

	New Links Training Solutions	Policy Document
	Section 1 E - Quality Panel	Version 2 –July 2019

1. The Quality Panel - Introduction:

The Quality Panel is a subcommittee of the Quality Committee and its function is to oversee and monitor the application of quality standards on all QQI validated programmes offered by New Links Training Solutions Ltd. The Quality Panel will ensure that procedures are in place that the quality of its programmes and awards meets the required specifications as set out in the QQI module descriptor and the QQI validation agreement.

2. Role of the Quality Panel:

The Quality Panel is responsible for:

- The oversight of quality on all QQI programmes delivered by New Links Training Solutions Ltd.
- Periodic monitoring of all active programmes and ensures that compliance is achieved at all levels of the course life cycle.
- The provision of advice, support and guidance to management, tutors, and staff on all practices relating to quality assurance of QQI programmes.
- Ensuring that all measures are taken to apply QA procedures as outlined in the QQI statutory Core Guidelines 2016.
- Overseeing the dissemination of existing information and information updates to all parties involved in the development, delivery, and assessment of QQI programmes.

3. Quality Manual:

3.1 The quality panel will use the Quality Manual to guide their work in supporting, maintaining and monitoring the Quality Assurance practices of New Links Training Solutions.

3.2 Quality manual Overview:

- 3.2.1 Section 1 – Governance and management of quality.
- 3.2.2 Section 2 - Documented Approach to Quality Assurance.
- 3.2.3 Section 3 - Programmes of Education & Training.
- 3.2.4 Section 4 – Staff Recruitment, Management, and Development.
- 3.2.5 Section 5 – Teaching and Learning.
- 3.2.6 Section 6 – Assessment of Learners.
- 3.2.7 Section 7 – Supports for Learners.
- 3.2.8 Section 8 - Information & Data Management.
- 3.2.9 Section 9 – Public Information & Communication.
- 3.2.10 Section 10 – Other Parties Involved in Education & Training.
- 3.2.11 Section 11 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring, and Review.

4. Terms of Reference for the Quality Panel

4.1 Membership: The Quality Panel will comprise the Quality Manager, Course Leaders, and external education consultants. A minimum of 3 professionals will sit on this panel – two of whom are quality/education experts to ensure the assessment decisions are valid. The chair of this panel should be an independent education expert who is not a member of the Quality Committee. Where possible, committee members will serve on this committee for a period of three years, with the option of a second term of service.

- 4.1.1 The Chair is responsible for appointing members to the Quality Panel and will ensure that the panel membership is such so as to ensure impartial decision making to avoid any conflicts of interest.

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- 4.1.2 Quality Panel members will be directed to carry out their duties without bias and will make their decisions based on the documented information provided to the panel ensuring openness, transparency, and accountability in all areas of quality assurance and course-related activities.
- 4.1.3 External members will act as advisors and ensure that the decisions made are ethical and fair. Their role is to confirm that all activities of the Quality Panel are conducted in compliance with QQI core guidelines.
- 4.1.4 The acting External Authenticator is not eligible for membership of a Programme Review Panel. However, subject matter experts who are also EAs but who do not carry out EA monitoring duties for the company may sit on the Quality Panel.

5. Decision Making

- 5.1 Minutes of the Quality Panel will be produced outlining the issues discussed and decisions reached, including recommendations. The meeting minutes will form part of the official record and must be retained by the centre for the statutory minimum of five years and be made available for auditing and monitoring purposes.
- 5.2 The contents of the minutes are confidential and must not be circulated to unauthorised personnel.
- 5.3 The chair of the Quality Panel will prepare a report which will be summarised to senior management. Items for review or items that require further consideration will be flagged as agenda items for the next programme review meeting.

6. Frequency of meetings

- 6.1 Meetings will be held monthly in line with the scheduled learner meeting and periodically in line with RAP meetings.
- 6.2 In compliance with GDPR guidelines all documents provided to panel members during the Programme Review Panel meeting must be returned to the Chair at the end of the meeting and will be disposed of as stipulated by the Regulation.
- 6.3 Notice of Meetings: meetings will be scheduled monthly in advance. During certification periods, meetings will be scheduled at least 4 weeks ahead of Quality Committee meetings to allow for reporting to that committee.
- 6.4 The date of the next meeting will be confirmed at each meeting.
- 6.5 Additional meetings may be organised if required.

7. Duties:

7.1 The duties of the Quality Panel are to ensure that:

- All programmes of learning are subject to continuous review and any improvements or recommendations to the quality committee or to management are underpinned by evidence-based research
- All course delivery and assessment processes are learner-centered.
- All Quality assurance practices are underpinned by relevant legislative or mandatory guidelines to include (but not limited to the following):
 - New Links Training Solutions Operations Manual
 - Learner Handbook
 - Tutor Handbook
 - QQI Core Quality Assurance guidelines

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- Health & Safety legislation
- Equality Legislation
- All learners are treated fairly, consistently and with courtesy and respect.
- Learners are facilitated to provide feedback about their learning experience and that this feedback informs recommendations and decisions made by the panel.
- Learners will participate in the committees of NLTR, where appropriate.
- Learner supports are provided and that there is access to reasonable accommodations while acknowledging budget constraints
- Learners have access to up to date, practical and relevant information in relation to access, transfer and progression on all courses.
- There is a constant monitoring of the provision of course materials, timetables and all relevant course procedures before or during course delivery as appropriate.
- Course outcomes and course expectations are explained to learners through public information systems, learner handbook, and appropriate course materials.
- Learners are made aware of their statutory rights in relation to course completion, attendance, and fees.
- Learners are made aware of complaints, appeals and any other procedures that enable them to have a voice and seek remedies in the event that they are dissatisfied with any aspect of a programme or the delivery of same.
- The values of Adult Learning are transmitted in the development of QQI courses and that learners are exposed to a variety of teaching/learning approaches and strategies required by course-specific learning outcomes.
- Learners have reasonable access to tutors both in person and via email during their course of study.
- Learners will receive both formative and summative feedback on assignments presented to allow them to deepen their learning and increase their learning opportunities.
- Learners are made aware of systems (procedures) in place to enable them to mitigate circumstances that may prevent them from succeeding.

8. Reporting

8.1 The chairperson (or notetaker) will distribute the minutes of meetings of the Quality Panel. A summary report will be prepared for the monthly Senior Management meeting and actioned accordingly.

8.2 The Quality Manager will summarise specific items that will be presented to the Quality Committee for further exploration, guidance or external decision making.

8.3 A meeting template is provided to ensure consistent reporting and follow through of agreed actions

Please see section 1 G for a visual overview of the relationships between committees and subcommittees