



# **Provider Monitoring Report**

**GQA Qualifications Limited**

**28 July 2023**

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# 1 Background

One provider was remotely monitored on 28 July 2023.

## 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

GQA Qualifications Limited provider monitoring date:	28 July 2023
Provider Monitoring Report approved by Accreditation Co-ordination Group on:	6 September 2023
Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by GQA Qualifications Limited:	19 October 2023
Action Plan to be emailed to <a href="mailto:regulation@sqa.org.uk">regulation@sqa.org.uk</a> by GQA Qualifications Limited	19 October 2023

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 emailed to GQA Qualifications Limited 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, five Issues have been recorded and one Recommendation has been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principles 5 & 14	GQA Qualifications Limited must ensure that its provider's Reasonable Adjustment policy includes Special Consideration.	Low
2. Principle 9	On reviewing the provider-devised documentation for provider 1, the Accreditation Auditor noted that several of the documents had no version control.	Low
3. Principles 9 & 13	Provider 1 was unable to provide the Accreditation Auditor with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) records for its Assessor or Internal Verifier. Therefore, the Accreditation Auditor was unable to confirm that they had met the CPD requirements stipulated in the <i>GQA Qualification Implementation Guidance Requirements covering Centre Approval, Candidate Assessment and ongoing Quality Assurance</i> document.	Medium
4. Principles 9 & 17	GQA Qualifications Limited must ensure that its provider's appeals policies reference appropriate escalation to SQA Accreditation, as the qualification regulator, and make it clear that SQA Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements.	Low
5. Principles 9 & 18	GQA Qualifications Limited must ensure that its provider's Malpractice and Maladministration policies reference appropriate escalation to the awarding body.	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 6 & 9	GQA Qualifications Limited should review its documentation uploaded on SharePoint according to their specified review dates.

## 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 GQA Qualifications Limited'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 highlighted:

- ◆ excellent communication and customer service provided by awarding body staff
- ◆ that the awarding body's External Quality Assurer (EQA) is extremely knowledgeable and quick at responding to any queries received from provider
- ◆ that the awarding body can refer the provider to a freelance Internal Quality Assurer if required

### 2.2 Issues

**Regulatory Principle 5. The awarding body and its providers must provide clear information on their procedures, products and services and ensure that they are accurate and appropriate to accredited qualifications.**

**Regulatory Principle 14. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that its qualifications and their delivery and assessment are fair, inclusive and accessible to learners.**

The Reasonable Adjustment policy at provider 1 only referenced Reasonable Adjustments, with no mention of Special Consideration.

GQA Qualifications Limited must ensure that its provider's Reasonable Adjustment policy includes Special Consideration.

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

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

On reviewing the provider-devised documentation for provider 1, the Accreditation Auditor noted that several of the documents had no version control, such as the Data Protection policy, Equality and Diversity policy, Reasonable Adjustment policy, and Malpractice and Maladministration policy.

The Accreditation Auditor was therefore unable to ensure that only the most up-to-date versions of applicable policy documents are available at the point of use.



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

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

**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.**

The *GQA Qualification Implementation Guidance Requirements covering Centre Approval, Candidate Assessment and ongoing Quality Assurance* states on page 4 that ‘All GQA Assessors and Verifiers must undertake a minimum of two significant CPD activities in both occupational areas and assessment and verification. Reflective CPD records must be maintained and made available to GQA EQAs for review.’

Provider 1 was unable to provide the Accreditation Auditor with CPD records for its Assessor or Internal Verifier. Therefore, the Accreditation Auditor was unable to confirm that they had met the CPD requirements stipulated in the document mentioned above.

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

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

**Regulatory Principle 17. The awarding body and its providers must have clear, fair and equitable systems, policies and procedures to manage appeals.**

The *GQA-215 Interim External Verifier Visit Report* dated 1 April 2022 recorded an action point that the appeals procedure had to reflect the regulatory authority’s role.

When reviewing the provider-devised *Appeals Procedure – Q1020, Version 3 – February 2020* given to the Accreditation Auditor by provider 1 does not make it clear that SQA Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements.

Neither does it inform candidates if still dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal to GQA Qualifications Limited that they have the right to submit a complaint to SQA Accreditation, as the qualifications regulator — whose role it is to review and ensure that the correct awarding body policies and procedures had been followed.

GQA Qualifications Limited must ensure that its provider’s appeals policies reference appropriate escalation to SQA Accreditation, as the qualification regulator, and make it clear that SQA Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements.

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

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

**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 provider-devised Malpractice and Maladministration policy given to the Accreditation Auditor by provider 1 did not reference the fact that all suspected and actual cases of malpractice and maladministration must be referred to the awarding body, so that these can then be reported to SQA Accreditation. Provider 1 had not had any incidences of malpractice or maladministration.

GQA Qualifications Limited must ensure that its provider's Malpractice and Maladministration policies reference appropriate escalation to the awarding body.

This has been recorded as **Issue 5**.

## 2.3 Recommendations

**Regulatory Principle 6. The awarding body must continually review the effectiveness of its services, systems, policies and processes.**

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

On reviewing the GQA documentation uploaded to SharePoint, the Accreditation Auditor noted that several of the documents had not been reviewed according to their specified review date, for example:

- ◆ GQA 20 Equal Opportunities Policy & Guidance for Centres, Version No 2 — review due: February 2021
- ◆ GQA 415 Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, Version No 12 — review due: June 2021
- ◆ GQA 410 Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy, Version No 6 — review due: 16/07/2020

GQA Qualifications Limited should review its documentation uploaded on SharePoint according to their specified review dates.

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

## 3 Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings