

Quality Assurance Policy

Purpose and Scope

This quality assurance policy outlines our belief and commitment to ensure that ongoing quality improvement is an integral part of our organisation. Next Steps Ed will aim for continuous improvement in the quality of all aspects of its work as part of its determination to help learners achieve the highest possible standards.

- Next Steps Ed aims to be the first choice for high quality education and training within its community
- The purpose of the Quality Assurance Policy is to ensure such continuous improvement through a process of self evaluation and action planning.
- The Quality Assurance Policy and associated procedures will involve all employees and collaborative partners. The management of the process will be through the existing organisational structure. Line managers will initiate procedures within their teams and collate and agree self-assessment reports and action plans
- The quality assurance procedures will be founded in a process of regular self-evaluation by teams, internal & external audits and observations, in addition to employer and client feedback.
- The quality procedures will seek the views and perceptions of learners and other stakeholders for whom the services of Next Steps Ed exist.
- Wherever appropriate, the procedures will promote the identification of quality standards and performance indicators against which performance can be measured, evaluated and improved.

Responsibility for Implementation

- **All staff** (managers, tutors, assessors, and support staff) are responsible for the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy
- It is the **Operations Manager's** responsibility to ensure there is an annual review of the policy
- It is the responsibility of all to engage positively in that review and ensure implementation

Tutor, Assessor, and Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) Roles & Responsibilities

Tutors

- Deliver course content in line with the approved curriculum and session plans.
- Monitor and support learners' progress, offering additional help as needed.
- Provide regular feedback to learners to encourage improvement and growth.
- Document learner achievements and report any issues or concerns to the Assessor or IQA.

Assessors

- Assess learners' work against established criteria, ensuring consistency and fairness.

- Maintain accurate records of learner assessments in compliance with awarding body requirements.
- Provide constructive feedback to learners on their assessments.
- Participate in standardisation meetings to ensure consistent application of assessment criteria.
- Liaise with Tutors and the IQA to address any discrepancies or areas for improvement in learner assessments.

Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)

- Review and verify assessments conducted by Tutors and Assessors to ensure alignment with awarding body standards.
- Identify areas where Assessors may need additional support or training to maintain quality.
- Lead standardisation meetings, creating an environment for Assessors and Tutors to align on standards.
- Conduct regular observations of Assessors and Tutors to ensure high-quality delivery and assessment.
- Implement and monitor corrective actions when assessment or delivery practices do not meet the required standards.

Internal Processes

To maintain up-to-date processes in line with awarding body updates, the following strategies are implemented:

Continuous Monitoring

- A designated staff member or team (often the IQA) monitors awarding body communications, guidelines, and policy updates regularly.

Update Integration

- Upon receiving updates from the awarding body, the IQA or relevant team will assess their impact on internal processes and make any necessary adjustments to policies, assessment criteria, and quality assurance practices.
- Changes are documented and incorporated into relevant materials, including Tutor and Assessor guidelines, session plans, and schemes of work.

Internal Communication

- Updates are communicated to all staff via email announcements, followed by a mandatory staff meeting or briefing to discuss the changes in detail.
- Updated policies and guidelines are stored in an accessible, shared digital location where all staff can refer to them as needed.

Training and Support

- Training sessions are provided for Tutors, Assessors, and IQAs on any new policies, procedures, or criteria. These sessions ensure that staff fully understand the changes and their application.

Standardisation

To ensure standardisation across all teaching, assessment, and quality assurance processes, the following measures are implemented:

Regular Standardisation Meetings

- Monthly or quarterly meetings led by the IQA allow all staff to review assessment criteria, discuss potential discrepancies, and align their practices. During these sessions, anonymised samples of learner work are often reviewed collaboratively to ensure consistency.

Session Plans and Schemes of Work

- Tutors are provided with pre-designed session plans, schemes of work, and course materials. These resources are developed with input from experienced staff and reflect the required learning outcomes and assessment standards, ensuring consistent delivery across different classes and Tutors.

New Staff Shadowing

- New Tutors, Assessors, and IQAs are paired with experienced team members to shadow them. This enables new staff to observe best practices and learn the expected standards of delivery and assessment.

Documented Criteria and Resources

- All Tutors, Assessors, and IQAs have access to a comprehensive set of documentation outlining assessment criteria, grading standards, and delivery expectations. These resources are updated regularly and are used as references to ensure consistency.

Peer Observations and Audits

- Periodic peer observations of lessons and assessment activities are conducted to ensure all staff maintain the same standards. Following each observation, feedback is provided to staff, and corrective actions are implemented if necessary.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

- Staff are encouraged to participate in CPD activities, including workshops, webinars, and courses that reinforce best practices in teaching and assessment. CPD records are reviewed annually to ensure all staff maintain competency.

Focus of Quality Assurance

Curriculum

- To encourage continuous improvement in the quality of all teaching and learning programmes, thereby making learning an enjoyable activity and through this, increasing learner retention and the achievement of individual learning aims
- To develop and sustain a diverse range of programmes which provide opportunities for progression and which provide learners with experiences and wherever appropriate, qualifications suited to their learning aims

- To ensure rigorous, standardised and consistent assessment procedures, which meet the standards of external validating agencies.
- To provide information which supports strategic planning for Next Steps Eds' business development
- To monitor and evaluate the procedure for advising, interviewing and counselling learners at entry and throughout their time at Next Steps Ed's Training
- To establish standards and monitoring procedures for providing a supportive and accessible range of services to all learners

Staff

- To review regularly the performance, training and developmental needs of all employees through the operation of Next Steps Eds' annual review and appraisal scheme
- Through the Continuing Professional Development Plan, to offer training and development to individuals from Induction and throughout their employment
- To monitor and evaluate performance and developmental needs through three internal observations a year.
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the training and development against Next Steps Ed's strategic goals.

Learners

- All learners at Induction will be made aware of the quality standards at Next Steps Ed CIC
- All learner feedback including comments in the suggestion box, review meetings and exit questionnaires will be analysed and acted upon
- All learners performance in the workplace will be monitored and evaluated
- All learners' files will be continuously and rigorously assessed for quality

Employers

- All employers will be made aware of the quality standards of BNext Steps Ed CIC
- All employers will be assessed for safeguarding procedures
- All employers will be monitored and evaluated on the quality of placement offered

Procedure

- The process of quality control requires all staff to meet on a regular basis to review their work, set standards and monitor learner perceptions and achievements.
- Quality control will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate performance indicators
- Statistical analysis will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate performance indicators
- Reviews will be supported by analysis of learner, employees and stakeholder views and perception, gathered via questionnaires, surveys and review meetings

The outcome of these processes will provide information:

- To inform the process of Next Steps Eds' self assessment and development planning
- To action plan for improvement at Next Steps Ed's team level

- To highlight issues that needs consideration by Next Steps Ed's
- That supports Next Steps Ed's business and strategic planning cycle
- That supports Next Steps Ed's contract compliance to an exemplary standard

Feedback on actions resulting from this quality review process will be communicated to employees via regular team and/or individual meetings. The outcomes and action plans which result from the process will form the basis of the annual Next Steps Ed's Self Assessment Report.

Internal Quality Assurance Strategy

Next Steps Ed CIC commits to providing an accurate representation spread of sampling. A minimum of 50% of assessments will be sampled. This percentage may increase for newly approved qualifications and new assessors for quality control purposes. When the programme is delivered for the first time, 100% sampling will be undertaken.

The sample includes:

- Monitoring at interim and summative stages or post certification
- All centre marked assessment components
- All assessment methods
- A representative spread across registered candidates
- Decisions from all Assessors, and all assessments sites

The candidate registration lists are to be used to pre-plan the internal quality assurance samples of each marked assessment component of the qualification, and will indicate which candidate's work will be selected for internal quality assurance checks.

Policy Review Date: 10th December 2025

Policy Approved By: Mica Smith - Director