



# **Audit Report**

**Safety Training Awards**

**12 July 2022**

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# 1 Background

This was the eighth audit of Safety Training Awards (STA) since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation in June 2009.

STA is a nationally recognised awarding body offering qualifications in the following areas: teaching swimming, pool lifeguarding, aquatic teaching, and emergency first aid at work.

STA was formed in 1932 and is a company limited by guarantee. The awarding body is a registered charity in England and Scotland. STA's headquarters are situated in Walsall.

The audit team were available and transparent for a remote full day audit.

## 1.1 Scope

SQA Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy*. This states the type and frequency of our quality assurance activities, describes our reporting procedures, and indicates how the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated.

As this was a full audit of STA, all regulatory requirements were included within the scope of the audit. Our quality assurance activities are conducted on a sampling basis and, consequently, not all aspects of the awarding body's systems, procedures and performance have been considered in this report to the same depth.

SQA Accreditation audit reports are written by exception, focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended. Consequently, this approach to audit reporting does not detail areas where compliance or good practice was found.

The audit was designed to ensure STA complies with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements, namely:

- ◆ *SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles (2021)*
- ◆ *all Regulatory Principles Directives*
- ◆ the awarding body's Accreditation Licence

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

## **1.2 Audit Report and Action Plan Timescales**

Safety Training Awards:	12 July 2022
Audit Report approved by Accreditation Co-ordination Group on:	31 August 2022
Audit Report to be signed by STA:	13 October 2022
Action Plan to be emailed to <a href="mailto:regulation@sqa.org.uk">regulation@sqa.org.uk</a> by STA:	13 October 2022

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

- ◆ The awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the Audit Report by email.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign the copy of the Audit 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 copy of the Action Plan and return by email to SQA Accreditation.

The findings of this Audit 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 Audit 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 STA as a separate document to the Audit Report and must be submitted to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2.

As a result of the audit and post-audit activities, one Issue has been recorded and one Recommendation has been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 16	The complaints policy stated that a complainant can refer appeals to SQA Accreditation, which is incorrect. The correct wording for amendment is that a complaint can be submitted to SQA Accreditation regarding an appeal.	Low

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for enhancement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations 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 & 13	There was no formalised assessment review process in place, although the assessment reviews are being conducted. It is our recommendation that the process should be formalised and documented with corresponding timescales.

## **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 the audit will count towards STA'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 Detail of Audit Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail Issues recorded, and Recommendations noted against SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements.

### 2.1 Issues

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

In reviewing the Approved Training Centre Manual v22.2, the auditors discovered there was misinformation regarding appeals and the escalation process. The manual stated that an appeal could be referred to SQA Accreditation for investigation, which is incorrect. The correct wording would be to state that a complaint can be referred to SQA Accreditation for further investigation.

As stated on page 10:

'For Centres based in Scotland, they must include the appeals escalation process to SQA Accreditation in their policy in order to meet regulatory requirements. For further information on this please refer to Appendix II.'

Furthermore, as stated on page 54:

'If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to STA, they may refer the appeal to SQA Accreditation (Scotland). If the complaint relates to delivery by a school or public leisure centre in Scotland, the appeal could also be referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.'

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

### 2.2 Recommendations

**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.**

While reviewing the assessment review process, the auditors raised a concern regarding the considerations that are made to reflect anticipated timescales and the management of this. For example, the timeline for providing an AC2 form to SQA Accreditation. The timescales are not formalised and documented within the procedural documents.

Currently, this process is managed by a long-standing member of staff who has comprehensive knowledge of the timescales and requirements. Our concern is that if this individual becomes absent, it creates a risk of missing deadlines. We recommend that the procedure be formalised to include the timescales and deadlines to mitigate this risk, particularly when new staff are recruited, or during handovers between staff.



We are satisfied with the decision to grade this as a recommendation, particularly as the further development of the assessment review process will ensure the transfer of knowledge. To date, we have not had any issues regarding timescales being met.

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

## **3 Acceptance of Audit Findings**