure that the assessment materials have been marked in line with Safety Training Awards qualification specifications and assessment strategies and the appropriate internal quality assurance checks are complete prior to claiming a certificate.

Where centres are responsible for claiming certification, claims will only be accepted through the accurate submission of evidence via the STAOnline system.

If a centre has not been granted DCS for approved qualifications they are responsible for submitting the course paperwork to Safety Training Awards for moderation checks prior to the certificates being released. Once we are satisfied that the assessment criteria has been achieved by the learner, certificates will be released via the STAOnline system.

Safety Training Awards reserves the right to reject a claim for certification where there is a cause for concern regarding maladministration and / or malpractice, fraudulent and / or a non-valid claim.

Fraudulent certificate claims will be escalated to the Compliance Team and an investigation will be carried out in line with the Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration policy. As part of

this process we are also required to notify other Awarding Organisations (AO) and the relevant Regulatory Authority. Certificates will not be issued if there is an ongoing investigation.

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 and the internal quality assurance activities are robust.

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 Claim 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 external quality assurance monitoring visit 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 and other Awarding Organisations.

If a centre wishes to appeal the decision to withdraw approval status they should follow Safety Training Awards appeal process, please refer to the Safety Training Awards Enquiries and Appeals policy for further guidance, this is available on our website or you can request a copy by contacting us.

Centre Approval Status Withdrawal Request

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.

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. The **ATC Centre Co-ordinator is responsible** for ensuring **learners are accepting their 'Email Invite for Learners' via STA Online** when they are accepted on to an STA course with that ATC. As part of this process the **ATC Centre Co-ordinator is responsible** for chasing the learners to complete this part of the registration process.

Learners must be registered within 48 hours of the course commencing, using the STAOnline 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 STAOnline. 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.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Safety Training Awards is committed to ensuring a fair and equal assessment for all learners. To facilitate this, centres have access to and must follow the Safety Training Awards Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations policy which details clear guidance on adjustments Safety Training Awards can implement upon application with supporting evidence from the centre.

Reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements are available to ensure all learners receive recognition of their achievement providing there is evidence that the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. These arrangements should not be used to make assessments easier for learners or give learners a head start and should not disadvantage other learners.

Reasonable Adjustments relate 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. An application may only be authorised for a learner who has a disability or need and must relate to the assessment.

For licence to practice qualifications, STA cannot alter a practical assessment. Learners must be able to competently complete all elements of the practical assessment to achieve the qualification.

All arrangements for reasonable adjustments must be approved by Safety Training Awards before being implemented by the centre. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be reviewed on an individual basis and all the evidence received will be considered.

The Safety Training Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations form is available on the ATCs Synergy home screen, please select that you are requesting a 'Reasonable Adjustment' and provide supporting evidence for your request. This should be submitted to STA via Synergy as soon as possible to prevent any delays which may disadvantage the learner(s).

Special Considerations are a post assessment adjustment to the marks of a learner's assessment paper or rearrangement of an assessment time and / or date. An example of a special consideration is if sufficient participants of the correct ability are not available for an assessment, the centre may request a special consideration to peer teach. A special consideration may be granted after an assessment has taken place if a learner may have been disadvantaged.

Special considerations should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should it mislead an employer / training provider regarding the learner's achievements for certification. The learner's results must reflect the achievement in assessment and not their potential ability.

The Safety Training Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations form is available on the ATCs Synergy home screen, please select that you are requesting a 'Special Consideration' and provide supporting evidence for your request. This should be submitted to STA via Synergy as soon as possible to prevent any delays which may disadvantage the learner(s).

The Centre Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring the centre has the required policies in place to operate as an ATC, the policies must be available for all learners upon induction of completing an STA qualification with the ATC. This will ensure the learners interests are protected at all times and that they are fully aware of the procedures that must be followed.

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	<p>Any action points will be directly related to areas that need improving or are non-compliant with the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre approval criteria Regulatory / legislative requirements Qualification requirements for the delivery of assessment.
Approval Criteria	<p>Set requirements that must be met and adhered to in order to gain and maintain approval status.</p>
ATC	<p>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.</p>
ATC Centre Co-ordinator	<p>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.</p>
Awarding Organisation (AO)	<p>An Awarding Organisation (AO) 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.</p>

Centre Personnel	Key contacts within the ATC, Centre Co-ordinator, site contact, accounts / finance contact, Tutor / Assessor and IQA.
Conflict of Interest	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<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 superseded in May 2018 by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and DPA 2018.</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>

Franchising	Franchising is where an ATC Centre Co-ordinator has agreed for a Tutor / Assessor to register an STA course under their ATC name but allows the Tutor / Assessor to take responsibility of the organising of the STA course and are not ensuring the ATC requirements are being adhered to.
GDPR	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).
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	The Lead External Quality Assurer (LEQA) seeks to ensure that assessment, internal quality assurance and external quality assurance activities have been conducted in a consistent, safe and fair manner. 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.
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.

Moderation	<p>Moderation monitoring activities are carried out on course paperwork in line with the relevant assessment criteria for that discipline. This process also includes a comparison against a moderation of course paperwork checklist to support our external quality assurance strategy.</p> <p>These quality assurance activities ensure all centres maintain a level of consistency and high standards, it also enables Safety Training Awards to monitor that the assessment process is being carried out correctly and the IQA is completing internal quality assurance monitoring activities in line with Safety Training Awards requirements.</p>
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.
Pre-approval Visit	A pre-approval visit is to ensure the appropriate validation checks have been carried out prior to approval status being granted, this process ensures the centre has achieved the approval criteria and will continue to meet the requirements set out by us.
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.
Risk Rating	A risk assessment is the combined effort of identifying and analysing potential events that may negatively impact individuals, qualifications and / or the environment; and making judgments "on the tolerability of the risk on the basis of a risk analysis" while considering influencing factors. These factors will influence the ATCs risk rating.
Risk Based Approach	A risk based approach is to identify the potential risks within the operations of the ATC. The approach you take to due diligence should reflect the level of risk that is highlighted. By identifying risks they can then be mitigated by implementing adequate policies and procedures that are proportionate to these risks. Having these adequate policies and procedures in place, provides a certain level of protection to the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications.
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.

<p>Site Details / Site Contact</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Special Considerations</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Sub-Contracting Arrangements</p>	<p>A sub-contracting arrangement is when an ATC sub-contracts sites / venues and / or other suitably qualified personnel to carry out a service that they feel they are not best suited and / or qualified to do. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to STA regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the marketing, advertising, recruitment or enrolment of learners.</p>
<p>Third Party Arrangements</p>	<p>A 'Third Party' arrangement is any party that provides services on behalf of the ATC. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. A member of centre staff may operate for the ATC on a self-employed, freelance, casual basis or may be ad hoc as and when needed to support the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance of an STA course, this arrangement would be deemed as a 'Third Party'. This definition does not include a contract of employment between an ATC and an employee.</p>
<p>Whistleblowing</p>	<p>Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual discloses information relating to a case of malpractice, maladministration or wrongdoing.</p>

Appendix I

Version Labelling and Control Procedure

What is version labelling and control?

Version labelling and control is the process by which different drafts and versions of a document are managed. It involves the naming and distinguishing between a series of draft documents which lead to a final version.

Development of new and revised documents

1. If developing a new document, begin the development using the Approved Training Centre (ATC) branding templates. This will ensure that the correct guidelines are being used for logos, fonts and headers and footers;
2. Apply a watermark showing the word 'DRAFT' which is visible on each page of the document. This is so all editors and reviewers can easily distinguish the documents status;
3. Enable the software's tracked changes functionality, which allows the recording of changes and feedback, which will assist in the development of the document if multiple people are involved;
4. Whilst in a draft state, the filename should contain the word DRAFT at the end of the description. For example, a draft document could be titled 'ATC Complaints Policy – DRAFT'.
5. It is important that draft documents are saved in an appropriate location on a secure file server. Please ensure you save it to a location whereby all people who need access have relevant permissions to do so.

Version Labelling

Once a draft document has been approved, it must then be allocated a version label, as detailed below:

Version labelling consists of four elements:

- A letter 'v' to represent the word 'version'
- Two digits to represent the year the document was created
- A decimal point
- A digit or digits which represent the number of versions of a document put live within the current year (starting from .1).

The version label must be added at the end of a document's filename. Depending on the document type, the version label is displayed differently within the document itself, detailed further on in this procedure.

An example file name, including its version label would be as follows: 'ATC Complaints Policy v19.3'

This signifies that the above titled document:

- Was created in 2019;
- Is the third version published within 2019.

Elements to be included

Below details the mandatory versioning elements which must be present on a variety of ATC documents:

General documents (usually created in Microsoft Word)

- Its version label, shown clearly within the documents filename;
- Its version label, shown clearly in the documents footer.

Policy or procedure documents (usually created in Microsoft Word)

- Its version label, shown clearly within the documents filename;
- Its version label, shown clearly in the documents footer;
- A date which the policy or procedure came into force;
- A date which the document is to be reviewed;
- A grid / table detailing information on changes within previous versions, including:
 - Version label;
 - Launch date;
 - Details of revisions made.

Version Control

Version Label	Launch Date	Details
v19.1	12 th April 2019	Complete overhaul of procedure
2018	2018	Original version

Finalising a draft document

When a draft document is ready to be finalised, the following process must be followed:

1. Document is sent to the relevant centre personnel for approval, written confirmation, usually in an email, should be obtained;
2. A 'launch date' should be discussed with all centre personnel involved and any relevant plans put in place;
3. All draft documentation and supporting information which has contributed to the finalised document should be filed electronically on the ATCs secure file server;
4. Document(s) must be checked and finalised by the relevant centre personnel, it is important to detail the 'launch date, and:
 - Check branding is correct and in-line with current ATC guidelines;
 - Allocate a version label, as detailed below;
 - Convert to PDF or locked format (which prevents the original content being altered)
 - Move the document to the appropriate place within the ATCs file server and ATCs Synergy record, re-locating any documents which the new document supersedes.

Note: Other procedures may need to be adhered to depending on the document type and intention. For example, if the 'ATC Complaints Policy' included some procedural changes these must be followed when the new policy is approved and launched.

Appendix II

SQA Accreditation Complaints Escalation Procedures

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the final response from the ATC they may submit their complaint to Safety Training Awards by following the procedures set out within the policy:

<https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/complaints-policy/>.

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint to Safety Training Awards they may refer the complaint to SQA Accreditation (Scotland). If the complaint relates to delivery by a school or public leisure centre in Scotland, the complaint could also be referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman. Please see below for the relevant contact details:

SQA Accreditation (Scotland)

SQA Accreditation, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ

Tel: 0345 213 5249

Website: [accreditation.sqa.org.uk](https://www.sqa.org.uk)

Email: accreditation@sqa.org.uk

For complaints relating to schools or public leisure centres in Scotland a complaint can be raised with the Scottish Public services Ombudsman as follows:

SPSO

Freephone advice line: 0800 377 7330

Fax: 0800 377 7331

Website: <https://www.spsos.org.uk/how-to-complain-about-public-service>

Online contact form: www.spsos.org.uk/contact-form

You can fill in our complaints form online at www.spsos.org.uk/complain/form

In Person: SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

By Post: Freepost SPSO

SQA Accreditation Appeals Escalation Procedures

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the final response from the ATC they may submit their appeal to Safety Training Awards by following the procedures set out within the policy:

<https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/enquiries-and-appeals-policy/>.

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to Safety Training Awards they may refer the appeal to SQA Accreditation (Scotland). If the complaint relates to delivery by a school or public leisure centre in Scotland, the appeal could also be referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman. Please see below for the relevant contact details:

SQA Accreditation (Scotland)

SQA Accreditation, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ

Tel: 0345 213 5249

Website: [accreditation.sqa.org.uk](https://www.sqa.org.uk)

Email: accreditation@sqa.org.uk

For complaints relating to schools or public leisure centres in Scotland a complaint can be raised with the Scottish Public services Ombudsman as follows:

SPSO

Freephone advice line: 0800 377 7330

Fax: 0800 377 7331

Website: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/how-to-complain-about-public-service>

Online contact form: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-form

You can fill in our complaints form online at www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form

In Person: SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

By Post: Freepost SPSO

Malpractice and Maladministration Procedures for all ATC assessment staff

It is important that all ATC personnel involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of STA regulated qualifications, and learners, are fully aware of the contents of the Malpractice and Maladministration policy and that the ATC has arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and/or maladministration.

Please refer to the Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, it sets out the steps the ATC, and learners or other personnel must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice and/or maladministration and our responsibilities in dealing with such incidents. It also sets out the procedural steps to be followed when reviewing any cases:

<https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/malpractice-and-maladministration-policy/>.

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

Please note: The Safety Training Awards Approved Training Centre (ATC) Manual and centre approval requirements are subject to change, dependent upon current legislation and regulatory requirements.