



# **Provider Monitoring Report**

**Future (Awards and Qualifications) Limited  
(FutureQuals)**

**16 September 2022**

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# 1 Background

One provider was monitored remotely on 16 September 2022.

## 1.1 Scope

SQA Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy*. This involves monitoring a sample of the awarding body's approved providers or assessment sites. Provider monitoring visits will be conducted in a consistent manner within and between providers.

The aim of monitoring is to:

- ◆ ensure the awarding body's compliance with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements
- ◆ confirm that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted by the awarding body in accordance with its prescribed arrangements
- ◆ ensure that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted in a consistent manner, within and between providers
- ◆ ensure that providers are receiving the appropriate guidance, support and documentation from the awarding body in order to facilitate a high standard of qualification delivery
- ◆ inform future audit and monitoring activity for the awarding body

All Principles may be included within the scope of the provider monitoring activity.

Awarding body documentation considered for review includes all documents banked on the awarding body's SharePoint Place at the time of provider monitoring and information supplied by providers to support provider monitoring activity. Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence.

SQA Accreditation provider monitoring reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended.

## 1.2 Provider Monitoring Report Timescales

FutureQuals provider monitoring date: 16 September 2022

Provider Monitoring Report approved by  
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 28 September 2022

Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by FutureQuals: 9 November 2022

Action Plan to be emailed  
to [regulation@sqa.org.uk](mailto:regulation@sqa.org.uk) by FutureQuals: 9 November 2022

The process will apply in relation to the timescales specified above:

- ◆ The awarding body will be sent a copy of the Provider Monitoring Report by email.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign the copy of the Provider Monitoring Report and return by email to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.
- ◆ The awarding body will also be emailed a copy of the Action Plan.
- ◆ The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and email this in Microsoft Word format to [regulation@sqa.org.uk](mailto:regulation@sqa.org.uk).
- ◆ SQA Accreditation will confirm when the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Issues and present it to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for approval.
- ◆ Following approval by ACG, the awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the approved Action Plan by email.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign the Action Plan and return by email to SQA Accreditation.

The findings of this Provider Monitoring Report and the associated Action Plan will be published on SQA Accreditation's website following signed agreement.

SQA Accreditation will continually monitor progress towards completion of the proposed actions identified in the Action Plan and update the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating as appropriate.

### 1.3 Summary of Provider Monitoring Issues and Recommendations

An Issue has been recorded where evidence shows that the awarding body is not compliant with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements. The awarding body must address the Issues and specify corrective and preventative measures to address them through its Action Plan.

The Action Plan is e-mailed to FutureQuals as a separate document to the Provider Monitoring Report and must be submitted to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2.

As a result of the provider monitoring activity, four Issues have been recorded and two Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 12	Provider 1 did not record the type of identification provided by learners in accordance with awarding body requirements.	Medium
2. Principles 13 and 15	According to its last external quality assurance (EQA) report (October 2021), provider 1 does not yet have Direct Claim Status (DCS) for the first aid qualifications offered and therefore would require EQA activity before certification could be claimed.  However, since the last EQA visit, certification claims have been processed by the awarding body without any quality assurance checks.	High
3. Principle 16	The complaints policy at provider 1 did not make reference to the fact that learners can escalate complaints to FutureQuals awarding body.	Low
4. Principle 18	The Malpractice and Maladministration policy at provider 1 did not make it clear that all suspected or actual cases of malpractice and maladministration would be reported to the awarding body.  Additionally, the Accreditation Auditor found other wording of the policy to be confusing.	Low

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for enhancement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations in order to reinforce ongoing continuous improvement. However, measures to correct or prevent these are not mandatory and therefore do not form part of the Action Plan.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Detail of Recommendation noted</b>
1. Principle 9	FutureQuals may wish to remind External Quality Assurers (EQAs) to ensure that provider policies reference the most current Data Protection legislation.
2. Principle 12	FutureQuals may wish to consider whether the recording methods for practical assessments used by provider 1 are the most appropriate for the qualifications.

## 1.4 Risk Rating of Issues

SQA Accreditation assigns a rating to each Issue recorded depending on the impact on or risk to the awarding body's operations, its SQA accredited qualifications and/or the learner.

Issues recorded during provider monitoring will count towards FutureQuals's Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards future quality assurance activity. Further detail on how the Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated can be found on the [SQA Accreditation website](#).

## 2 Good Practice, Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail:

- ◆ good practice noted by providers
- ◆ Issues recorded and Recommendations noted against SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements

### 2.1 Good Practice

The following areas of good practice were noted by providers:

Provider 1 was extremely content with FutureQuals as an awarding body and rated them very highly in the first aid sector, specifically the staff highlighted the:

- ◆ professional nature of the awarding body
- ◆ standard of the qualifications
- ◆ methodical and robust processes
- ◆ helpful staff
- ◆ ability to use provider devised materials subject to awarding body approval

### 2.2 Issues

**Regulatory Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.**

In terms of learner identification requirements, page 11 of the *FutureQuals Centre Operations Manual, 2019* states, 'centres are required to ensure that each learner's identification is checked and that the type of identification provided by each learner is recorded before assessments are undertaken.'

The registration form completed by the assessors viewed by the Accreditation Auditor for provider 1 was ticked to confirm that learner identification had been checked but there was no recording of the type of identification provided.

Staff at provider 1 commented to the Accreditation Auditor that the assessors did check photographic identification and had recorded the type of identification previously but that this process had been streamlined over time. Staff stated that the recording of identification type would be reinstated.

This has been recorded as **Issue 1**.

**Regulatory Principle 13. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have systems and processes which ensure the effective quality assurance of accredited qualifications.**

**Regulatory Principle 15. The awarding body must have effective, reliable and secure systems for the registration and certification of learners.**

Page 4 of the FutureQuals Direct Claim Status policy states, 'A Centre with direct claims status is judged to have appropriately skilled and knowledgeable assessors and quality assurers and robust quality systems. These enable the centre to make the right decisions about awards to learners without having to wait for an EQA visit as a certificate claim. A Centre with DCS can directly claim certificates for learners from FutureQuals on the approval of their Internal Quality Adviser (IQA) alone.'

According to their last EQA report of October 2021, provider 1 does not yet have DCS for the first aid qualifications offered and hence would require EQA activity before certification could be claimed. The reason that DCS was not granted was the relatively new status of the provider in offering SQA accredited qualifications and the small sample size.

Staff at provider 1 informed the Accreditation Auditor that up until October 2021, upon certification request, EQA activity would be arranged to check the content of the claims. However, since the last EQA activity, certification claims have been processed by the awarding body without any quality assurance checks. The provider did not query this with FutureQuals, as they thought DCS must have been granted automatically for certification to occur. In the course of provider monitoring activity, the provider had enquired about DCS and was informed by the awarding body that they definitely did not have it.

It would therefore appear that first aid certificates claimed by the provider and processed by the awarding body since October 2021 have been done so in the absence of DCS and without the necessary quality assurance checks.

This has been recorded as **Issue 2**.

**Regulatory Principle 16. The awarding body and its providers must have open and transparent systems, policies and procedures to manage complaints.**

The complaints policy at provider 1 did not make reference to the fact that learners can escalate complaints to FutureQuals awarding body.

The policy did reference escalation to another awarding body where relevant, and did reference the regulator appropriately.

No complaints had been received by the provider in connection with SQA accredited qualifications.

This has been recorded as **Issue 3**.

**Regulatory Principle 18. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that it has safeguards to prevent and manage cases of malpractice and maladministration.**

The Malpractice and Maladministration policy at provider 1 did not make it clear that all suspected or actual cases of malpractice and maladministration would be reported to the awarding body.

The provider policy stated that, for regulated qualifications, they would investigate each case to ascertain whether malpractice had occurred and that, following an investigation, may impose sanctions and *where relevant* the findings would be reported to the relevant Awarding Organisation or Body.

The Accreditation Auditor found other wording of the policy to be confusing.

The policy stated that FutureQuals will contact the provider to investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice and maladministration. But in the absence of reporting these to the awarding body in the first instance, the incidents may not be known to FutureQuals.

The policy also stated that where the suspected malpractice had taken place in an examination for a regulated qualification, the incident would be reported urgently to the awarding organisation. However, the First Aid qualifications delivered by the provider through FutureQuals are assessed by practical observation and multiple-choice questions, which do not equate to an examination as such.

Provider 1 had no incidences of malpractice or maladministration in connection with SQA accredited qualifications.

This has been recorded as **Issue 4**.

## 2.3 Recommendations

### **Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.**

The Data Protection policy at provider 1, despite being reviewed by the provider in 2022, still referenced the Data Protection Act 1998 instead of the Data Protection Act 2018.

FutureQuals may wish to remind EQAs to ensure that provider policies reference the most current legislation.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 1**.

### **Regulatory Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.**

For the practical assessment of the first aid courses delivered by the provider, the recording sheet that is used detailed a checklist grid with each learning outcome in the left hand column and each learner name across the top. Assessors are then required to put a cross in the relevant box against any learning outcome *not* met for each learner, but to leave the box blank if the learning outcome is met. Additionally, assessors are then required to confirm in a separate row at the end that the practical assessment as a whole has been met for each learner. This means that the assessment record sheet essentially appears blank for most learners as all learning outcomes have been passed, with only the final row ticked.

While the Accreditation Auditor can understand that this method of recording saves time on a course when assessing up to twelve learners, the idea of a checklist is that the variables that are being checked — learning outcomes in this case — are ticked off as they are completed. Also, it would perhaps be easier to make a mistake and miss out the assessment of a learning outcome when the checklist does not record exactly what has been assessed when the assessment is in progress.

Additionally, of the three assessors' paperwork viewed by the Accreditation Auditor, two had followed the recording instructions but the other assessor had ticked every learning outcome met by each learner and ticked the final line too.

FutureQuals may wish to consider whether the recording methods for practical assessments used by provider 1 are the most appropriate for the qualifications.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 2**.

## 3 Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings