

Quality Assurance Framework and Standards Policy

1. The aim of our quality system is to ensure that:

- We comply with legal and statutory requirements
- We routinely assess the needs of interested parties in our business, i.e. all stakeholders including staff, learners, employers, funders, Ofsted and awarding organisations
- We meet our contractual requirements with funding bodies and contractors
- We meet our regulatory requirements with qualification awarding organisations
- We identify and deliver a quality service to maintain excellent relationships with our learners/apprentices and employers
- All work is carried out consistently to a defined standard that is measured through our quality objectives
- We have the skills and resources to fulfil our customer requirements
- All activities support the strategic plans of the business
- We strive to continuously improve our systems and procedures
- We only use services that meet our own quality standards
- Any complaints are dealt with efficiently and within an acceptable time period

Key learning processes will be internally quality assured by observation, feedback, verification, documentation completion using performance data. Alt Valley Community Trust will retain documented information to have confidence that the quality system is effective.

AVCT are committed to ensuring all government and good practice information is utilised fully and forms the basis of our quality improvement requirements.

The Ofsted Further Education and Skills Handbook can be accessed here:
[Further education and skills handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Key Performance Indicators

Quality objectives are based on the main risks to the business including measure and set a baseline for stakeholder satisfaction using the following information.

- Recruitment data
- Retention data
- Success rates
- Qualification Achievement rates

- Learner/apprentice satisfaction results
- Employer satisfaction results
- Learner/apprentice attendance
- Observation of performance in teaching. Interviews and initial assessment. Learner reviews and tutorials
- Awarding body external moderation. ESFA audits. OFSTED inspections

An audit timetable in partnership with The Quality Calendar is in place to monitor the implementation of the quality system. This will also include a review of the procedures to ensure these meet the requirements of learners/apprentices, staff and employers as well as other stakeholders. This quality assurance policy and framework has been authorised by, Alma Mason-Chair of the Education Board and AVCT Board of Trustees and will be reviewed at least annually. Our commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for our learners/apprentices as well as AVCTs commitment to continuous improvement starts with our robust Safer Recruitment practice and our well-planned staff induction to ensure that we recruit the appropriate qualified and experienced members of the team. Also ensuring a well-planned induction for both staff and learners/apprentices ensures that all are aware of expectations and meet the criteria of the vacancy/ qualification.

2. The Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

It is AVCTs objective to obtain an accurate, objective judgment on the quality of training and assessment delivered to learners/apprentices.

Each member of staff who has responsibility for delivering or supporting lessons must be observed at least every 6 months (12- 14 weeks) by the IQA or Education Manager using the observation of teaching, learning and assessment (OTLA) form. This outlines both key strengths and up to three areas of development that are recorded on the OTLA analysis document. This also includes an action plan for each member of staff which identifies targets for improvement. All information recorded is used to inform CPD needs and help to set Appraisals targets for individual staff as well as inform team and individual CPD.

If there are concerns with the quality of the observation and findings then the observer completes the action plan and discusses the need to return sooner than the 'usual' window. This will be dependent on findings as well as those areas identified within Requires Improvement, or Inadequate. If there are areas identified as 'Inadequate' then it is expected that the observer will be observed more frequently than quarterly as per the policy until they reach the expected standard. Failure to reach the standard when professional development and coaching support is implemented will lead to termination of contract.

Procedure

Employees will be informed prior to the observation by email. This can be as little as 24 hours in advance. This notification will inform them of the window of observation and guide them towards appropriate documentation to support their preparations. The observer will require diary information in order to plan effectively.

The yearly schedule of observations will be prepared by Lesley Baugh, Education Manager with support from the Education Board but not made available to the employees prior to the formal notification window.

The Observation

Observers will respect the professionalism of employee and resulting feedback will be handled in a way which maintains confidentiality between the Observer, Employee and their Manager.

- Probationary employees will receive a developmental observation within the first eight weeks
- Observers will be asked to hold pre-observation meetings with employees if required
- Those graded as inadequate will be required to complete training as outlined on the observation action report and will be re-observed following this support
- The training assessment session will be observed for a period of at least 45 minutes and no more than one hour
- The observer will use the standard documentation as agreed and indicate strengths and areas for development according to Ofsted standards, ensuring Assessors/Coaches/Tutors consistently achieve at least 'Good' with outstanding qualities
- The observer will, if possible, give verbal feedback immediately after the observation. To allow for quality procedures, written feedback will be provided within 14 working days of the observation. Employees who would require an individual meeting for the purposes of more detailed feedback can contact their observer to arrange this. The observer and employee will agree on the focus of identified CPD
- Recommended training via the observation action report will be organised by the Education Manager in partnership with Head of Education regarding financial implications- annual budgets outline financial support for all CPD opportunity

Appeals – Grounds for appeals may be (i) conduct of the observation or (ii) dispute over identified areas for development.

In either case, the employee should appeal in writing to Lesley Baugh- Head of Education. If the appeal is upheld in the case of a dispute over a grade, a re-observation can be arranged through Danielle Forman, Assistant Executive Director. Please see Complaints policy for further details.

Observations also take place regarding all aspects of the learning journey including apprentice sign up, initial assessment, induction, learner/apprentice reviews to ensure high standards of delivery throughout each learner journey.

Quality Assurance of the process

Moderation will be planned to ensure that all observers are moderated each year. Moderators will use the standard report and may observe any part of the observation process. The IQA will conduct a moderation of a sample of lesson observation reports following the observation periods. Written feedback will be provided to observers.

The Head of Education will receive a summary report of the observation grades and feedback with will inform the SAR/QIP.

3. Learning Walks (for classroom-based activity)

IQA's will conduct learning walks in order to gauge the quality of delivery at that particular time. However that is not an indication that the Tutor/ Assessor is effective all of the time, just a snapshot of the quality of teaching and learning. This is why it is important to monitor this regularly. Learning Walks can be themed and matched to staff meetings and staff training that may have taken place. Findings are recorded on the observation form, and again, used to develop practice and our commitment to continuous quality improvement.

4. Work Scrutiny (for classroom-based activity)

IQAs/ Managers collect a selection of learner/apprentices work for examination. The selection should represent a range of abilities and all subjects delivered. The IQA/ Manager then completes the documentation to record findings. These findings will highlight good practice and inform any training needs.

All good practice is celebrated and shared to ensure those staff with 'outstanding' grades, support other colleagues.

5. Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

The Education Manager & Education Board will demonstrate full commitment through annual self-assessment and will support the use of the key learning processes and ensure the quality system is accessible to all staff and achieve the intended results of the business.

On an annual basis, the full delivery team for each contract completes a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) based on the above evidence and any external evidence sources. The SAR is crucial in identifying strengths and areas of development which should be backed-up with clear and explicit evidence. This should be reviewed regularly to inform progress and impact of each education contract. These areas of development then inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which is completed annually and also reviewed regularly. The SAR and QIP review are discussed at each Progress meeting and after annual completion should be sent to the Head of Education for validation.

See Communication Strategy for details of scheduled meetings.

6. Staff CPD

AVCT believes that staff development and learning should be an integral part of the organisation's strategic planning so that staff can perform their individual jobs effectively and, in doing so, ensure that the organisation achieves its objectives.

The central aim is therefore to provide an environment where continuous development can take place and where staff are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands and priorities of AVCT and learners/apprentices.

To achieve this aim, learning and development needs will be regularly reviewed and staff will be encouraged to play an active part in identifying their own learning needs, selecting appropriate learning methods and in assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of their learning.

Options for learning and development may include:

- On the job learning and learning from others in the organisation
- Internal workshops and learning for groups or teams
- Self-paced learning and reflective journaling, videos
- Off-job courses run by AVCT or other providers
- Secondments and placements/visits to other organisations
- Mentoring including support from a suitably qualified external Consultant

A selection of staff from all services within the organisation will attend compulsory staff training which will include annual updated training of Safeguarding, Prevent, Mental Health Awareness, FGM, Online Safety learning, Equality and Diversity, IAG, Health and Safety. It is at this time when policy and procedure is renewed annually, that appropriate team members will be involved in review and implementation under our continuous improvement cycle. These set days will also be used to upskill and develop staff and share good practice as needs are identified in supervision, team meetings and appraisals. There is also an opportunity for the SAR and QIP review so that all staff are aware of our key priorities for improvement and play their part in achieving these.

Learning & Development Process & Induction

An induction programme helps new staff to familiarise themselves with the organisation, get to know others and to become more quickly at ease in a new work environment.

All new staff will take part in an induction programme including an introduction to AVCT and probationary review policy and procedure will underpin key planning and development to ensure that they are able to be effective within their role.

Coaching in immediate work processes and tasks and for inducting new staff into the organisation will be the responsibility of the Education Manager

The new staff would be supported under the probationary review framework.

Please see Professional Development of Employees Policy for further detail.

Identifying & Assessing Learning Needs

AVCT believes that this should be an ongoing process for all staff. Individual staff learning needs will be identified during regular 1-2-1 sessions/ supervisions (see Supervision agreement) and an annual appraisals which is reviewed regularly during supervision to ensure key objectives and targets are met. Collective learning needs may be identified within staff groups or teams and discussed.

The Education Manager will ensure that the learning needs of the staff are reviewed annually.

Learning Review & Reports

The Education Manager will have responsibility for analysing the effectiveness of AVCTs staff development programmes.

Annual Learning Plan & Budget

The development of an annual learning plan will include areas of learning development specified in AVCT time off for learning, reimbursement of travel costs and payment of membership fees will be at the discretion of the Executive Team, including; Phil Knibb, Danielle Forman, Scott Blundell and Danny Brownbill. A final programme of learning will be agreed at the beginning of the financial year, when funding has been secured and learning budgets can be realistically assessed. The programme may be amended or added to during the year, to take account of new priorities, or in response to newly identified learning needs.

Learning Requests

All learning requests will be considered sympathetically. However, the availability of learning resources will depend on factors such as budgetary constraints, work commitments and learning priorities necessary to fulfil the organisation's objectives.

A further budgetary consideration will be the extent to which skills acquired through learning can be applied within the organisation, within a reasonable time period. Individual staff members may be interested in obtaining accreditation or a nationally recognised qualification. AVCT will be sympathetic to requests of this sort, where the learning has a demonstrable relevance to AVCTs objectives, and in co-operation with the staff member will seek to provide appropriate support and assistance.

7. Learner Recruitment

This process should include initial Information Advice and Guidance which should enable potential learners/apprentices to make an initial decision as to the suitability of a programme. The aim of recruitment is to enable AVCT to make an initial decision as to the suitability of the potential learner to undertake an appropriate education programme.

This process has two elements:

- Information gathering
- Initial interview

The purpose of the initial interview is to:

- Provide the learner/apprentice with information to enable them to make an informed judgement about the suitability of a programme
- Identify whether a potential learner has sufficient interest and motivation to complete the programme.

Arrangements for Learners with Special Assessment Requirements

The assessment must be available to all those who have the potential to achieve the standards required for a qualification. However, some learners/apprentices may need access to alternative means of providing evidence and/or additional support. Care needs to be taken that any proposed assessment methods are of equal quality and rigour to standard assessments to demonstrate that the learner/apprentice has achieved the required standard. The assessment must be inclusive and must meet the needs of all learners/apprentice as outlined by the Equality Act (2010).

Learners/apprentices may need appropriate support in their development to help them meet the required standards, such as:

- Support with communication and number skills
- Adapted equipment and/or physical environment
- Special information technology
- Soft skill development
- Social aspects away from the centre

8. Learner and apprentice initial assessment and induction

AVCT ensures that the learning programmes offered to learners/apprentices, are appropriate to their needs and their capability to meet the requirements of the programmes in question.

To ensure that AVCT are placing the right learners/apprentices on the right programmes, i.e. ones that meet the learners/apprentices needs and add value to the organisations they work for, it is vital that each element of the process is carried out effectively.

IAG and initial educational assessment is the minimum requirement during either the referral process or the first week of the programme. This will determine whether the learner/apprentice is on the appropriate path of learning prior to registration.

The Education Manager has overall responsibility for this process and will evaluate it on an annual basis (or sooner if this is deemed appropriate):

- The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation procedures
- Changes to other policies and procedures
- The extent to which the arrangements referred to in this policy are being robustly adhered to

The Education Manager is responsible for ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities, in relation to recruitment, selection, diagnostics and induction.

AVCT believes that all learners/apprentices should benefit from an induction that:

- Enables them to confirm that their chosen learning is appropriate for their needs
- Signposts or refers them to other opportunities where appropriate
- Prepares them to gain maximum benefit from their chosen learning
- Sets out what they can expect from their course and from AVCTs services
- Provides them with information relevant to our/their programme of study, their support needs and possible progression opportunities

The induction process should be conducted over several sessions, which in many cases will mean that it happens over several weeks. This means that learners/apprentices may be engaged in learning before all elements of induction have been completed.

The purpose of the induction is to ensure that learners/apprentices have all necessary information to enable them to complete their programmes safely and successfully. The content of inductions may vary depending on the structure and content of programmes. The induction process must include as a minimum:

- Programme content, delivery and assessment arrangements
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety including Safeguarding, Prevent and Welfare
- Commitment to British Values
- Appeals process
- Expectations of behaviour and commitment to study

Selection and diagnostics

These activities will be integrated with recruitment and induction activities. The purpose of these activities is to determine what learning support needs learners/apprentices may have, and to tailor training programmes to learners/apprentices needs. In some instances, this may determine that a level of a programme is inappropriate for them.

Depending on the programme learners/apprentices are to undertake, they will participate in one or more of the following:

- Initial and diagnostic assessments
- Analysis of previous qualifications cross-referenced to Individual Learner Records
- Learner/employer training needs analysis to identify any existing knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to the programme they are to follow
- Learning styles assessment

During the administration of these assessments, staff will be instructed to monitor for signs of learning difficulties, which the learner/apprentice may not have declared. If the staff involved has reason to believe that a learner/apprentice has any difficulties, they should be highlighted to, Lesley Baugh, Safeguard/Prevent Lead to agree on an appropriate course of action.

The learner/apprentice will be given constructive and sensitive feedback on the outcomes of these diagnostic exercises. And offered professional advice and guidance if they are not suitable for the programme they are applying for.

Where additional support needs are identified, the outcome of these diagnostic exercises should be communicated to the appropriate member of support staff, to arrange additional support where appropriate, or referral to a specialist service if required.

Please see our separate Initial Assessment process for apprentices for further details.

Curriculum design

Staff training apprentices to standards need to:

- Understand the requirements of the standard
- Be fully cognisant of the requirements of the assessment plan
- Ensure that apprentices develop and exemplify the required behaviours
- Be subject experts
- Have high levels of technical expertise
- Be able to distinguish between levels of performance
- Give and record detailed feedback to show progress over time

Curriculum design should be in partnership with employers to ensure that not only is the standard Assessment Plan achieved, but also that the apprenticeship journey i.e. individual Delivery Plans reflects the Job Description, knowledge, skills and behaviours analysis within initial assessment and review, and is bespoke to the particular apprentice and employer need.

Off the job training (Please see our separate Off the Job process for further details)

Ofsted Inspectors will consider how well apprenticeships are planned and fully meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. This is absolutely about doing a full and

proper skills analysis as the apprentice starts their apprenticeship. Be really clear, and record, what the apprentice can do and what they know already. Develop a structured learning and training plan which includes Off-the-Job training with milestones and way markers to the EPA, then measure progress from there.

The main focus should be the standard and the requirements of an apprenticeship – laid down in the funding rules. The employer needs to be aware of the parameters for a ‘quality apprenticeship’: IfA, ESFA, DfE and Ofsted.

The employer may want additional learning that reflects ‘their business’ more fully than the standard. The employer needs to recognise that an apprenticeship is a job with training – if they can’t provide the training, or the time – then it’s not an apprenticeship. This includes the commitment to Off-the-Job training.

9. Internal Verification and Sampling

The IQA system seeks to ensure all assessment is fair, consistent and meets AVCTs and Awarding Organisation requirements.

This policy has been designed to promote quality, consistency and fairness throughout the assessment and internal verification activities. It aims to ensure that standards of assessment are maintained over time.

This document is applicable to everybody involved in assessment administration, management, verification and moderation of any AVCT qualifications.

Any activity related to AVCT within delivery and or assessment site is also obliged to abide by this policy.

The IQA will be responsible for establishing the Verification/Sampling strategy sampling plan and subsequent implementation. As a standard, the range of portfolios to be sampled will be consistent with the recommendation of the awarding bodies/organisations during EQA. If any quality issues are raised, the percentage sample and frequency of IQA visits will be increased at the discretion of the designated IQA. An appropriate development plan will be agreed between the Tutor/ Assessor and the IQA

Verification Aim

The IQA Verification aim is to ensure effective management of assessment and verification processes, effective support for assessment and verification personnel, and to quality assure the outcomes of assessment in-line with AVCT and Awarding Organisation requirements

Verification Objectives

IQA objectives propose to:

- operate from established verification policy and procedures that are reviewed where required in-line with the centres' quality control arrangements
- ensure an effective induction is provided for all members of the assessment and verification teams, as required
- ensure effective appraisal and continued professional development for all members of the assessment and verification teams
- ensure that the assessment and verification teams understand and follow all the centre policies and procedures
- ensure that equality and diversity is embedded throughout the verification and assessment activities
- ensure quality via accurate and effective assessment of all learners/apprentices
- monitor and ensure consistency of assessment outcomes via appropriate interpretation of awarding organisation criteria
- review and evaluate the quality and consistency of assessment at different stages of the assessment process
- maintain accurate and current records of verification and moderation
- standardise all components of the assessment where appropriate
- Carry out continuous improvement activities to ensure all corrective actions best practice guidelines requested by the external verifier/ AVCT IQA

This will be carried out for all programmes. IQAs will record these quality assurance checks on the IQA report. The IQA will use their judgement to decide on the sample size in accordance with the sampling plan.

There are a number of Quality Assurance tools used by managers in order to evidence the standard of delivery under the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). This is to ensure our commitment to continuous quality improvement and give the best possible learner experience and outcomes for our learners.

When Sampling factors to be considered include:

- Tutor/ Assessors- Assessment and delivery experience, competence, current and working towards qualifications, current workload and occupational experience and competence
- Methods of assessment- questioning, observation, witness testimony, product evidence, assignments, projects and tests, external testing, guided discussion and professional discussion and portfolios
- Records- Reports from Tutor/ Assessors, correct assessment practices, IQA records, learner portfolios, meeting notes and EQA reports/actions
- Internal Quality Assurance Planning
- Standardised assessment practice
- Health and safety practice, safeguarding, equality & diversity and prevent strategy

- Additional support of new employed and associate qualified and trainee Tutor/ Assessors
- Standardisation activities across all Tutor/ Assessors and IQA's within each qualification
- Each IQA must use AVCTs IQA procedures and associated recording systems which are reviewed regularly to determine the impact

This plan is developed and monitored by Head of Education and Education Manager as well as the IQA team to ensure that the verification process is standardised throughout the company:

- Each IQA creates their own sampling plan and is responsible for working to the agreed sampling plan
- The IQA is reminded the activities must be carried out throughout the period of assessment. Under no circumstances can sampling only take place towards, or at the end of learner/apprentice assessment. It is expected that first sampling is planned within the 1st 3 months of learning. Findings will be included in the process for risk banding and grading
- For a full qualification, a single unit or units will be identified by the IQA to sample across all Tutor/ Assessors. This will form part of the internal verification process.
- For trainee Tutor/ Assessors or qualified Tutor/ Assessors that are new to AVCT. Minimum sampling expected is one mandatory unit and one optional unit at different points in each learning period of assessment. The IQA must identify on their sampling plan how many units per qualification they are sampling for each Tutor/ Assessor

The IQA will also need to focus on all additional areas of IQA responsibility.

This includes:

- Monitoring all practice
- Monitor all teaching and learning and controlled by observation
- Monitoring learner evidence

Based on the findings of the above the IQA may amend the sampling proportion, Where it is necessary to vary from the sampling plan, the reasons should be recorded and the variations clearly added to the sampling plan.

Newly employed personnel:

- Each unit assessed by trainee Tutor/ Assessor is overseen and countersigned by a qualified Tutor/ Assessor, including feedback to trainee Tutor/ Assessor
- The qualified Tutor/ Assessor supporting the trainee Tutor/ Assessor judgements, must confirm and agree all the relevant units

The IQA must complete all relevant IQA records timely and in line with AVCT processes and procedures throughout the assessment process for all their Tutor/ Assessors.

Internal Quality Assurers Competencies

All those who quality assures qualifications internally must have up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in assessment and quality assurance
And show current evidence of continuing professional development in assessment and quality assurance in the relevant areas

IQA Induction

The Education Manager will ensure that IQA's have access to all relevant information and resources and understands the processes & procedures and recording requirements.

Standardisation

It is important to standardise Tutor/ Assessor judgements in order to ensure that each Tutor/ Assessor consistently makes valid decisions and that all learners/apprentices are assessed fairly. Standardisation sessions will be carried out at least once per quarter unless there are significant changes within the sector or following significant feedback from EQA visits. The IQA will be responsible for planning standardisation meetings and will follow a standard agenda. Tutor/ Assessors are expected to participate. Topics regularly covered in this session include:

- Improvement Plan relevant actions
- Qualification achievement rates
- Results and analysis of observations of assessment, reviews and teaching and learning
- Strategic and sector developments
- Discussion of new qualifications and evidence requirements
- Problem units – where it has been identified that a number of candidates are having problems understanding the criteria or gaining advice
- Tutor/ Assessors may be asked to share experiences of dealing with alternative forms of evidence regarding additional needs
- Discussion on hot topics/British Values, Functional Skills and embedding this information into curriculum
- Internal quality assurers discuss sampling requirements and problems encountered with monitoring observation
- EQA visits and feedback from awarding bodies/organisations

The effective implementation of this strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the IQA standardisation meetings.

10. Evaluation

- A 'learner voice' approach is implemented to obtain feedback from learners/apprentices at observation and through feedback forms (paper-based/electronically)
- An 'employer voice' (where appropriate i.e. apprenticeship provision) is implemented to obtain feedback from employers at observation and feedback forms (paper-based /electronically) collated and analysed to inform and improve practice
- Staff surveys will be taken formally and informally, including at communication days, appraisals and self-assessment

Feedback results will be analysed by the Education Manager and Education Board. The results will be shared and action agreed at team meetings and standardisation meetings attended by IQAs and other staff. All feedback will be analysed and the results fed into the business action plan and self-assessment report. Complaints will be dealt with promptly, logged on the non-conformance log and reported as per communications received. The appeals process for assessment decisions and customer communications general. Please see Complaints Policy for further detail.

11. Managing Quality

The Education Manager will ensure that assessment/training resources, including personnel, are effectively managed and planned. The IQA's provide a link between the awarding body, QCA and other regulatory bodies, and provide an overarching quality assurance role for the company.

12. Malpractice

If malpractice is identified at any stage the person identifying this must report their findings to Lesley Baugh-Education Manager will investigate and record their findings. If required they will then inform the appropriate Awarding Bodies/Organisation.

13. EPA

The employer will be responsible for identifying the End Point Assessment Organisation at the start of each apprenticeship. The Employer will be responsible for identifying when the apprentice has met the Assessment Plan and shows competence in all aspects of the apprenticeship i.e. this is at Gateway. At Gateway when the employer has identified that the apprentice is competent (good practice should ensure the apprentice and provider are in agreement) then the End Point Assessment will be booked.

End-point assessment checklist

Does your apprentice understand what their EPA will consist of?

Has the apprentice displayed understanding in the criteria laid out in the standard Assessment Plan?

Has the apprentice completed a range of assessments covering different aspects of their course?

Does the apprentice have clear evidence of their learning journey?

If the EPA involves a portfolio showcase, has the apprentice prepared a suitable amount of evidence to present?

Has the apprentice completed mock tests in preparation for the gateway?

Have you discussed the apprentice's progress with their employer?

Does AVCT, employer and apprentice agree they're ready to take the EPA?

Have you booked or reserved the end-point assessment with a registered apprenticeship assessment organisation (RAAO)?

Related Policies and processes

Complaints Policy

Performance Management Policy

Initial Assessment process

Professional Development of Employees Policy

Delivery of Maths and English process

Off the Job process for apprenticeships.