



Provider Monitoring Report

**Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
(ACCA)**

23 January 2023

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1 Background

One ACCA approved learning partner (ALP) was monitored remotely on 23 January 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

ACCA provider monitoring date: 23 January 2023

Provider Monitoring Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 1 February 2023

Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by ACCA: 15 March 2023

Action Plan to be emailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by ACCA: 15 March 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.
- ◆ 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 ACCA 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, one Issue has been recorded and one Recommendation has been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 13	Awarding body monitoring activity has not taken place at the Learning Partner in accordance with documented timescales.	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.

Recommendation	Detail of Recommendation noted
1. Principle 6	To ensure the analysis of pass rates is effective, ACCA may wish to review how data is processed for students who do not attend examinations.

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 ACCA'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.

Provider 1 highlighted the:

- ◆ position of ACCA as industry leaders in the accountancy field
- ◆ positive and professional relationship with the awarding body
- ◆ good communication from ACCA with provider staff and students
- ◆ quick resolution of queries
- ◆ resources on the Education Hub for tutors
- ◆ proactive nature of ACCA in engaging with tutors about material on the Education Hub

2.2 Issues

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.

In terms of monitoring by ACCA, Section 7 of the *ACCA Approved Learning Partner Handbook 2022-23 (Guidance and Regulations for working with ACCA)*, states, 'Monitoring visits for Gold and Platinum learning providers who are teaching face to face, online learning or blended learning delivery will normally be conducted at least once every three years.'

Provider 1 had not had a monitoring visit from ACCA since August 2019, ie in nearly three and a half years. Staff at the provider had submitted the annual renewal documentation each year within this time and had been granted re-approval as a Gold Learning Partner, so ACCA did have some oversight of the provider within this period. Also, staff commented that there has been regular contact with ACCA about courses and their delivery, though no information had been given about the scheduling of a monitoring visit. The Accreditation Auditor also acknowledges the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to awarding body monitoring activities. Nonetheless, monitoring activity has not taken place at the Learning Partner in accordance with timescales.

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

2.3 Recommendations

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

Staff at the provider submit information on student numbers to ACCA for statistical purposes. This information is used by ACCA to analyse pass rates, as Learning Partners are required to meet/exceed certain global pass rate targets.

However, students who have been absent from an examination are counted as a 'fail' within this analysis. Provider staff felt this method gave a false representation of results, making pass rates look artificially low, as these students had not actually failed. Additionally, given the provider works with relatively small numbers of students, the results from one or two students have a big impact on overall pass rates.

To ensure the analysis of pass rates is effective, ACCA may wish to review how data is processed for students who do not attend examinations.

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

3 Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings