Inspire
Education Group

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Policy

Purpose

The Inspire Education Group (IEG) is responsible for implementing an effective quality assurance system to ensure that standards of attainment are upheld. An effective internal quality assurance system ensures:

● Valid assessments are used for each qualification
● All assessments are as accessible as possible while maintaining the standards for the qualification
● Assessments are capable of generating sufficient evidence to allow candidates to demonstrate that they have met the required standards for the qualification
● All assessors are familiar with the required standards and can apply them
● Assessors reach accurate and consistent assessment judgements for the same qualification for all candidates

IEG recognises that failure to fulfil internal quality assurance commitments could lead to the withdrawal of centre approval by the awarding organisation.

Scope

This policy applies to all students and qualifications delivered by IEG, except those provided by University Centre Peterborough where a separate policy is in place.

The Policy Statement

IEG will:

● Provide procedures to support IQA across the Group
● Ensure assessors are familiar with IQA procedures
● Include IQA procedures as part of new staff induction
● Regularly review the effectiveness of procedures in place and amend if any weaknesses are identified
● Review procedures annually to ensure they continue to reflect the IQA requirements of Awarding Bodies
● Keep up to date with IQA developments in the sector by supporting staff to attend Awarding Body and Association of Colleges training

Responsibilities

IEG will allocate responsibility to named staff for carrying out internal verification for particular units / awards. To ensure that the internal verification procedure is open, fair, and free from bias under no circumstances will an Internal Quality Assurer verify assessments which they have developed or verify their own assessment judgements.

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Where required by the awarding organisation (for example BTEC) a Lead Internal Quality Assurer will be appointed for each subject area to oversee effective internal verification systems in their subject area.

IEG is responsible for ensuring that all Internal Quality Assurers are competent in their role and that they understand and apply the Internal Quality Assurance system consistently. See Appendix 2.

IEG will provide an effective selection and training to support Internal Quality Assurers.

- Internal Quality Assurers must have the technical experience, skills and / or qualifications required by their sector
- Any training or development needs for Internal Quality Assurers will be identified and met
- Where an awarding organisation requires that Internal Quality Assurers either hold or are working toward a nationally recognised Quality Assurer qualification then IEG will support staff to gain the appropriate qualification

All members of staff involved in assessment and verification activities need to be aware of relevant health and safety, safeguarding and environmental / data protection and equal opportunities policies and how they are applied within the Group and on employer partner premises.

Quality Nominee / Quality Contact

Main contact for all awarding body queries and signing of centre agreements

Head of Faculty and Lead Internal Quality Assurer

- The Head of Faculty is responsible for the effective management of programmes and actively encourages and promotes good practice
- Ensure documentation relating to completion of a student's qualification is completed correctly, timely and meets the date issued by the Group

Internal Quality Assurer

- Carry out sampling procedures as defined in sampling plan and in line with awarding organisation requirements
- Complete awarding organisation documentation: signing interim where necessary e.g. task / assignment / brief / unit not completely signed off by the assessor
- Observe assessors giving feedback to students and give confidential feedback to the assessor where required by the awarding organisation
- Where required, if assessors are working towards TAQA, Internal Quality Assurers

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must arrange for a qualified competent assessor to check and countersign their assessments

- Discuss with students their progress and understanding of their qualification where required by the awarding organisation
- Sample students' E-portfolios: all methods of assessment e.g. observation, witness testimonies, case histories, worked products, personal statements, professional discussions
- Provide robust consistent feedback to assessors re the quality of feedback given to students, and assessment decisions made
- Initially deal with any appeals
- Where required, countersign documentation for assessors working towards their TAQA qualification
- Ensure all students are registered in line with awarding organisation requirements, clear audit trail allowing for the ten-week rule
- Ensure that documentation relating to completion of student's qualification is completed correctly, timely and meets the date issued by the Group
- Observation of all invigilators, new and current should be carried

Internal Assessors

- Occupationally competent and have relevant occupational expertise as defined by the awarding organisation
- Where required, qualified to the relevant TAQA assessor units within the first 12 months of registration as a student assessor, if they do not hold the A1 / A2 or the D32 / D33 qualifications
- Ensure they are fully conversant with awarding organisation practice and requirements
- Ensure that the students have been registered with the awarding organisation as near to the start of the programme as possible and / or clear audit trail for the ten-week rule
- Manage the assessment system, from student induction to assessment planning, feedback, assessment decisions, review, and record keeping as required by the awarding organisation
- Check and correct students' English and mathematics skills on all assessed evidence, e.g. study programmes / qualifications / apprenticeships
- Ensure the students' evidence is valid, authentic, sufficient, and current
- Provide high quality oral and written feedback on assessment decisions
- Ensure assessment decisions are correct, fair, and reliable
- Meet with their Internal Quality Assurer and participating in internal quality assurance standardisation meetings a minimum of three per calendar year

Related Documents

Appendix 1 – Related Procedures
Awarding Body Quality Assurance Guides

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Internal Quality Assurance Policy - Procedures

To ensure effective internal verification Inspire Education Group (IEG) will ensure in all subject areas that:

- An annual internal verification schedule, linked to assessment plans, will be in place
- Internal verification will take place before, during and after assessment. Before will include checking the assignment brief to ensure it is fit for purpose and allows candidates to produce sufficient evidence that they have the knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the assessment criteria
- Sampling of formative and summative assessments as well as checking the assessor has reached the right assessment decision will also check processes have been correctly followed (e.g. all appropriate forms have been signed, timely registration of students etc.)
- Accurate and detailed recording of internal verification decisions is maintained
- Where an awarding body provides a template for this purpose it shall be used. Where a template is not provided standardised documentation is provided and used by all staff
- Secure records of all internal verification activity are maintained wherever possible in digital form. Up to date and securely stored assessment records help to minimise the risk of assessment malpractice or issues related to staff absence

Internal verification is a crucial element of IEG's quality assurance. It ensures that all students entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently. Effective internal verification:

- Is an ongoing process. It allows good practice to be shared and can help identify problems at an early stage. Leaving internal verification to the end of the assessment process is poor practice and can jeopardise candidates' chances of gaining qualifications because there may not be sufficient time to carry out remediation or reassessment
- Involves planning and reviewing as well as actually carrying out verification activity
- Covers all assessors and programme activity
- Is used to enhance future assessment practice

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Standardisation builds quality through training assessors in the correct application of assessment criteria. Standardisation activities support assessors in making consistent and reliable assessment judgements against the required standards.

- Standardisation meetings must take place as a minimum once per term each academic year. The meetings will provide information, advice and guidance to all assessors and quality assurers
- IEG expectation is for standardisation meetings to happen in each curriculum department chaired by Lead Internal Quality Assurer
- Minutes of standardisation meetings must be produced. The agenda will consist of the implementation of both delivery and developmental processes following individual programme assessment strategies linked to the awarding organisation requirements and guidelines
- All Lead Internal Quality Assurers will attend a standardisation meeting held centrally by the Quality Department; this is to ensure that processes and practices are consistent and standardised across the Group

Sampling allows the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) to check that each assessor is making consistent assessment judgments, in line with the standard, for each group of students over time.

- Sampling must be conducted during the assessment process, rather than waiting until the end. This allows the IQA to review assessment judgements and identify any inconsistencies at an early stage. The IQA can then ensure that action is taken to address these issues
- To ensure efficient and effective internal verification, a risk-based approach will be used to determine the appropriate sample size for each verification activity. The following factors will be considered when determining sample size:
    o The experience of the assessor
    o The size of the group
    o Previous outcome of internal verification.
  The IQA will document the rationale behind the chosen sample size for each IV activity. This documentation should reference the identified risk factors and how they influenced the decision.
- An appropriately structured sample of assessment from all programmes, units, sites, and assessors is internally verified, to ensure programmes conform to national standards
- Sampling will highlight individual assessor needs which in turn must be used to develop the assessment team as a whole
- Secure records of all sampling will be maintained. Where the awarding organisation provides a template, this shall be used. Where a template is not provided standardised documentation is provided and used by all staff

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Process

Internal Verification of Assignment Briefs

Assignment briefs should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are fit for purpose and to make improvements based on experience of delivering and assessing them. Assignment briefs are expected to be internally verified, with any issues addressed, before being distributed to students.

The Internal Quality Assurer should check that the assignment brief:

- Has accurate unit and programme details
- Has clear deadlines for assessment
- Shows all relevant assessment criteria for the unit(s) covered in the assignment
- Indicates relevant assessment criteria targeted against each tack
- Clearly states what evidence the student needs to provide
- Is likely to generate evidence which is appropriate and sufficient
- Is set at the appropriate level
- Has a time period of appropriate duration
- Uses suitable vocational language
- Has a clear presentation format

Re-use of assignment briefs from previous academic years should be checked to ensure dates and deadlines have been updated and that the assignment is appropriate to the new groups of students.

Internal Quality Assurers should provide advice and guidance to the Assessor. If an action is identified by the Internal Quality Assurer, the Assessor should complete this and return it to the Internal Quality Assurer for authorisation prior to the assignment being issued to students.

Internal Quality Assurers should provide feedback that makes any actions clear, using SMART principles – Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon, Realistic, Time-based. Good practice should be commented on.

Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions

The Internal Quality Assurer reviews the Assessors' judgement against the learning aim, unit content, assessment criteria and assessment guidance as published in the qualification specification. Internal Quality Assurers should check:

- The student's work against the assessment criteria and judge whether it has been assessed accurately

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- The assessment criteria. This represents the national standard and all students are measured against it
- Coverage of the unit content in conjunction with the assessment guidance to ensure the Assessor has taken this into account. It is not a requirement
- Ensure all claims are accurate before claiming with the awarding organisation

Addressing Assessment Inaccuracies Identified During Internal Verification

When the internal verification process identifies inaccuracies in assessment judgements, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Communication and Review:
  The IQA will promptly communicate the identified inaccuracies to the relevant assessor(s) in a clear and constructive manner.
  The communication will detail the specific areas of concern and provide supporting evidence from the verification sample.
  The assessor(s) will be given the opportunity to review the feedback and provide a written response if necessary
- Re-assessment of Cohort:
  Based on the nature and severity of the identified inaccuracies, the assessor(s) may be required to re-assess the entire student cohort impacted by the issue
  The re-assessment will consider the feedback provided by the IQA, ensuring alignment with assessment criteria and national standards.
- Internal Verification of Re-assessed Work:
  The IQA will conduct a follow-up verification of the re-assessed work to ensure that the inaccuracies have been addressed effectively
- Documentation:
  All actions taken to address assessment inaccuracies will be documented. This documentation will include:
  - o The initial verification findings
  - o Communication with the assessor(s)
  - o Any re-assessment activities conducted
  - o The outcome of the follow-up verification
  This comprehensive approach ensures that identified inaccuracies are addressed promptly and effectively, safeguarding the integrity of the assessment process and ensuring fairness for all learners.

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Security of Information

If student e-portfolios / assignments / projects are kept at the relevant college campus, they need to be kept in a secure environment, e.g. locked cupboard / Google Classroom / OneFile and kept for a minimum of three years or as required by the Awarding Body. Access to students' assessed evidence is restricted to students, assessor, Lead / Internal Quality Assurers, Heads of Faculty, and members of the Quality Department.

- Retain documentation / records to standards required by the Awarding Body / Group
- Ensure that documentation relating to completion of students' qualification is completed correctly, timely and meets the date issued by the Group

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