Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Assessment Strategy

2020-2022

1. Introduction

Green Labyrinth delivers vocational qualifications in the workplace and classroom based qualifications. Both are supported by a robust quality framework and a system of internal quality assurance that aims to:

- Ensure accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions
- Continually improve training and assessment practice through CPD, development and training of teams and Teachers, individual Trainers and Work Based Learning (WBL) Consultants
- Meet Awarding Organisation (AO), and in the case of funded programmes, the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework requirements

The procedures outlined in this Policy apply to all qualifications offered by Green Labyrinth and describes how these aims are monitored and achieved.

Apprenticeship delivery is now based on Standards and Green Labyrinth IQAs are only responsible for monitoring of the "On-Programme Assessment" part of the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Operations and Quality Director

The Operations and Quality Director of Green Labyrinth is responsible for planning and auditing the quality of training and assessment and monitoring the implementation of the IQA strategy to ensure that organisation complies with AO requirements. He/she is responsible for planning and implementing all IQA activities and quality assures the performance of all internal quality assurance staff.

In addition, the **Operations and Quality Director** is responsible for liaising with External Quality Assurers for the Awarding Bodies responsible for the Qualifications delivered by Green Labyrinth.

2.2 Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)

Internal Quality Assurers are responsible for planning appropriate IQA activities; monitoring and observing the assessment practice of Trainers and WBL Consultants for the qualifications within their curriculum and occupational area; and for verifying the accuracy, consistency and quality of WBL Consultants' and Trainers' decisions against the assessment criteria within the qualifications delivered by Green Labyrinth. A full list of IQA responsibilities can be found at Appendix A.

2.3 Work Based Learning Consultants, Trainers and other delivery staff

WBL Consultants, Trainers and other delivery staff are responsible for training and assessing in their specialist area. Their job includes planning, delivering and assessing aspects of learners' programmes in the classroom and either on or off the job (in the case of WBL Consultants), linked to the qualification and/or standard.

Job Descriptions for the roles that support Quality at Green Labyrinth are available on request from the Operations and Quality Director.

2.4 All QA staff at Green Labyrinth:

- Are occupationally or academically competent and meet the requirements of the relevant assessment strategy
- Have been regularly carrying out IQA of assessment and have been observed and monitored by a senior colleague
- Hold a relevant qualification (new IQAs will achieve one within six months of registering as a candidate IQA and be assigned to a mentor IQA while they do so).
- Have evidence of their CPD and can demonstrate that they meet Awarding Organisation and Green Labyrinth Training requirements

3. Quality Assurance Procedures

3.1 IQA sampling plans and rationale

All IQA plans are based on a sampling rationale whereby WBL Consultants and Trainers are rated according to the level of risk they represent. IQAs at Green Labyrinth use a Traffic Light System as follows:

Red (high risk) – **Delivery staff will have a minimum of 75% of units sampled. The staff in this area include:**

- Existing delivery staff with no record of CPD
- New or existing delivery staff with frequent actions identified on sampling (newly qualified or new to Green Labyrinth)
- Any delivery staff identified as making unsafe decisions
- Delivery staff with high caseloads

Amber (medium risk) – **Delivery staff will have a minimum of 50% of units sampled. The staff in this area include:**

- Newly qualified delivery staff with few actions identified on sampling
- Qualified or experienced delivery staff new to Green Labyrinth

Green (low risk) – Delivery staff will have a minimum of 25% of units sampled. The staff in this area include:

- Experienced delivery staff who consistently demonstrate up-to-date practice
- Rare actions identified on sampling

3.2 Monitoring of Assessment, marking and Teaching Practice

Work Based Learning

IQAs monitoring of assessment practice increases according to the level of risk, as follows:

Red (high risk)

- Six weekly monitoring to include observation of practice and ongoing sampling of all decisions across all units, learning outcomes and assessment criteria until the delivery staff member regularly demonstrates accuracy and/or consistency of judgement and practice

- Three-monthly monitoring to include at least one observation of practice and sampling of decisions across a sample of units and/or assessment criteria (to be decided by the IQA based on previous practice)

Green (low risk)

- Six-monthly monitoring – sampling based on CPD objectives in the delivery staff member's individual training record and/or team standardisation
- Observation of practice in line with Green Labyrinth OTLA Policy

IQAs' activities include observations of live practice which should comply with the GL OTLA Policy.   Frequency of monitoring activity is according to the IQA's judgement and he/she will review and revise individual ratings following each round of monitoring..

Study Programme

All Quality processes and systems will be followed in Study Programmes to adhere to the Internal Quality Assurance outlined in this document. The additional quality processes are listed below:

- Study Programme teaching staff have OTLA sessions arranged and carried out to adhere to the Quality Control and Annual Quality Calendar by The SP Head, SEN Teaching lead and other trained teachers who can support the OTLA process.
- Study Programme standards of teaching are adhered to with support from the DfE Teachers Code of Conduct which is stored on G Drive here
- Study Programme Marking and Assessment Policy can be found here

3.3 Areas of Sampling

The IQA plan for each programme area includes sampling all the following:

1. WBL Consultants/Trainers/Teachers
2. Learners – across cohorts and/or programmes
3. Assessment Methods – use of oral questioning, observation, use of others, RPL, product evidence, professional discussion, assignments, case studies and projects
4. Units/assessment criteria – new qualifications and/or units; levels; grades; comparison of assessment criteria – critically evaluate, for example
5. The learning process – recruitment and RPL; induction; training/learning
6. Records – recording of decisions; assessor reports; marking/grading schemes; assignment marking; feedback to learners
7. Assessment locations – new locations; employers; off-job training; sub-contractors

3.4 Standardisation/Team Meetings

Standardisation is part of Green Labyrinth Training's quality assurance strategy. Regular meetings are planned throughout the year in line with the Quality Assurance calendar. Annual standardisation will be integrated into the Quality Calendar and will focus on new units and qualifications, assessment methods, judgements and evidence across all qualification areas. It is also an opportunity for analysis and planning of professional competence and CPD.

It is the responsibility of the qualification/programme IQA to plan and arrange these meetings.

All Standardisation/Team meetings are planned in advance and the Agenda distributed at least a week before the meeting to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Please see Appendix C

3.5 CPD of Delivery Staff

IQAs and OTLA team members are responsible for identifying individual delivery **staff development needs,** and sharing these with the Line Managers for Trainers and WBL Consultants. They should work with Line Managers to provide opportunities and resources to support Trainers and WBL Consultants in achieving and implementing their development needs to improve assessment practice overall. IQAs record CPD needs and activities as a result of their sampling and observations, to the relevant Line Manager.   The observation forms from IQAs/OTLAs should be shared with Line Managers and CPD/Staff Development sessions held. Please refer to OTLA process in the Quality Cycle/Calender here

CPD activities for Trainers and WBL Consultants include:

- Self-assessment against the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Trainers and WBL Consultants
- Directed activities such as peer observations and guided reading linked to the NOS, according to individual needs.

4. Assessment Strategy for Work Based Learning (WBL)

4.1 Target Group

All staff involved in the management, training, delivery and administration of Work Based Learning (WBL):

4.2 The role of the WBL Consultant:

Referrals:

On receipt of a referral, the WBL Consultant will make contact with the learner within 3 working days to set up an Induction meeting.

Inductions:

Induction Visits should be arranged within 10 but no more than 15 working days of initial contact. The WBL Consultant will be responsible for inducting learners and will use the check list in the Consultant Induction Pack which can be found on MIS.

Planning/Assessment Visits:

All WBL Consultants will meet with their learners on a regular basis to plan their assessments. It is recommended that visits should be planned on a four weekly basis, bearing in mind the target completion dates for WBL programmes.

All assessors must use a holistic approach that enables achievement of full units by identifying natural work activities, all possible evidence and a range of appropriate assessment methods.

Assessments:

All WBL Consultants are to assess to the Green Labyrinth standard and in-line with agreed assessment plans, using the required assessment methods as dictated by the evidence requirements and set criteria. All WBL Consultants will use the e-portfolio system "Quals Direct" and for management apprenticeships "Get-to-Gateway" to record their decisions, feedback, actions and reviews. Individual learner records on the e-portfolio systems must be updated within 5 working days of each meeting.   V.A.S (Valid, Authentic and Sufficient) needs to be clearly detailed and also recorded. WBL Consultants must ensure evidence is mapped to the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria and recorded on the relevant e-portfolio system. If an e-portfolio system is not being used for a qualification WBL Consultants are to ensure that evidence matrices are completed for all learning outcomes and assessment criteria relevant to the WBL programme   All assessment activities must be negotiated and planned with the learners, and where applicable with the employer/mentor, and the WBL Consultant must complete and follow agreed assessment plans.

Feedback:

All WBL Consultants will give constructive feedback to the learner after every assessment activity and record the key outcomes on the relevant e-portfolio system, or if the e-portfolio system is not being

used Green Labyrinth assessment documentation. This should include a brief summary of the assessment, what has been achieved, any development needs and the next steps in assessment.

Reviews:

All WBL Consultants must review the progress of their learners on a regular basis. This relates to a review of the whole WBL programme as opposed to a review of each assessment or unit, and should include reference to health and safety, safeguarding and equality and diversity.   Green Labyrinth requires reviews to be completed every 8 weeks for work based programmes as a minimum. These reviews should be placed on the GL Review document. A copy should be placed on the appropriate e-portfolio system and a copy should be sent to GL Administration

Contributing to the quality assurance process:

All WBL Consultants must complete all their assessment records in accordance with this strategy, the learner journey and the Awarding Organisation specifications within a timely manner.

All WBL Consultants must attend standardisation meetings which are normally held 4 times a year and must attend WBL development opportunities provided by Green Labyrinth.

Internal quality assurance sampling:

It is the responsibility of the WBL Consultant to ensure that all their learners records are up to date, whether this is recorded on e-portfolio or a paper portfolio in order that IQA sampling can take place at any time. There will be at least an interim or formative IQA in accordance with the IQA sampling plan, and a summative IQA at the end of the WBL programme. IQAs may require further sampling if an WBL Consultant is new to Green Labyrinth, a Trainee Assessor, or the standards for the qualification have changed. WBL Consultant risk banding will also affect the frequency of IQA requests and visits.

Support and development

All WBL Consultants must be proactive in maintaining their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in accordance with the CPD Strategy and have annual development plans. It is the responsibility of the WBL Consultant to bring forward and make their IQA or their Line Manager aware of development needs. The IQA may also identify development needs through quality assurance activities such as IQA observations and communications with centre management in relation to yearly appraisals and development plans.

All WBL Consultants are to use their internal quality assurer for advice and guidance on the assessment process within their specific vocational areas.

5 Policies and Procedures

The Policies and Procedures and other documentation that support Quality of delivery and Internal Quality Assurance of Green Labyrinth Training are listed below.

Copies of all Policies and Procedures are available on request.

Policy/Procedure	Location	Who:
Quality Control and Assurance Policy (including Quality Cycle)	G Drive (Quality) here	Quality Manager
Self Assessment Report (SAR)	G Drive (SAR) here	Quality Manager
Quality Improvement Plan	tbc	Quality Manager
OTLA	G Drive (Quality)	Quality Manager
Student Appeals Procedure	Link to G Drive	Quality Manager
Student Complaints Procedure	Link to G Drive	Quality Manager
Student Equality & Diversity	Link to G Drive	Quality Manager
Recognition of Prior Learning and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning	Link to G Drive	Quality Manager
Information, Advice and Guidance	Link to G Drive	Quality Manager
Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of students	Link to G Drive	DSL
Prevent Strategy	Link to G Drive	DSL
Malpractice and Maladministration Policy	Link to G Drive	Exams Officer

Appendix A - IQA Roles and Responsibilities

As an IQA your role is to ensure the integrity and quality of assessment within Green Labyrinth Training. This means that a large part of your job focuses on the performance of Delivery Staff at Green Labyrinth Training.

IQAs monitor the work of all Trainers and Work Based Learning (WBL) Consultants involved with a particular qualification, to ensure they are applying the standards consistently throughout assessment activities. They must have and maintain an appropriate level of occupational competence in work based learning activities. An IQA will never quality assure their own assessment decisions.

All IQAs must hold the appropriate IQA qualifications (D34/V1/Level 4 award in the IQA of assessment processes and practices). Unqualified IQAs will have all their decisions monitored, checked and authenticated by qualified IQAs.

The IQA has the following responsibilities:

- Regularly sampling assessment activities, methods and records to monitor consistency of assessment decisions
- Ensuring that teaching and learning is embedded throughout all programmes and across all delivery areas; and that Trainers and WBL Consultants work to the Ofsted CIF standards and Awarding Organisation requirements
- Carrying out observations of Trainers and WBL Consultants, interviewing learners to ensure consistency
- Ensuring that Trainers and WBL Consultants follow the assessment guidance provided by Awarding Organisations and Green Labyrinth Training
- Advising and supporting Trainers and WBL Consultants to assist them in interpreting and applying the standards correctly and consistently
- Providing Trainers and WBL Consultants with prompt, consistent, accurate and constructive feedback on their assessment decisions
- Undertaking an active role in raising issues of good practice in assessment
- Ensuring that equal opportunities, safeguarding and anti-discriminatory practices are upheld in the assessment process
- Ensuring British Values and the PREVENT Agenda are upheld in the teaching and assessment process
- Ensuring that all learners' achievement records and centre documentation are completed in accordance with requirements
- Countersigning appropriate assessment documentation, including trainee Trainers, WBL Consultants and IQAs
- Ensuring Trainers and Assessors have opportunities for updating and developing their vocational and professional competence, in consultation with the Operations Manager.
- Holding regular Meetings with Trainers and WBL Consultants to include standardisation activities

Issues which an IQA should monitor

- a lack of confidence by the assessor to make correct decisions
- a lack of standardisation activities leading to one assessor giving more of an advantage to a learner than another assessor of the same subject
- a learner's lack of confidence or resistance to be assessed
- action points from external reports not being carried out by the target date
  - an assessor not taking into account a learner's particular needs
  - an unsuitable environment for assessment to take place
  - answers to questions being obtained inappropriately by learners which leads to cheating
  - assessing written work too quickly and not noticing errors, plagiarism or cheating
  - assessor expertise, knowledge and competence not being kept up to date or whether new staff are working towards an assessor qualification. Unqualified staff might need their decisions countersigning. Staff should have appropriate job descriptions and development plans otherwise they won't know what is expected of them
  - assessors who might be under or over assessing compared to other assessors
  - assessors using leading questions to obtain the correct answers they require
  - assistive technology for learners with particular needs is used wrongly or used to give too much support
  - awarding organisations prescribing assessment methods which might not complement the qualification, a learner's needs, or the learning environment
  - changes to qualifications, standards, documents, records, policies and procedures: staff need to be kept up to date
  - feedback to the learner which is unhelpful or ineffective
  - high turnover of staff resulting in inconsistent support to learners
  - how quick (or how long) learners take to achieve with a particular assessor
  - instructions too complex or too easy for a learner's ability
  - insufficient or incorrect action/assessment planning
  - lack of resources or time to perform the assessment role correctly
  - learners creating a portfolio of evidence which is based on quantity rather than quality, i.e. submitting too much evidence which does not meet the requirements
  - learners plagiarising or copying the work of others, or from the internet
  - locations of learners and assessors which might make them inaccessible at times for assessment to take place
  - marking and grading carried out incorrectly by assessors
  - misinterpreting the assessment requirements and/or criteria (by learners and assessors)
  - numbers of learners allocated to assessors is too high, leading to rushed assessments
  - resources and equipment accessibility, availability and safe use

- time pressures and targets put upon assessors and learners
- type of qualification or programme being assessed, problem areas or units
- types of evidence provided by learners e.g. a reliance on too many personal statements which are not backed up by assessment decisions
- unreliable witness testimonies from the workplace, lack of support to witnesses
- unsuitable assessment methods i.e. an observation when questions would suffice
- unsuitable assessment types i.e. summative being used instead of formative
- unwelcome disruptions and interruptions when assessing, such as noise or telephone calls
- use of technology and how reliable it is for assessment purposes
- whether bilingual assessments could lead to any issues, or language barriers impeding communication
- whether evidence and records are stored manually or electronically and are safe and secure, in case they can be accessed by unsuitable people
- whether the learners have been registered with an awarding organisation (if applicable) as assessment decisions might not be valid otherwise.

Appendix B - IQA - Standardisation Meetings Terms of Reference

Standardisation is part of Green Labyrinth quality assurance strategy. Regular meetings are planned throughout the year in line with the Quality Assurance and Improvement calendar. Annual standardisation will be integrated into the Quality Assurance cycle and will focus on new units and qualifications, assessment methods, judgements and evidence across all qualification areas. It is also an opportunity for analysis and planning of professional competence and CPD.

It is the responsibility of the qualification IQA to plan and arrange these meetings.

1.   Internal standardisation provides a system for checking the quality of assessment to make sure that it is:

- Valid- relevant to the standards for which competence/ attainment is claimed
- Authentic – produced by the learner
- Current- sufficiently recent for assessor to be confident that the learner still has the same level of knowledge and skills
- Reliable – genuinely representative of the learner's knowledge
- Sufficient – meets the entire requirement of the standards in full.

2.   The overall objectives of GL Standardisation are to ensure that standardisation of judgements is agreed with regard to the following:

- Quality assurance of assessment activities
- Interpretation of standards, learning outcomes and assessment criteria- to include a review of current and new programmes
- Judging how evidence meets qualification requirements
- Checking the quality of feedback from Assessors to learners and IQAs
- Updating assessment and quality assurance documentation and procedures
- Sampling cycle of activity is agreed in line with GL overall IQA and Assessment Strategy and Quality Improvement SOP.

Additional standardisation activity

- Course development and review – standardisation of templates and Brand for schemes of work, session plans, course materials.

3.   Please note all Standardisation meetings must be planned in advance and Agenda distributed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Please ensure that there is clarity surrounding which programmes will be standardised.

Appendix C - Standardisation Agenda

STANDARDISATION AGENDA

1.   Standardisation of practice
   o   Judging evidence and making assessment decisions as a team
   o   Recognition of prior learning
   o   Assessing work provided by another assessor to ensure the same decision is reached
   o   Comparing how assessment documentation is completed
   o   Considering the most appropriate method or methods of assessment for a qualification
   o   Designing or revising assessment documentation
   o   Writing assessment materials e.g. assignment briefs, to ensure each Assessor has the opportunity to contribute

2.   Updating of standards (Qualification specification/ NOS),

   o   Reviewing qualification standards and discussing how each Assessor interprets them and the type of evidence they would look to produce
   o   Reviewing any marginal evidence or marks (specifically borderline or fails which may give cause for concern and appeals)

3.   Reviewing consistency and outcome of sampling

   o   Identification of common trends in judgements, evidence collation and implementation of improvements across all programmes

4.   Standardisation of learner materials and PP to strengthen GL Brand. GL template.

5.   Identifying training needs and CPD planning

6.   Progression and sharing of good practice

7.   Awarding Organisation and Sector updates

8.   EQA reports and follow up action / development report and progress

9.   AOB

All standardisation activities should be recorded and maintained and uploaded onto the Quality Folder in the G Drive within 2 days of holding the meeting.

Appendix D - SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE APPROVED CENTRE CRITERIA

Ofqual provides a tariff of sanctions for non-compliance with the centre approval criteria which Awarding Organisations use as a framework to identify appropriate actions where weaknesses are identified in centre practice. The recommended Tariff of Sanctions for non-compliance is as follows:

Examples of non-compliance Sanction Rationale

1. Centre's aims, policies and assessment practices, and responsibilities of personnel are not clear or well understood by assessment team
2. Internal quality assurance procedures and activities not clearly documented
3. Communication between centre and the awarding body is ineffective
4. Insufficient qualified assessors
5. Assessors/IQAs do not have adequate development plans
6. Learners are not aware of their rights and responsibilities, eg no appeals procedure for learners
7. There is inadequate assessment planning with learners
8. Queries are not resolved or recorded
9. Range of assessment methods is insufficient to encourage access
10. Changes to personnel of the assessment and IQA team are not notified to the awarding body
11. Unit certification is not made available to learners
12. There is inadequate monitoring or review of procedures
13. There is inadequate evidence of meaningful employer engagement

Sanction Level

Level 1: Entry in action plan Non-compliance with centre approval criteria, but no threat to the integrity of assessment decisions :

1.1   Assessors have insufficient time, resources or authority to perform their role
1.2   Decisions of unqualified assessors not supported by qualified assessor
1.3   Assessment decisions are not consistent
1.4   Insufficient qualified internal quality assurers
1.5   Decisions of unqualified IQAs not supported by qualified IQA
1.6   Records are insufficient to allow audit of assessment
1.7   Previously agreed corrective measures relating to level 1 are not implemented

Level 2: Escalated action point Close scrutiny of the integrity of assessment decisions required:

2A.1   Assessment process disadvantages learners
2A.2   Assessment decisions are unfair
2B.1   No qualified IQA
2B.2   Assessment does not meet national standards
2B.3   The centre fails to provide access to requested records, information, learners and staff
2B.4   Assessed evidence is not the authentic work of learners
2B.5   Records of assessment show serious anomalies 2B.6 Certification claims made before all the requirements of assessment are satisfied 2B.7 Previously agreed corrective measures relating to level 2 non-compliance are not implemented

Level 3A/3B: Suspension of registration/ certification
3A – threat to learners
3B – loss of the integrity of assessment decisions – danger of invalid claims for certification
3.1   Significant faults in the management and quality assurance of the programme which result in an on-going failure to meet the core requirements for the conduct of assessment
3.2   Previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 3 non-compliance have not been implemented

Level 4: Withdrawal of centre approval for specific qualifications Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality assurance of specific qualifications
4.1   Significant faults in the management and quality assurance of all programmes 4.2   Previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 4 non-compliance have not been implemented

Level 5: Withdrawal of centre approval for all qualifications Irretrievable breakdown in management and QA of specific qualifications