Provider Monitoring Report

IMI

21 April 2020 to 28 April 2020

Contents

1 Background

Two providers were monitored remotely on 21 and 28 April 2020.

The Accreditation Auditor would like to acknowledge the support, contribution and level of engagement from the two providers throughout the remote provider monitoring process.

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

IMI provider monitoring dates: 21–28 April 2020

Provider Monitoring Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 27 May 2020

Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by IMI: 15 July 2020

Action Plan to be emailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by IMI: 15 July 2020
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 IMI 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. Principle 6	There is a discrepancy between the currency of documents uploaded to SharePoint and those in the *IMI Operating Manual* on the IMI website.	Low
2. Principle 10	In provider 1, the materials used to assess the numeracy Workplace Core Skill were not specifically relevant to the automotive workplace as required.	Low
3. Principles 12 and 10	The complaints procedure in provider 2 did not reference escalation to the IMI awarding body. A similar Issue at a different provider was raised previously in the Provider Monitoring Report of 2018–19. Additionally, a recent *IMI External Quality Assurance* report at provider 2 had highlighted an administrative issue with the complaint procedure but had not highlighted concern with the content of the procedure.	Medium
4. Principles 13 and 10	The appeals procedure in provider 1 did not reference escalation to the IMI awarding body. Additionally, a recent *IMI External Quality Assurance* report at provider 1 had highlighted an administrative issue with the appeals procedure but had not highlighted concern with the content of the procedure.	Low

5. Principles 14 and 10	The malpractice and maladministration procedure at provider 2 did not allow for suspected cases to be reported to the awarding body.	Medium
	An Issue concerning reporting procedures for malpractice and maladministration at a different provider was raised previously in the Provider Monitoring Report of 2018–19.	
	Additionally, a recent *IMI External Quality Assurance* report at provider 2 had highlighted an administrative issue with the malpractice and maladministration policy but had not highlighted concern with the content of the procedure.	

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.
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Recommendation	Detail of Recommendation noted
1. Principle 10	Staff in provider 1 explained to the Accreditation Auditor that there had been long delays in the awarding body launching the e-portfolio for the IMI Certificate in Transport Maintenance at SCQF level 4 R570 04.
	IMI may wish to review any problems that have been identified with the e-portfolio platform to ensure full functionality for qualifications and candidates from the outset.

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 IMI'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

Both providers spoke extremely highly of IMI as an awarding body.

Provider 1 highlighted the:

♦ professional nature
♦ status as sector leaders
♦ comprehensive support system for providers
♦ quick resolution of queries
♦ efficient registration and certification system
♦ supportive external quality assurers

Similarly, provider 2 highlighted the:

♦ quick response to queries
♦ excellent administration staff
♦ level of sector knowledge
♦ professional and valued relationship with the long-standing external quality assurer
♦ efficient registration and certification processes

2.2   Issues

Regulatory Principle 6. The awarding body and its providers shall maintain accurate documents, records and data.

In preparation for provider monitoring, IMI gave the Accreditation Auditor access to the *IMI Centres Section* of the website containing relevant information and documents, including the *IMI Operating Manual.* The Accreditation Auditor noticed a discrepancy between the currency of documents uploaded to SharePoint and those in the *IMI Operating Manual*.

As an example, there is a discrepancy with the following documents (this list is not exhaustive):

♦ *Section 2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Centre Personnel*
♦ *Section 2.3 Centre Policies and Procedures*
♦ *Section 2.4 Internal Quality Assurance*
♦ *Section 7.1 External Quality Assurance — Monitoring Visits*
♦ *Section 7.2 External Quality Assurance — Sampling*
♦ *IMI Malpractice and Maladministration policy*

IMI must ensure that the documents on SharePoint remain current.

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

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

During provider monitoring, materials used to assess Workplace Core Skills were reviewed. The Accreditation Auditor noted that three documents used to assess numeracy in provider 1 were not specifically relevant to the automotive workplace, as they concerned 'recycling', 'getting money' and 'carbon footprint'.

The materials across all five Workplace Core Skills at provider 1 were based loosely on the assessment packs devised by SQA Accreditation; packs which can be used where the Workplace Core Skills are not embedded in the SVQ and where the associated Core Skill Signposting does not indicate sufficient naturally occurring evidence for the SCQF level required for the Modern Apprenticeship. The intention of these assessment packs is that they are adapted to make them relevant to the workplace. For example, page 2 of the *Workplace Core Skills Assessment Support Pack for Numeracy at SCQF level 5* states that, 'the unit is designed for the workplace and the content should involve tasks and skills that are suited to the requirements of the candidate's working environment'.

The Accreditation Auditor understands that the content of the materials designed to assess the Workplace Core Skills in provider 1 is under review. Currently, however, the numeracy assessment materials being used are not relevant to the workplace as required.

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

Regulatory Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers shall have open and transparent systems to manage complaints.

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

The complaints procedure in provider 2 did not reference escalation to the IMI awarding body. The procedure only referenced escalation for qualifications delivered through another awarding body, though did reference escalation to the regulator. Similar information was contained in the candidate induction document at the provider.

Where provider policies and procedures do not inform candidates fully of the complaint escalation route to an awarding body, there is a risk that complaints are not progressed where necessary. The Accreditation Auditor understands from discussion with staff at provider 2 that escalation to the IMI awarding body was omitted in error from the current policy, as the previous iteration had contained appropriate reference to escalation.

An Issue concerning appropriate escalation in complaints documentation at a different provider was raised previously in the Provider Monitoring Report of 2018–19.

Additionally, a recent *IMI External Quality Assurance* report at provider 2 had highlighted an administrative issue with the complaint procedure but had not highlighted concern with the content of the procedure.

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

Regulatory Principle 13. The awarding body and its providers shall have clear, fair and equitable procedures to manage appeals.

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

The appeals procedure in provider 1 did not reference escalation to the IMI awarding body. The procedure only referenced escalation for qualifications delivered through another awarding body, though did reference escalation to the regulator.

For Scottish Colleges guidance from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) states that they do not have to list every single awarding body that they deal with, but where they choose to do so, they should be highlighting the correct one for the qualification being delivered and certificated.

Additionally, a recent *IMI External Quality Assurance* report at provider 1 had highlighted an administrative issue with the appeals procedure but had not highlighted concern with the content of the procedure.

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

Regulatory Principle 14. The awarding body and its providers shall ensure that it has safeguards to prevent and manage cases of malpractice and maladministration.

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

The malpractice and maladministration policy at provider 2 outlined procedures for an initial internal investigation and conclusion, only reporting confirmed cases of malpractice and maladministration to the awarding body.

In accordance with Regulatory Principle 14, page 3 of the *IMI Malpractice and Maladministration policy November 2019* states that, 'anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must notify the IMI immediately.' However, the provider policy did not meet this requirement.

An Issue concerning reporting procedures for malpractice and maladministration at a different provider was raised previously in the Provider Monitoring Report of 2018–19.

Additionally, a recent *IMI External Quality Assurance* report at provider 2 had highlighted an administrative issue with the malpractice and maladministration policy but had not highlighted concern with the content of the procedure.

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

2.3   Recommendations

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

Staff in provider 1 explained to the Accreditation Auditor that there had been long delays in the awarding body launching the e-portfolio for the IMI Certificate in Transport Maintenance at SCQF level 4 R570 04, even though there were very few changes to this qualification from the previous accredited version.

The staff member at the provider understood that the source of the delays were related to issues from an external supplier and to some extent were outside the control of the awarding body. Nonetheless, the lack of functionality of the e-portfolio platform for this qualification meant that candidates were forced to undertake the qualification on paper-based portfolios which would not have been their choice.

IMI may wish to review any problems that have been identified with the e-portfolio platform to ensure full functionality for qualifications and candidates from the outset.

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

3   Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings

For and on behalf of IMI: For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

Print name   **Print name**

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Signature   **Signature**

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Designation   **Designation**

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Date   **Date**

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