Provider Monitoring Report

Lantra Awards

12 September 2018

Contents

1   Background

One provider was monitored on 12 September 2018.

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. Consequently, this approach to provider monitoring reporting will not detail areas where compliance or good practice was identified by SQA Accreditation.

1.2   Provider Monitoring Report Timescales

Lantra Awards provider monitoring date: 12 September 2018

Provider Monitoring Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 24 October 2018

Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by Lantra Awards: 6 December 2018

Action Plan to be e-mailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by Lantra Awards: 6 December 2018

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

♦   The awarding body will be sent two signed copies of the Provider Monitoring Report by post.

♦   The awarding body must sign both copies of the Provider Monitoring Report and return one by post to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.

♦   The awarding body will also be e-mailed a copy of the Provider Monitoring Report (for information only) and an electronic copy of the Action Plan.

♦   The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and e-mail 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 two signed copies of the approved Action Plan by post.

♦   The awarding body must sign both copies of the Action Plan and return one by post 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 Lantra Awards 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, six Issues have been recorded and no Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principles 5 and 7	The provider was unaware of a significant guidance document relating to the operation of Lantra Awards providers.	Medium
2. Principle 5, 12 and 13	Candidates are not made aware of the circumstances under which they can escalate issues to SQA Accreditation.	Low
3. Principle 8	The provider was unable to produce certificates of competence for its assessors.	Medium
4. Principle 10	The awarding body has never performed an External Quality Assurance visit (EQA) at the provider.	High
5. Principle 10	The provider does not have a qualified internal verifier.	High
6. Principle 15	Candidate paperwork is not stored securely.	High

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 Lantra Award'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 area of good practice was noted by the provider:

Provider 1 highlighted: That the course materials and the information relating to course content available from the awarding body website is very good.

2.2　Issues

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

Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body shall have effective arrangements for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

The Accreditation Auditor noted that the provider was unaware of the document titled Lantra Awards *Provider Guidance Handbook Version 7.* The provider's internal verifier (IV) was appointed in April and is the main contact between the awarding body and the provider. Lantra Awards did not make the new provider contact aware of the guidance document, which is specifically aimed at providers that offer its qualifications.

If the provider had been made aware of this document during communications or external quality assurance from the awarding body, some of the other issues in this report may have been mitigated.

This has been recorded as **Issue 1**

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

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

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

When reviewing the provider's policies, the Accreditation Auditor noted that the *Lantra Awards Complaints Policy* did not make any reference to the candidates' right to complain to SQA Accreditation after exhausting the provider's and the awarding body's complaints procedures.

Similarly, the provider's *Lantra Awards Appeals Policy* does not reference the candidates' right to contact SQA Accreditation after exhausting the provider's and awarding body's appeals procedure.

The Lantra Awards *Annual Provider Agreement* states that providers will 'ensure learners are aware that where an appeal or a complaint is in relation to a regulated qualification, an appeal or complaint can be made to the appropriate regulatory authority'.

SQA Accreditation may undertake activities to assess the effectiveness of the Awarding Body and/or the provider's appeals process, however, SQA Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements. , Therefore, any reference with regards to Lantra Awards appeals being escalated to SQA Accreditation is incorrect.

The awarding body must ensure that candidates are made aware of the circumstances under which they can escalate issues to SQA Accreditation which will be treated as complaints.

This has been recorded as **Issue 2**

Regulatory Principle 8. The awarding body shall ensure that SQA Accreditation is granted access to all information pertaining to SQA accredited qualifications.

On the day of the visit the provider was unable to produce certificates of competence for its assessors.

The *Provider Annual Agreement* states that the provider will 'retain a workforce of appropriate size and competence to undertake the delivery of training and qualifications'.

The Accreditation Auditor was therefore unable to be sure that the assessors employed by the provider are competent. While the assessors are registered with Lantra Awards, the provider was unable to show evidence of what qualifications the assessors had achieved.

The awarding body must ensure that staff members at its providers are both competent and are able to provide evidence of this.

This has been recorded as **Issue 3**

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 Accreditation Auditor noted that the provider has never had an external verification visit from the awarding body.

The Lantra Awards *Provider Annual Agreement* states that Lantra Awards will 'provide for the purposes of training and/or assessment access to quality assured Instructors, Assessors or EQAs'.

Lantra Awards Provider Guidance handbook Version 7 states 'routine Provider Quality Assurance is included in the membership fees'.

Lantra Awards has not performed any External Quality Assurance at the provider. The Accreditation Auditor considers that an EQA visit would have mitigated many of the issues that are mentioned in this report., As EQA visits should be routine and are included in the annual membership fees, it is concerning that the awarding body has not visited the provider at all.

The awarding body must ensure that its providers are subject to regular and robust quality assurance measures in order to maintain the integrity of accredited qualifications.

This has been recorded as **Issue 4**

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 *Lantra Awards Provider Guidance handbook Version 7 ANNEX 3* states: 'Providers must have processes and systems in place for the purposes of validating the assessment decisions to ensure consistency and fairness. One of the key aspects of this is the need to appoint an Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).' The document *ANNEX 3* also states that the IQA must 'hold or be working towards a regulated IQA qualification or equivalent'.

The Lantra Awards SSC document *Rationale for the Assessment of Qualifications and Units in Forestry and Arboriculture* states 'all assessment offered through regulated Awarding Organisations/bodies will have to comply with defined and monitored quality assurance procedures which provide necessary consistency, rigour and validation of the knowledge and performance'.

The Accreditation Auditor noted that the staff member at the provider who is responsible for internal quality assurance does not have any qualifications relating to internal verification. The individual described scrutinising the paperwork from assessments as a 'sense check' to ensure they are completed rather than carrying out verification of the evidence presented by the assessors.

The awarding body must ensure that its providers have robust quality assurance procedures in place in order to maintain the integrity of accredited qualifications.

This has been recorded as **Issue 5**

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

The Accreditation Auditor noted that paperwork, including certificates, containing candidates' personal information is not held securely at the provider.

The *Lantra Awards Provider Guidance handbook Version 7* states that 'Lantra requires you to securely retain all documents relating to a learner's registration (training, qualifications, customised provision) for a minimum period of 3 years from date of final training or assessment completion'.

The Accreditation Auditor noted that candidate paperwork is often stored on a desk in an open plan office for days before being sent out to candidates. A number of staff members at the provider could potentially access personal information as these are not held securely.

With respect to General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Data Protection Act 2018, candidate's personal information should be stored securely.

The awarding body must ensure that its providers keep candidates' personal information secure and are fully compliant with all legislative requirements.

This has been recorded as **Issue 6**

2.3　Recommendations

There were no recommendations

3   Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings

For and on behalf of Lantra Awards: 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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