



# **External Quality Assurance Arrangements**

**Version 2**

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## 1 External Quality Assurance Roles and Responsibilities

External Quality Assurers (EQA) is an integral part of our quality assurance arrangements. They are a key mechanism in the establishment and monitoring of recognised centre status facilitating compliance with statutory regulation, our quality standards and the expectations of our qualification partners.

EQA's are required to visit centres and conduct interventions (desk based/ actual visit) to monitor and report recognised centre compliance against the 1st4sport Centre Recognition Conditions and the Qualification Conditions (developed in accordance with our quality standards and appropriate legislation). 1st4sport have a number of External Quality Assurance roles and responsibilities in place to ensure compliance is effectively maintained and that risk is managed.

Role	Responsibilities
Senior External Quality Assurer (SEQA)	<p>Is allocated to a centre within their region upon completion of the recognition and approval process and will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conduct recognition and approval visits upon the request from the 1st4sport Compliance and Risk Team</li> <li>act as the main point of contact for centres within their region, providing support, advice and guidance.</li> </ul>
External Quality Assurer (EQA)	<p>Will be assigned to conduct interventions within their region that they are qualified to quality assure, they will also have knowledge and understanding of the current qualification legislation<sup>1</sup>. They will also be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conduct Initial Certification of Assessment (ICA) and review of course interventions.</li> <li>follow the Centre Management Strategy (<i>risk-based approach</i>) for the number of visits required to be conducted at a centre.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Probationary External Quality Assurer (PEQA)	<p>Is responsible for successfully completing the recruitment &amp; selection activities and attending one shadow visit with a Senior External Quality Assurer prior to being recruited as an EQA.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The recognised centre may receive visits from a number of external quality assurers within their region as the criteria for qualifications may be different and require technical expertise.

<sup>2</sup> EQA's may be requested to conduct interventions more frequently at the request of the 1st4sport Compliance and Risk Team as a result of the risk-based approach.

## 2 1st4sport Quality Assurance Aim

Our quality assurance aim is to ensure External Quality Assurers are effectively trained and deployed to manage and monitor recognised centres activity against the 1st4sport Centre Recognition Conditions and Qualification Conditions, which are developed to encompass appropriate statutory regulation and partner expectations.

To achieve our qualification assurance aim we have explicit recruitment, training and performance management procedures in place to ensure standards are maintained. In deploying our EQA's we expect that they comply with our established *External Quality Assurance Code of Conduct*.

### 2.1 External Quality Assurers Responsibility to Recognised Centres:

External Quality Assurers are required to undertake the following activities to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to recognised centres. These are:

- The provision of information and advice related to our quality standards and established procedures, regulator and partner expectations.
- The provision of advice on our recognised centre requirements, achieving and maintaining recognition and approval status.
- Conducting advisory visits to recognised centres providing information across the scope of our awarding function.
- Monitoring the centre performance via the conduct of visits and desk-based interventions in accordance with our Quality Assurance Arrangements to ensure that their consistency of the assessments and quality assurance activities are in place.
- Agreeing an appropriate visit or review date with the relevant centre's personnel giving at least 10 days' notice of the EQA's attendance, along with sending a visit planner to confirm the intervention as part of the routine<sup>3</sup> EQA process.
- Conducting unannounced spot checks where a recognised centre will not be given notice of an EQA intervention (*at the request of the 1st4sport Compliance and Risk Team*).
- Commending centres on areas of best practice and/or areas where improvements could be used.
- Continuous review of allocated centres recognition and approval statuses ensuring corrective actions are addresses via Athena.
- The provision of advice on the interpretation of qualification- specification criteria, links to national occupational standards and key or functional skills (where required).
- Establishing centre action plans via Athena ensuring a clear rationale with appropriate justification to address noncompliance and to treat risk.

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<sup>3</sup> Centres should note that 1st4sport reserve the right to conduct unannounced spot check visits in line with a centre's risk profile.

## **2.2 External Quality Assurance Responsibility to 1st4sport**

External Quality Assurers are required to undertake specific activities to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to 1st4sport. These are:

- Maintenance of their personal user profile on Athena, ensuring all certificates and CPD information is uploaded, that demonstrates knowledge and skills for the qualifications they are quality assuring.
- Maintaining occupational competence and undertaking continued professional development activities to fulfil the quality assurance role.
- Attend the standardisation events run by 1st4sport and contribute by sharing good practice and where improvements are required.
- Reporting accurately on recognised centre compliance against our 1st4sport Centre Recognised Conditions and Qualification Conditions, establishing action plans and making recommendations where required.
- Reporting on allocated centre recognition and approval statuses effectively managing compliance with corrective actions via Athena to ensure compliance and reduce risk.
- Monitoring reasonable adjustment and special consideration outcomes granted via Athena to ensure equality and quality standards are maintained.
- The conduct of investigations (where required) in line with 1st4sport procedures, the regulator and partner expectation and under the instructions of 1st4sport Compliance and Risk Team.

### 3 External Quality Assurance Code of Conduct

In establishing our deployment arrangements, we expect our EQA's to comply with the stated Code of Conduct, to reduce any risk of unethical or unlawful behaviour, direct or indirect, and/or personal or financial interest. We expect certain standards of behaviour at all times in the workplace and while conducting business on our behalf. The professional manner in which our EQA's are required to conduct themselves are:

- Conduct assurance activities in line with 1st4sport recognition and approval conditions, regulatory framework, regulation and legislation.
- Provide assurance activity outcomes on evidence seen.
- Have no connection with stakeholders (centres and/or learners) which could undermine their objectivity.
- Provide honest and clear feedback to centres.
- Carry out all work with integrity, treating 1st4sport customers with courtesy, respect and sensitivity.
- Act in the best interest and well-being of all stakeholders and service users.
- Respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals, organisations and their work.
- Take prompt and appropriate action on any equality, safeguarding, data protection, health and safety or other relevant issues.
- Communicate any conflict of interest with 1st4sport

## 4 1st4sport Quality Assurance Objectives

External Quality Assurers manage and monitor recognised centre activity via the conduct of visits or desk-based interventions, reporting on compliance with our requirements and qualification condition criteria. The number of interventions at a centre follows a risk-based approach developed in accordance with The Centre Management Strategy.

The quality assurance objectives support a risk-based approach to monitoring. Therefore, if a recognised centre complies fully with our requirements, less monitoring may be completed. If, however a centre does not comply with our conditions further EQA interventions may be required which are chargeable.

Quality Assurance Activities	
Quality Assurance of Recognition Status	<p>Centre status is only granted following a Centre Recognition and Approval visit by a Senior External Quality Assurer (SEQA) and depending on the outcome of the visit. The decision is made on whether the centre have the capacity and capability to comply with our conditions and qualification conditions.</p> <p>Following on from becoming a recognised centre, a further visit will be required to be conducted prior to certification is granted for their first cohort of learners.</p>
Quality Assurance of Initial Certification of Assessment (ICA) interventions	<p>Initial Certification of Assessment is required to be verified during a visit of desk-based review undertaken at the end of the first course/ learner cohort after the centre has been granted approval for a qualification.</p> <p>ICA interventions ensure that the learners meet the conditions to be certificated. If the outcomes are successful, the centre will receive approval status for a qualification. In the event that Initial Certification of Assessment is not awarded the EQA will set a level 2 action or above action plan.</p>
Quality Assurance of courses/ cohort of learners	<p>Courses and learner cohorts are required to be continually verified in line with The Centre Management Strategy. This ensures continued compliance and facilitates the sharing of good practice within and between centres. Ongoing monitoring of courses and learner cohorts ensures risk is effectively managed across recognised centre activity.</p>