

Fair Initial, Diagnostic and Assessment Policy and Procedures

Initial and Diagnostic Assessment

All learners should complete an initial Diagnostic Assessment to aid identification of support needs for English and maths. Once identified it is essential that the necessary support is put in place for the learner to progress.

On-going monitoring of the support should be carried out by the IQA in conjunction with the learner and, where necessary the Centre Manager to update the Individual Learning Plan. Where available, the Centre Manager will draw down additional funding support. This will inform the learners' Individual Learning Plan and assist staff in the guidance and counselling of individuals towards NVQ's, Diploma's and Apprenticeships.

Welcome Skills is committed to accurately identify what each student needs to learn and to find out what the barriers to learning and successful progression and completion may be, in order to put in place appropriate on-going support throughout the learning process.

Through the initial assessment process, Welcome Skills gathers a range of information on each student to ensure that the learner is on the most appropriate learning programme and at the right level.

This includes:

- Learners' goals and aspirations
- Learners' prior qualifications, achievements and learning experience
- Learners' relevant abilities, interests and skills including Maths and English
- Learning needs, any learning difficulties
- Learners' personal circumstances that may affect learning
- any other personal circumstances that may affect learning

Implementation

When conducting initial assessment staff ensure that students are fully involved. They must ensure that assessment methods are appropriate to the learners' needs. Special consideration is to be given to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Outcomes of the initial assessment are shared and discussed with the learner immediately. All assessments must be reliable and valid. Staff are trained on understanding and using initial assessment results to inform individual learning plans.

Staff ensure that learners are placed on the right programme with the right pathway and at the right level. At enrolment, account is taken of the students' level of Math and English.

a) Assessment of Prior Learning

APA is a process by which individuals can gain credit towards qualifications based on evidence from their past achievements. It facilitates the assessment and formal certification

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of current competence based on evidence drawn from past experience and enables individuals to identify new paths for learning and development.

Welcome Skills Limited will recognise learners past experience and achievements and identify if any opportunities are available to provide evidence for their chosen qualification.

b) Assessment of competency in the workplace

The assessor to confirm their competency of performance and knowledge will assess learners within their workplace. The assessors will use a variety of assessment methods, be cost and time effective in their assessment decisions and it will be desirable to triangulate the evidence to increase the reliability and validity of the assessment decision. The assessor will ensure that the evidence provided by the learner is valid, authentic, current and sufficient. They will follow the assessment strategy of the Sector Skills Council and the requirements of the Awarding Organisation at all times.

c) Assessment Planning

At each assessment, it is essential that an Assessment Plan is formulated between the assessor and the learner for each unit being assessed (or group of units where an holistic approach is being used). The Assessment Plan should be reviewed regularly and should detail what is to be assessed, how it will be assessed, the evidence required and who will be responsible for which aspects of assessment.

It is important that the process is seen as a partnership between the learner, the assessor and others involved.

At the planning stage it is important that the assessor explore all sources of potential evidence, this should include assessment of prior learning and experience - as detailed above.

d) Registration of learners

The administration team will register each learner 4 weeks after the start date of their qualification, unless requested to do so earlier by an assessor wishing to make assessment decisions before this date.

6. Internal Verification Strategy

All IQA's will be qualified to current guidance requirements and occupationally competent to the requirements of the assessment strategy for the relevant qualification. IQA's working towards their qualification must have their work fully countersigned by a qualified occupationally competent IQA.

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a) Portfolio sampling

Candidate portfolios are to be sampled regularly. The samples must take place throughout the on-programme schedule (usually monthly) and a final sample must take place prior to certification. (Portfolios may be subject to further checks at the discretion of the IQA). The feedback will be documented on IQA feedback to the assessor.

Sampling must take place according to the sampling planner and each assessor must be risk banded by the IQA. There are 4 bands.

Band	Description	% Internal Verification
1	Novice Assessor/ Assessor working towards qualification	100%
2	Newly qualified Assessor	75%
3	Assessors showing minor development needs	50%
4	Assessors working within the requirements proving consistency in assessment decisions over a period of time	25%

Banding of assessors must take place by communication with the CEO and the Quality Assurance Manager.

Over a period of time all assessors must have every unit of every qualification sampled, IQA's are encouraged to sample any units which occur less frequently to ensure centre/assessor compliance. New qualifications introduced to the centre must be sampled at a higher ratio for example: a new qualification completed by an assessor for the first time must be 100% internally verified.

b) Observation of assessor

The internal verifier will be required to observe assessment practice of assessors at least twice per year. This will increase if the assessor is unqualified to at least 4 times per year. The observation will be to the current standards and must be documented on the IQA Observation of Assessor Report.

c) Standardisation

Welcome Skills Limited will plan regular assessor Standardisation meetings. Assessors and IQA's are expected to attend and contribute to these meetings. It is the assessors/IQA's responsibility to update their CPD record following these meetings and provide a copy for the centre file. Minutes of all meetings will be taken and retained by the centre.

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d) Certification of learners

Once ready for certification the IQA feedback must be left in the portfolio for external quality assessment and the IQA must communicate certification requirements to the Quality Assurance Manager. The Quality Assurance Manager will be responsible for the certification of all learners.

Learner's portfolios will remain at the centre until the next external quality assurance visit.

The Quality Assurance Manager must ensure that feedback from EQA's is communicated to the team within the shortest possible timescale; the feedback will be given electronically or verbally.

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