Quality Improvement Toolkit

*Developed by Education Relations on behalf of
the Learning and Skills Council North West, 2010*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EDUCATIONRELATIONS.CO.UK

Acknowledgements

Following a programme of support for new and existing providers of ESF Programmes this guide was produced for the Learning and Skills Council North West by Lynne Clough and Judith Hamer, coordinated by Education Relations. This guide was produced for the Learning and Skills Council North West using European Social Fund (ESF) Technical Assistance Funding.

This project was managed by an Advisory Group consisting of:

Richard Finch	Merseyside Network for Europe
Karen Rigg	Voluntary Sector North West
John Hacking	North West Network
Angeliki Stogia	North West Network
Nicky Crosby	VOLA Merseyside
Eunice Bartram	The Greenbank Project
Kewal Dass	Learning and Skills Council North West
Andy Fawcett	Learning and Skills Council North West

Extracts from this publication may be used for non-commercial educational or training purposes, on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.

This document is available in electronic form on the following websites:
Merseyside Network for Europe – www.merseynetwork.com
North West Network – www.nwnetwork.org.uk
Voluntary Sector North West – www.vsnw.org.uk
Education Relations – www.educationrelations.co.uk

Contents

Introduction to the Quality Improvement Toolkit

Every provider of education and training has clear responsibility for assuring the quality and continuously improving the standard of the programmes and services that it delivers. Every organisation should have arrangements in place to ensure that its provision is of a high standard and that learner, and where appropriate employer or community, needs are met. All providers have responsibility for ensuring that they meet the requirements of their awarding bodies, funding providers and key partners such as Ofsted.

This Quality Improvement Toolkit contains 14 separate tools that will assist you improving the quality of your training and sets out the minimum requirements that can reasonably be expected of any provider delivering training. Equally if provision is sub-contracted it shows what should be expected of the sub-contractor.

The Toolkit offers providers a generic set of quality standards that identify what all learners enrolled onto any programme are entitled to. It provides guidelines and a framework that organisations can adopt as the basis of their own quality arrangements to ensure that identified standards are consistently met. It also provides a benchmark against which to compare existing internal processes as part of continuous improvement.

Responsibility rests with all training providers to ensure these minimum standards are met. Training providers can extend guidelines and approaches suggested in this Toolkit to meet the needs of their individual organisations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EDUCATIONRELATIONS.CO.UK

Tool 1: Quality Standards for the Delivery of Teaching and Learning

How can I use this tool

- To ensure that learners receive a high quality learning experience throughout the learner journey

- To produce a learner charter which can be displayed within your centre

- To develop a checklist for staff

Quality Standards for the Delivery of Teaching and Learning:

The following standards set out a "minimum entitlement" for all learners on programmes with [PROVIDER]. All standards are subject to regular quality assurance monitoring to ensure that they are fully met.

1. Initial advice and guidance

1. All learners will be provided with sufficient information to ensure that they can make well informed course choices.

2. All learners will have access to impartial information and advice prior to enrolment.

3. All learners will be informed of any eligibility criteria for enrolment/service provision. Such criteria will be clearly set out and will be both fair and equitable.

4. All learners will receive an induction at the start of their programme which will incorporate health and safety, safeguarding and equal opportunities.

5. At the start of their programme [PROVIDER'S] Charter will be explained to all learners. The Charter sets out rights, responsibilities, what [PROVIDER] can offer and the learners' contribution to the process.

2. Teaching and structured learning

1. All courses and structured learning sessions will be planned in advance by relevant staff.

2. Staff will explain course content, expectations and identify learning goals as part of initial induction.

3. Staff will hold relevant teaching and support qualifications and have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience in their subject areas.

4. Sessions/courses will be delivered using appropriate methods and resources at an appropriate pace.

5. Staff will identify and meet learners' individual needs and requirements.

6.   Learning environments will be matched to learner need and managed effectively.

7.   All venues will have good access to appropriate resources and facilities. Health and safety requirements will be monitored and fully met.

8.   Staff will work to ensure that learners feel safe and are protected within their learning environment and are involved in and aware of their own rights and responsibilities in relation to safety.

9.   There is equality of opportunity with regard to recruitment, enrolment and access to [PROVIDER] products and services subject to contract conditions and limitations.

3. Guidance

1.   Learners will be given information, advice and guidance by staff who are appropriately skilled, experienced and knowledgeable.

2.   All structured advice sessions will be planned in advance by relevant staff.

3.   Staff will explain the guidance process, expectations and clarify objectives in group sessions and/or one to one interviews.

4.   Guidance sessions will be delivered using appropriate methods and resources at an appropriate pace.

5.   Staff will identify and meet learners' individual needs and requirements.

6.   Guidance venues will be matched to learner need and managed effectively.

4. Assessment and monitoring of progress

1.   All learners will receive an initial assessment of their needs which will be used as a basis for planning learning and support.

2.   Progress reviews will be fair, accurate and carried out in a planned and routine manner. They will be appropriate to the learners' needs.

3.   Learning and guidance support will be monitored to enable regular feedback to be given to learners about their progress and achievement and what they have to do to improve.

4.   All achievements towards learning, qualification, employment and/or other goals will be recorded and accredited where appropriate.

5.   Information about learner assessment will be used to guide course development where applicable.

6.   All assessment, certification and moderation procedures will meet awarding body requirements.

5. Achieving objectives

1.   All learners will be confident of their progress and will receive support to reach their goals.

2.   Learners will work towards their identified aims and learning outcomes wherever appropriate for their goals and needs.

3.   All individuals will achieve an appropriate level of information, advice, guidance, knowledge, skills and understanding to meet their identified aims and learning outcomes.

4.   All individuals will be supported to demonstrate personal development.

5.   All individuals will be supported and encouraged to achieve their goals and progress further.

6.   All learners will demonstrate high levels of satisfaction.

6. Support for learners

1.   All learners will receive adequate information about what [PROVIDER] can offer.

2.   All learners will receive appropriate information, advice and guidance prior to, during and on completion of their programme/course.

3.   Resources will be targeted to provide additional holistic, person-centre support where it is most appropriate and to learners most in need within contract and budget constraints.

4.   [PROVIDER] will use effective outreach and marketing strategies so as to widen participation and help people who have not recently been involved in learning or received guidance support.

5.   [PROVIDER] will maintain links with external agencies including other providers, voluntary organisations and community groups to enable the provision of additional or specialist support for learners where appropriate.

This section has been developed from information shared by Bolton WISE Ltd. Bolton

Tool 2: Sample Quality Assurance Policy

How can I use this tool

- To produce a quality assurance policy for my own organisation

- To help staff understand the range of activities used to help improve the quality of provision

- To provide a checklist to cross map against current quality improvement activities and identify any gaps

Sample Quality Assurance Policy

The following standards set out a "minimum entitlement" for all learners on programmes with PROVIDER] is committed to ensuring that the quality of education and training that it delivers is of a high standard.

Education and training is delivered to meet the identified needs of individual learners, employers and the local community. [PROVIDER] is committed to providing good learning resources and employing competent and experienced staff to ensure that the quality of the learner's experience is consistently high.

[PROVIDER] has in place quality standards that underpin the delivery of learning and guidelines for staff showing how the quality of the learner's experience is to be assured and improved.

[PROVIDER] will:

1. Regularly collect and analyse the views of its learners. Information gathered will be used to bring about improvements to the services that they offer. The results of actions taken will be shared with learners.

2. Collect, analyse and use feedback from key partners including staff, employers and community representatives. The results of actions taken to bring about improvements will be shared with partners.

3. Arrange for suitably qualified, experiences and trained staff to observe other members of staff as they work with learners, against pre-determined criteria. Written feedback will be provided to staff. The results of observations will be used to inform staff appraisal and development plans.

4. Produce written policies and procedures for staff to follow which clearly define:
   - how key learning processes are to be carried out with learners
   - health and safety and safeguarding arrangements for learners
   - the promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity

5. Audit and review key documents, processes and procedures to ensure they meet the needs of learners, the organisation and where appropriate the requirements of legislation.

6. Check at regular intervals that policies, procedures and other guidelines are being adhered to by all staff

7. Have systems in place to ensure that they consistently meet the requirements of QCDA and any external bodies with which they hold accreditation

8. Have arrangements in place to support the collection and analysis of data on learners' characteristics, retention, achievement and progression and regularly analyse this information to identify areas for individual and organisational improvement.

9. Conduct annual self-assessment within their individual organisations. Self-assessment will result in a plan which is used to guide quality improvement activity.

10. Have arrangements in place to monitor staff performance and to conduct regular appraisals which lead to the setting of targets and the identification of opportunities for continued professional development.

Tool 3: Quality Improvement Framework

How can I use this tool

- To identify the range of activities that our organisation needs to carry out to both quality assure the quality of training that we deliver and to bring about continuous improvement

- To identify actions that our organisation should take in relation to each area of activity

- To provide our organisation with a comprehensive quality improvement framework

- To link with other tools in this toolkit

Quality Improvement Framework

Quality Improvement Activities	Responsibility	Action to be taken
1. Collection, analysis and use of feedback from learners *Tool 4 can support you with this activity – SAMPLE LEARNER SURVEY FORM*		• Feedback should be gathered from a sample of learners at identified points during their time on programme. It is important that feedback is gathered at key stages in the learning process, not just on completion. • Learners should be asked to complete a questionnaire or to participate in a discussion/focus group during which their comments will be collected. Findings should be analysed and a summary shared with managers and staff. • A designated manager should have responsibility for ensuring that action is taken to address any issues raised. • Feedback should be given to learners, identifying the findings of the surveys and outlining action to be taken to address issues. • An annual summary of feedback should be used to contribute to the development of the organisation's self-assessment report. • Additional questionnaires may be completed as part of internal verification. Findings should contribute to an annual summary of learner feedback.
2. Collection, analysis and use of feedback from key partners (including staff, volunteers, trustees, community partners) *Tool 5 can support you with this activity - SAMPLE PARTNER SURVEY FORM*		• Key partners should be asked to complete a questionnaire annually (minimum) • Feedback should be analysed and a summary shared with managers and staff through team meetings. • A designated manager should be responsible for ensuring that action is taken to address any issues raised. • Feedback should be given to partners through the internal staff meetings, board meetings and where appropriate newsletters, identifying the findings of the survey and outlining action to be taken to address issues raised. • Findings should be used to contribute to the development of the organisation's self-assessment report
3. Observation of staff performance *Tool 6 can support you with this activity OBSERVATION GUIDELINES PAGE 19* *Tools 7 & 8 can support you with this activity – SAMPLE OBSERVATION CRITERIA AND RECORD FORM (TEACHING SESSION)* *Tool 9 can support you with this activity – SAMPLE OBSERVATION OF REVIEW CRITERIA AND RECORD FORM*		• Staff should be observed at least annually, more frequently where they are new to their roles. Frequency will be agreed by their line manager. • Observations should take place of staff as they carry out activities including: - Interviews - Initial assessment - Induction - Training - Assessment - Reviews • Observations will take place against agreed criteria that will be shared with staff • Observations should be graded using the four-point scale that is used by Ofsted inspectors (see Common inspection framework for further education and skills, OFSTED, November 2009): - Grade 1 Outstanding - Grade 2 Good - Grade 3 Satisfactory - Grade 4 Unsatisfactory • Observations should result in an action plan that will be agreed with the member of staff. A copy of the action plan will be shared with the member of staff's line manager. • Feedback from observations should be discussed at staff annual appraisals and at interim reviews where further training and support needs will be discussed. • Observation findings should be collated and analysed annually; information gathered should be used to inform the planning of staff development activities across the company. • The purpose of observation is to support continuous improvement in the service and observers as well as focussing on the quality of learning and teaching should look at other aspects which affect the learner's experience e.g. safeguarding, equality and diversity.

Quality Improvement Activities	Responsibility	Action to be taken

4a. Audit and review of learner files
 	
Tool 10 can support you with this activity – SAMPLE AUDIT CHECKLIST
		• Learner files should be regularly audited to ensure that claims made to the LSC are supported by correctly completed documents.
		• Audit should take place across the year to an agreed schedule.
		• Learner files should be sampled, however all files should be audited, at least once, over the course of the year.
		• Audit will check that all necessary documents are in place.
		• During the audit, documents should be reviewed to ensure that they have been completed to the required standard. The quality of their content will be evaluated.
		• Audit findings should be recorded and shared with the staff member responsible for the file and their manager and lead to planning for improvement. A deadline for any necessary amendments will be agreed.
		• Where appropriate training and support needs should be discussed and recorded in the member of staff's training plan.
		• The following records should be checked as part of the audit and review process:
		  - Application forms and interview records
		  - Evidence of eligibility as required by funding bodies
		  - Registration documents
		  - Records of all initial assessment activities
		  - Evidence of induction
		  - The learner's individual learning plan/learner diaries/learning logs
		  - Progress reviews
		  - Evidence of existing skills and knowledge at the start of the programme
		• A designated named manager should review audit findings at least twice a year to identify common errors and to establish staff training needs

4b. Audit of key processes		• The quality manager (or other designated named manager) should be responsible for ensuring that all key processes are audited annually. • Procedures and working instructions for all key learning processes should be reviewed annually to ensure they remain current and meet business needs. • * It may be necessary for policies and processes to be up-dated more frequently where a specific need is identified, for example in response to legislation. • Changes to procedures and working instructions should be shared with staff through team meetings. The line manager is responsible for ensuring all staff have been briefed and have access to revised documents and instructions.
4c. Audit of policies and policy statements		• A designated manager should be responsible for ensuring that all policies and policy statements are audited annually and where necessary new policies developed. • * It may be necessary for policies to be up-dated more frequently where a specific need is identified, for example in response to legislation. • New policies or amendments should be agreed at management meetings • New and up-dated policies should be disseminated to all staff

7. Internal verification (where programmes are externally accredited)
 	
Tool 11 can support you with this activity – INTERNAL VERIFICATION GUIDELINES
		• The organisation's approach to internal verification (IV) should be outlined in its IV Policy and procedure
		• IV processes should be audited annually (or as agreed with the External Verifier)
		• Internal verification activity should take place against a plan drawn up by the IV Co-ordinator that meets the needs of the organisation's awarding bodies.
		• IV activities should take place over the course of the year and include:
		  - Observation of assessor practice
		  - Internal verifier/standardisation meetings
		  - Up-dating of policies and procedures relating to IV
		  - Interim internal verification of portfolios and learners' work
		  - IV interviews

Quality Improvement Activities	Responsibility	Action to be taken
		- Review of registrations - Updating of policies and procedures relating to IV • The IV is responsible for ensuring that actions identified during external verifier visits are addressed fully. • Training and development needs identified should be incorporated into staff training plans.
8. Collection and analysis of data on participation, learner success and progression		• Management information should be collated at least monthly to provide an overview of learner progress. • Individual learner progress should be reviewed to identify any causes of concern and to celebrate learner success. • Data on participation, progression and learner success should be collated each quarter or more frequently if required by funders, to enable a full evaluation of company performance against funding body contracts. • Performance should be analysed across different learner groups to identify trends or areas for concern. • Where necessary managers should develop action points to address issues identified through the evaluation. • Progress against action points should be reviewed monthly (or more frequently where serious concerns are identified) • Findings should be shared with staff through team meetings
9. Self-assessment and Quality Improvement Planning *Tool 12 can support you with this activity* *– SAMPLE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT TEMPLATE PAGE 32* *Tool 13 can support you with this activity* *– QUICK GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN*		• Self-assessment should be completed annually against standards in the Common Inspection Framework.(CIF) • Judgements made in the self-assessment report should be based on: - Management information showing learner success and progression rates - Findings from surveys - Views of partner organisations - Observations of teaching and learning - Outcomes of internal verification - External reports e.g. those from external verifiers and funding bodies - Previous self-assessment reports and linked quality improvement plans • Findings should be shared with staff and where appropriate other partners, in order to validate the report • A quality improvement plan should be developed by each partner to address areas for improvement and to maintain strengths. Progress against this plan should be monitored monthly by the partner organisation.
10. Staff appraisal		• Appraisal for all staff should take place annually (as a minimum) • Information to be discussed at the appraisal should include: - Results of staff observation and any associated action points - Results of file audits - Results of internal verification activities - Feedback from learners and other partners • Progress to meet actions agreed at the last appraisal is evaluated and any outstanding points discussed • Targets should be agreed with each member of staff and deadlines for completion agreed. • Training and development needs should be discussed and a training and development plan agreed. • It is recommended that progress against actions agreed during appraisal should be formally reviewed with each member of staff after 6 months when additional action points and targets can be discussed. • It is recommended that new members of staff have an initial discussion with their line manager at which targets and a training development plan can be agreed. Progress will be subject to a review after 3 months after which time they should fall into the planned appraisal cycle.

Tool 4: Learner Satisfaction Survey

How can I use this tool

- To gather feedback from learners on the quality of training and support which you provide

- To support other information you might have collected regarding the quality of training and support which you provide

- To review the questionnaires which you currently use to gather feedback from learners

Learner Satisfaction Survey

For each question please tick the statement that applies to you best

Q1: How good was the information you were given when you were choosing your learning programme

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q2. How good was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your learning programme?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q3. How good is the training on your learning programme?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q4. How good is the respect staff show to you?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EDUCATIONRELATIONS.CO.UK

Q5. How good is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this learning programme?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q6. How good is the support you get on this learning programme?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q7. How good is the learning provider at listening to the views of learners?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q8. How good is the learning provider at acting on those views?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Q9. Overall, how good do you think the learning provider is?

- Very good
- Good
- Not good but not bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Are there any comments that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time and help

This survey contains the questions asked by the LSC of all learners as part of its approach to ensuring Learner Responsiveness, a key part of its Framework for Excellence. Analysis of findings from this survey can be benchmarked by providers against any data collated nationally by the LSC.

Tool 5: Sample Partner Satisfaction Survey

How can I use this tool

- To gather feedback from learners on the quality of training and support which you provide

- To support other information you might have collected regarding the quality of training and support which you provide

- To review the questionnaires which you currently use to gather feedback from partners

Partner Survey

Name of person completing this form:

Name of your organisation (where appropriate):

What is your connection with [PROVIDER]?

	Very good	Good	Not good but not bad	Bad	Very bad
Q1: How good is your working relationship with [PROVIDER]?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Q2: How do you rate the quality of the service offered by [PROVIDER]?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Q3: How do you rate the effectiveness of the service/s offered by [PROVIDER]?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Q4: How good is [PROVIDER] at keeping informed by about what they are doing?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

	Very good	Good	Not good but not bad	Bad	Very bad
Q5: How good is [PROVIDER] at encouraging your involvement in its development?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

	Very good	Good	Not good but not bad	Bad	Very bad
Q6: How good is [PROVIDER] at responding to your comments and feedback?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

	Very good	Good	Not good but not bad	Bad	Very bad
Q7: Does [PROVIDER] have a beneficial impact on your business/organisation?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

	Very good	Good	Not good but not bad	Bad	Very bad
Q8: Would you recommend [PROVIDER] to other organisations and/or individuals?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Please use this space to add any additional comments you would like to make about [PROVIDER]

Thank you for your time and help

Tool 6: Observation Guidelines

How can I use this tool

• To help observers and those being observed understand observation is effectively carried out

• To help you produce observation guidelines for your own organisation if you do not have any in place

• To help you review your own organisation's current observation guidelines

Observation Guidelines

General Guidelines

1. Observations will be carried out by staff who have been appropriately trained and deemed to have the necessary skills and knowledge.

2. Observers must not be dogmatic about what makes a successful session. They should not approach an observation with a fixed view on what the session should contain.

3. Observers must be prepared for alternative styles of teaching and learning which might be as effective as more familiar styles.

4. The key factors in determining whether a learning session has been successful are whether its objectives:
   - have been met
   - are in line with the overall learning plan
   - represent an appropriate challenge for all learners

5. Lesson observations should lead to judgements about what learners have achieved, whether it is appropriate in terms of the overall programme and significant in terms of challenging the learner. Observations of Information, Advice and Guidance sessions should judge if the session has been successful in moving the learner on.

6. Judgments about the effectiveness of sessions should be carried out against agreed criteria that are shared with the person being observed.

6. When observing learning, observers are required to assess, first and foremost, the learning outcomes. Judgments are then required about the 'ingredients' of the session: the features which made it successful or not. If the learning outcomes are unsatisfactory, it is unlikely that the session as a whole can be anything other than unsatisfactory, regardless of other factors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EDUCATIONRELATIONS.CO.UK

When undertaking an observation, it is important that observers should:

7. Ask to see the plan for a teaching session and a copy of any scheme of work, or previously completed reviews. Where appropriate reference can be made to the learner's learning plan or other information held.

8. Not participate in the learning or guidance process

9. Be as unobtrusive as possible.

10. Observe the session where possible from the start to see how objectives are introduced and how latecomers are dealt with. Advice sessions should be observed from the start, interruptions can be distracting.

11. The later stages of the session will allow the observer to see how the tutor summarises what has been taught and learnt, concludes the session and prepares learners for the next session. The concluding parts of an advice session allow the observer to evaluate how progress is summarised and linked to forward planning.

12. Stay long enough in a learning session to reach valid judgments on the effectiveness of the learning or guidance process.

13. Ensure comments made are objective. They should accurately reflect the quality of the activity observed. Assumptions should not be made. Consistency is essential.

14. Observations of learning should focus on the standards of learners' work. Wherever possible, look at some learners' folders and practical work during the session.

15. Observations of Information, Advice and Guidance sessions should include a study of all documentation to ensure that it has been correctly completed.

16. If you observe any unsafe or dangerous practice during your observation you must use your professional judgment about any, or the right degree of, intervention to make.

17. Always make notes during the session using the appropriate report form for the training activity being observed. Where appropriate, grades should be given using the following 4-point scale:
    - grade 1 - outstanding
    - grade 2 - good
    - grade 3 - satisfactory
    - grade 4 - unsatisfactory

18. In feedback to the tutor or adviser it should be made clear that observers focus on the effectiveness of the learning or the advice giving process. As part of the company's quality improvement arrangements, the observation also reflects on the performance of staff and is used to identify possible staff development needs. Aspects of performance identified as being in need of development should be recorded.

Tool 7: Sample Lesson Observation Criteria

How can I use this tool

- To support observers in knowing what to look for when observing teaching and learning sessions

- To help you produce session observation criteria for your own organisation if you do not have any in place

- To help you review your own organisation's current session observation criteria

Session Observation Criteria

Date/Location: Observer:

Tutor: Observer Comments:

How detailed and appropriate is the scheme of work?	
How well does the session plan form part of the scheme of work and meet the needs and aims of individual learners?	
How appropriate is the learning environment in ensuring that learning can take?	
How effective is the tutor's introduction in outlining the session's aims and objectives?	
To what extent does the session have pace and structure?	
How well does the session plan identify how learners' skills for life development needs will be met?	
To what extent is the tutor providing a purposeful, motivating environment for learners in which they feel safe, secure confident and valued?	

How well do learning methods meet learner needs?

How effectively is the tutor using listening and questioning techniques to monitor learning?

How far do learning materials and resources reflect a good standard?

How well is the tutor adopting inclusive learning strategies?

How well does the tutor adopt an appropriate style that met the needs of learners?

How well does the tutor communicate using different forms of language and media?

How well does the tutor use effective and appropriate teaching and learning techniques?

How good is the tutor's subject knowledge?

How well is learning managed during the session?

How effectively do learners engage in activities that meet curriculum requirements and their individual needs?

How well has the tutor drawn the session to a close and provide a useful summary of key learning points?

To what extent has learning taken place?

Tool 8: Sample Lesson Observation Evidence Form

How can I use this tool

- To support observers in recording the outcomes of teaching and learning observations

- To help you produce documentation for your own organisation if you do not have any in place

- To help you review your own organisation's current session observation form

Session Observation Form

Member of Staff:

Observer:

Session:

Time and date:

No of learners present:

Session started on time? Y N

No of learners expected:

No of late arrivals:

Session context:

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
Teaching	
•	•

Learning / Progress made by learners during the session

•	•

Observation Summary

Summary (what happened during the session)

Tutor comments

Action points / Training needs

Tutor signature:

Observer signature:

Grade awarded to session

1
Outstanding
Significant strengths. Few if any weaknesses identified.

2
Good
Strengths significantly outweigh the weaknesses.

3
Satisfactory
Balance of strengths and weaknesses

4
Unsatisfactory
Weaknesses outweigh any strengths

Tool 9 – Sample Learner Progress Review Observation Criteria and Observation Evidence Form

How can I use this tool

- To support observers in knowing what to look for when observing learner reviews

- To help you produce observation of review criteria for your own organisation if you do not have any in place

- To help you review your own organisation's current observation of review criteria

- To support observers in recording the outcomes of observations of learner reviews

- To help you produce documentation for your own organisation if you do not have any in place

- To help you review your own organisation's current learner review observation form

Observation of Review Criteria

Date/Location   Observer   Reviewer

Observer Comments

How well prepared is the reviewer to deliver the review	
To what extent has a suitable venue been selected for the review?	
How well does the reviewer ensure that both the learner and their manager/mentor contribute to the review?	
How effectively is progress since the last review evaluated? How well is progress since the start of the learner's programme evaluated?	

How well does the reviewer ensure that all learning and support needs identified on the ILP were discussed?

How effectively does the reviewer agree SMART targets with the learner that provided both long and short term goals?

How effectively does the reviewer ensure that the learner understood what they have to complete before the next review?

How well does the reviewer ensure that learner understanding of both health and safety and equality and diversity are tested?

How well does the reviewer ensure that the learner feels safe and understands how to raise concerns?

How well is the review form completed and all discussions documented?

Feedback

Context of Review (Location and any relevant background information)

Summary of Key Points (use a grade descriptor with a summary of the evidence, e.g. "The review was outstanding because...")

Strengths

Areas for development

Agreed action points

Safeguarding Issues

Health & Safety/Resource Issues

Equality & Diversity (Including differentiation)

Reviewer's Comments

Signature of observer

Signature of reviewer

Date feedback given

Date when progress against any action points will be reviewed

Grade 1   Outstanding
Grade 2   Good
Grade 3   Satisfactory
Grade 4   Inadequate

Tool 10 – Sample File Audit Checklist

How can I use this tool

- To support those who are responsible for checking that learners' files are up-to-date and contain all the necessary documentation

- To help you produce your own file audit checklist for your organisation if you do not currently have one in place

- To help you review your own organisation's current file audit checklist

File Audit Checklist

File name: Date: Auditor:

Item	Correct / in place Yes	No	Further action needed
1. Application form			
2. Interview records			
3. Evidence of eligibility for LSC funding			
4. Registration documents/copies			
5. Records of all initial assessment activities e.g. - literacy/numeracy assessment - learning style assessment - IT skills assessment			
6. Records of any diagnostic testing			
7. Evidence of any existing skills, knowledge or qualifications at the start of the learner's programme			
8. Evidence of induction			
9. ILP/learner diary/learning log			
10. Evidence of all reviews/ activities at which learner progress is discussed			
11. Are all documents signed and dated where necessary by both tutor and learner?			

Comments:

Tool 11: Guidance Notes for Internal Verification

How can I use this tool

- To provide guidance for those who are responsible for carrying out internal verification

- To develop an internal verification procedure

- To review your organisation's current internal verification arrangements

- To support the development of a job description for an internal verifier

Guidance Notes for Internal Verification

Three Main Aspects of the Internal Verifier Role
- Verifying Assessment
- Developing and Supporting Assessors
- Managing the Quality of NVQ Delivery

1.   Verifying Assessment

- Internal verifiers aim to ensure consistent and reliable assessment and verification systems are in place within the centre

- They monitor the quality of assessment and highlight any issues, emerging trends and the development needs of assessors

- There are three main strands to verifying assessment, these are: the sampling of assessments, the monitoring of assessment practice and the standardising of assessment decisions.

Sampling Assessments:

- In sampling assessments, the aim is to ensure that an appropriate verification sample has been selected

- Sampling assessments should involve reviewing the quality of assessor judgements at both interim and summative stages – not "end-loaded"

- The quality of both assessment records and assessor reports should be scrutinised.

- Adequate evidence referencing will be looked for. The internal verifier should not have to search extensively to find evidence which supports the assessors' decisions.

- The internal verifier's role is not one of "second assessment".

- They must ensure that they keep accurate records of their sampling activities.

- Interim sampling: It is important that the internal verifier "dips in to" the assessment process undertaken with the candidate at different stages in that process. This can include reviewing

candidate work before decisions have been made on any unit and looking at portfolios with one or two completed units. It will entail checking the progress review report given to candidates by assessors. This will enable the internal verifier to evaluate the quality of formative guidance on assessment and the effectiveness of assessment planning.

- Summative sampling: Correct summative sampling should entail reviewing the quality of the assessment decision by evaluating HOW the assessor has reached a decision. The internal verifier must be able to follow an audit trail which clearly demonstrates that the assessor has checked that the evidence presented – whatever its format – meets the "rules of evidence". This includes evidence collated via a portfolio, computer aided compilation, video/audio tape or evidence identified via alternative assessment. Evidence must have been confirmed by the assessor as:
  - **Valid** – relevant to the standards for which competence is claimed
  - **Authentic** – produced by the candidate
  - **Reliable** – accurately reflects the level of performance which has been consistently demonstrated by the candidate
  - **Current** – sufficiently recent to be confident the same level of skill/understanding/ knowledge exists at the time of claim
  - **Sufficient** – meets in full ALL the requirements of the standards

- The assessment process must be transparent to anyone with appropriate expertise who looks at the evidence and assessment records. It is not good practice to rely on assumptions that for example the assessor "must have seen everything". It must be clear that the assessor has taken steps to verify the authenticity of witness testimony or work generated products.

- The quality of assessment records and reports are critical. Vague generalised comments such as "worked well" or "satisfactory" or "met standards" lack the detail required to establish an audit trail to the standards.

- **Evidence referencing**: Candidates should not be prevented from achieving NVQ accreditation simply because they cannot reference evidence.

Sampling Strategy

- The internal verifier will draw up a schedule for internal verification. This will normally be planned annually.

- The strategy that underpins this schedule will vary as the specific needs in each centre are taken into account.

- The sampling strategy should be agreed with the external verifier.

- The following must be taken into account in developing the schedule:
  - The size of the sample that is needed to ensure reliability
  - The assessment methods used by the centre
  - The experience of the assessors, their workload, location
  - The range of assessment sites
  - The types of learners that the assessors support – are they full or part-time, employed or trainee status, how long have they been on programme?
  - The NVQs being verified, particularly where qualifications are new or have recently been revised
  - All units should be covered in the sampling schedule, with particular focus on any units that present wither learners or their assessors with problems

Size of sample

- It is not good use of internal verification resources to maintain 100 per cent checks on assessment decisions. It implies a lack of confidence in both assessor practice/expertise and the verification strategy.

- It is important that the internal verifier looks at assessment decisions of all the team in any given period. Once the other sampling factors are taken into account – the sample size will almost decide itself. It is critical that the process follows this route – rather than the other way round i.e. deciding on the sample size and trying to "fit" a strategy round this.

Assessment methods

- The internal verifier must sample the full range of assessment methods e.g. direct observation of performance, professional discussion, Q&A, assessment of portfolio evidence, products of work, APL, witness testimony, personal reports and the assessment of simulated activities (where these are allowed).

- The range and frequency of use of assessment methods will vary depending on the NVQ and the level of the NVQ. Internal verification must take this into account.

- It is important that the internal verifier knows the NVQ thoroughly and the likely range of assessment methods and evidence sources that could be used.

Number and experience of assessors

- If assessors are qualified and experienced it may not be necessary to look at more than one or two decisions per learner and only one or two learners (depending on learner numbers).

- If assessors are inexperienced (e.g. gained the assessor award less than 12 months ago), or new to the particular NVQ, the internal verifier may need to sample substantially more of their decisions in the first 6 – 12 months. The objective would be to ensure that the IV reviews the new assessor's decisions on all units in any NVQ. This is particularly important where there are "problem" units e.g. where the evidence specifications require very specific evidence, or the standards are often misinterpreted.

Workload

- The internal verifier needs to look at the workload of each assessor so that the total sample also fairly reflects the numbers of decisions being made by individual assessors. Increasing ratios of candidates to assessors may also indicate assessment problems, which require the attention of the internal verifier. It can also lead to diminishing quality of assessment. In these cases sampling should be increased.

Location of assessors and assessment sites

- The internal verification sample must capture a picture of assessment across the full range of assessment sites.

The NVQ

- The sample needs to take account of the standards themselves. It is important that both assessors and the internal verifier know the standards well and agree their interpretation of aspects such as evidence specifications and, range and knowledge and understanding requirements.

- Common areas of weakness in sampling schedules include: "end-loaded sampling", fixed date sampling – regardless of the amount of assessment taking place and fixed percentage sampling – regardless of circumstances.

- In order to develop a sampling schedule, the internal verifier needs to have access to a tracking system that shows planned and actual learner achievement.

- It is essential that the internal verifier knows planned unit achievement dates to be able to schedule when these units can be verified.

- Tracking systems need to be maintained to record learner achievement. They can be used by assessors, internal verifiers and managers to monitor learner progress.

Monitoring Assessment Practice

- In monitoring assessment practice, the internal verifier is looking to ensure that national standards of assessment are adhered to by assessors.

- Through the monitoring, the internal verifier is looking to identify any areas where assessors may need further support or development.

- The internal verifier is also looking to ensure that learners are aware of and satisfied with the assessment process.

- It is essential that all assessors are observed as they conduct an assessment and receive constructive feedback on their performance.

- During the monitoring, the internal verifier will review the assessment records completed by the assessor.

- The internal verifier will also interview the learner involved to gather feedback.

- Monitoring involves evaluating all aspects of the assessor's performance.

- The internal verifier must maintain clear records of the monitoring activity.

- Monitoring should be viewed as part of the assessor's continued professional development.

  The feedback given must reflect this.

Standardising Assessment Judgements

- Internal verifiers should lead regular standardisation exercises with the assessors.

- Standardisation should check that both the assessment processes, as well as the judgements reached, are sound.

- Some centres may involve the external verifier in standardisation exercises.

- Standardisation should take place between assessors **and** across programmes.

2.   Developing and Supporting Assessors

- The internal verifier should provide support to the assessors. They should ensure that assessors have access to continued professional up-dating linked to both developing their assessment practice and to maintaining their occupational competence. This should be reflected in assessors' development plans.

- Feedback given to assessors during the internal verification process should be fed back to line managers and included in overall systems for staff appraisal and review.

- Particular strategies should be devised to support new assessors. These should be introduced during the new member of staff's induction.

- The internal verifier must support all assessors when standards change or guidance is revised.

- Internal verifiers should ensure that information is available to assessors to support them in their work.

- The internal verifier should hold a file showing the following information for each assessor:
  - Personal profile or CV demonstrating occupational competence at an appropriate level and current/recent relevant industrial or commercial experience.
  - Their original assessor qualification or validated copies.

- Where an assessor is not yet qualifier, the internal verifier must agree realistic target dates for the assessor to achieve certification.

- The internal verifier and assessor must agree a personal action plan.

- All of the new assessor's assessment decisions must be validated by a qualified assessor (not the internal verifier).

- Where possible the new assessor should be allocated a mentor who will work with the internal verifier to ensure that the assessor's learning and development needs are met.

3.   Managing the Quality of NVQ Delivery

- The internal verifier has a role within each centre to ensure that assessment resources for their programmes are effectively planned and managed. This includes both human and physical resources.

- The internal verifier has a key role in ensuring the quality standards in the delivery and assessment are met.

- The internal verifiers provide a link between the awarding bodies, QCA and any other regulatory bodies. They must ensure that up-to-date information is passed on to assessors and managers.

- The internal verifier is the key link with the external verifiers. They have a central role in ensuring that EV action plans are addressed.

- The internal verifier has responsibility for maintaining the security of candidate files and records.

These notes reflect the requirements of Awarding bodies.

Tool 12: Sample Self-Assessment Report Template

How can I use this tool

- To support you in writing your Self-Assessment Report

- To review the layout of your current Self-Assessment Report

Sample Format for a Self-Assessment Report

'Cover Page'

Company Logo

Company Name

Self-assessment Report Date

Confidential

Report prepared by:

Introduction

This section should contain information about the organisation, including:

- Location and background
- An overview of work undertaken including details of government funded training programmes, sectors, numbers of learners etc.
- Changes since the last self-assessment report
- Key features of the geographic area in which the organisation operates including for example unemployment rates, GCSE performance, ethnicity.

Type of provision	Number of learners at time of self-assessment
14-16	
16-18	
Adult learners (19+)	
Employer provision Apprenticeships	

Summary of grades

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grades
Capacity to improve	
Outcomes for learners	
Quality of provision	
Leadership and management	
Safeguarding	
Equality and diversity	
Subject areas - List as appropriate all of the areas covered and their grades	

Overall effectiveness	Grade
Start with a judgement statement about overall effectiveness. Follow with a summary of the key findings from across your self-assessment report that should clearly support the overall effectiveness judgement.	

Main findings

Bullet points can be used here to identify key strengths and areas for improvement across the organisation. Satisfactory practice can also be included.

It is useful to list the bullet points in the order of the inspection framework aspects

What needs to be improved further?

This section can be used to highlight the key areas that you recognise need to be included in your quality improvement plan for the coming year – keep this section brief and focus on things that will make most difference.

Summary of learners' views

Taken from recent feedback

Summary of employers' views

Taken from recent employer feedback

Capacity to make and sustain improvement   **Grade:**

Text in this section should evaluate the criteria identified under the "capacity to improve" section of the revised inspection framework (2009)

Outcomes for learners   **Grade:**

Text in this section should provide a summary of your findings from across the organisation.
Ensure that as far as possible you evaluate against all of the criteria under aspect 1 of the revised inspection framework (2009)

The quality of provision   **Grade:**

Text in this section should provide a summary of your findings from across the organisation.

Ensure that as far as possible you evaluate against all of the criteria under aspect 2 of the revised inspection framework (2009)

Leadership and management   **Grade:**

Text in this section should provide a summary of your findings from across the organisation.
Ensure that as far as possible you evaluate against all of the criteria under aspect 3 of the revised inspection framework (2009)

Subject area(s)   **Grade:**

If there are two or more subject areas covered within your self-assessment you should provide separate summaries for each one within this section of your document.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EDUCATIONRELATIONS.CO.UK

Context

Use this section to provide a description of how this subject area operates. Provide basic information such as programmes offered, qualification levels and numbers of learners.
This section should not start the evaluation of the subject, its aim is to set the scene

Key findings

Within this section summarise key strengths, areas for improvement and satisfactory practice within this subject area. Ensure that you have evaluated your provision against each aspect of the revised inspection framework.

What needs to be improved further?

This section should be used to identify the key priorities within this subject area that will form the main part of the improvement plan for the coming year.

Tool 13: A Quick Guide to Quality Improvement Plans

How can I use this tool

- To support you in writing your Quality Improvement Plan

- To review the layout of your current Quality Improvement Plan

Quality Improvement Plans: A Quick Guide

The purpose of the quality improvement plan is provide summary of the actions you plan to take over the next twelve months to build on the strengths and to resolve the areas for improvement that you have identified in your self-assessment report. Actions identified in the plan should be clearly linked to the areas for improvement that you are seeking to address. The most useful quality improvement plans identify responsibilities for actions, timescales and the impact of the action on learners. The quality improvement plan should be used to track the progress you make against the actions you have identified.

Hints

- It is not unusual to find that working through the self-assessment process for the first time reveals the need to strengthen quality monitoring arrangements. Could this be the case for your programme/s?

- The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is an important part of the SAR. The QIP is another way of demonstrating that you have the capacity to make improvements.

Format

Quality improvement plans can be take a variety of formats. If you are doing this for the first time you may wish to take each of the areas for improvement that you have identified and beneath each one identify the specific actions that you plan to take. You may also wish to add other areas that you are planning to focus on.

Area for improvement 1:

The action we plan to take	What impact we expect this to have on the learners?	Who is responsible for taking action?	The action will be completed by? (date)	Notes
Action 1.1				
Action 1.2				
Action 1.3				
Area for improvement 2, 3, 4 etc				
Action 2.1				
Action 2.2				
Action 2.3				

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EDUCATIONRELATIONS.CO.UK

Tool 14: Sample Quality Assurance Calendar

How can I use this tool

- To provide a model to adopt or adapt in line with the needs of your organisation

- To plan quality assurance activities over a 12 month period.

- To ensure that information is gathered for analysis at key points of the year, feeding into self-assessment, the development of quality improvement plans and staff appraisal.

- To support or sit alongside other planning documents and schedules e.g. internal verification

Sample Quality Assurance Calendar

Process	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Data review and analysis			■				■				■	
Learner Surveys		■				■				■		
Learner feedback meetings	Feedback meetings held at least quarterly at all sites to s a separate plan									Info. collated		
Partner surveys					■							
Observation of learning activities			Info. collated	Observations conducted across the year to a separate plan								
Internal audit of learner file documentation.		■		■		■		■		■		■
Annual review of policies and policy statements.	■											
Collation of SAR information											■	
Annual audit of IV Processes (where appropriate)	IV conducted against a separate sampling plan across the year.					■						
Internal audit of procedures and working instructions for the key learning processes.	■											
Staff appraisal				■						Interim review		