



Provider Monitoring Report

SafeCert Awards Limited

15 January – 29 January 2019

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1 Background

Three providers were monitored between 15 January and 29 January 2019.

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

SafeCert provider monitoring dates: 15 January – 29 January 2019

Provider Monitoring Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 13 March 2019

For action required, please reference SQA Accreditation sanction letter dated 20 March 2019.

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

As a result of the provider monitoring activity, eight Issues have been recorded and three Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 6	<p>After the SafeCert audit of 2018, the awarding body produced an updated sign off record to capture the closing out date for actions and the evidence submitted by providers.</p> <p>However, the <i>SafeCert EQA (external quality assurance) form</i> does not include any dates for the actions to be completed by providers. Hence the process for action plan sign off is not clear.</p>	Medium
2. Principle 6	<p>SharePoint is not being maintained by the awarding body for currency of documents and policies. This Issue has been raised previously in the last two SafeCert audits. The SafeCert website also lacks current first aid qualification specifications.</p>	Medium
3. Principles 10 and 6	<p>Providers 1 and 2 highlighted errors in the multiple choice question papers for the <i>SafeCert SCQF Level 6 Award in First Aid at Work</i>.</p> <p>Both providers have highlighted these errors to the awarding body but changes had not been made to the assessment papers at the time of provider monitoring.</p>	High
4. Principles 10 and 6	<p>The <i>SafeCert EQA Guidance 2017</i> states that copies of the external quality assurance report will be circulated to providers. Provider 1 had not received its report nearly a year after the external quality assurance visit, despite repeatedly contacting SafeCert to request it. Similarly, provider 2 only received its report after repeated requests, including highlighting to the awarding body that the report was being requested as part of SQA Accreditation's provider monitoring visit.</p>	Medium

<p>5. Principles 10 and 6</p>	<p>The external quality assurance report at provider 3 included an action for the provider to complete. However, in the risk assessment section of the report, the external quality assurer had failed to list the action identified. When actions are not stated clearly to providers in reports, there is a risk that the action is not completed as intended.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>6. Principles 10 and 6</p>	<p>Provider 1 contacted SafeCert to request a resit paper. It was informed that there was no resit paper, contrary to what is indicated in the SafeCert documentation.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>7. Principles 15 and 6</p>	<p>There is a discrepancy in the certification timescales given in the <i>SafeCert Qualifications Delivery Manual</i> and the <i>SafeCert Customer Service Statement</i>.</p> <p>Provider 2 had not received certificates in accordance with any of the timescales stated.</p> <p>Both providers 2 and 3 commented that many of the candidate names were incorrect in the certificates received and that misspellings occurred in almost every cohort.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>8. Principle 15 and Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR 3</p>	<p>The SafeCert certificate viewed at provider 1 included the provider name and telephone number; the SafeCert certificate viewed at providers 1, 2 and 3 included logos. Provider names and logos from other organisations contravene the Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR 3.</p> <p>The SafeCert certificate viewed at providers 1, 2 and 3 was missing the total number of SCQF credit points, a statement to acknowledge the Credit Rating Body and the full 4 + 2 qualification code — all of which are requirements of the Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR 3.</p>	<p>Very High</p>

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for improvement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations noted as good practice. 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	<p>Only one of the providers monitored had been issued with a provider approval certificate. The awarding body should adopt a consistent approach to the issue of approval certificates.</p> <p>Secondly, the <i>SafeCert Qualifications Delivery Manual</i> has been in existence since 2014. It is recommended that this document be reviewed for currency.</p>
2. Principle 7	<p>Providers 1 and 2 felt that communication from SafeCert generally was very poor at times, especially in terms of answering emails fully, supplying some documents and giving regular updates on best sector practice. However, provider 3 felt that communication from the awarding body was very good.</p> <p>SafeCert should consider its communication strategy to ensure consistency across providers.</p>
3. Principle 10	<p>The <i>SafeCert SCQF Level 5 Award in Activity First Aid</i> is assessed by short answer paper. Provider 3 commented that many of their candidates have poor literacy levels and struggle with writing short answers.</p> <p>SafeCert may wish to give consideration to the assessment method for this qualification and should they decide to make changes, submit an amendment request to SQA Accreditation in advance of these changes.</p>

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 SafeCert'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:

Providers 1 and 2 highlighted:

- ◆ the standardised multiple choice question papers for first aid qualifications which ensure parity across providers

Provider 3 highlighted:

- ◆ the customer service received from SafeCert in terms of certificate dispatch and general communication

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

At the SafeCert audit of 2018, an Issue was raised concerning action point closure from external quality assurance reports. This resulted in the awarding body producing an updated sign off record to capture the closing out date for actions and the evidence submitted by providers.

However, the *SafeCert EQA form* does not include any dates for the actions to be completed by providers. Actions have always been closed at subsequent external quality assurance visits but it is not known if this has still to be the case. Hence the process for action plan sign off is not clear.

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

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

In preparation for provider monitoring, the Accreditation Auditor reviewed SharePoint and found that it is not being maintained by the awarding body.

Some key awarding body documents, such as the first aid qualification specifications and the related award support packs are not banked on SharePoint.

Some documents have been superseded but still have a previous version banked, eg the *External Quality Assurance* document under Principle 9 has been replaced by the *EQA Guidance* document under Principle 10.

Some awarding body policies are no longer present on SharePoint and the Principle folder is empty, eg the complaints policy under Principle 12.

This Issue has been raised previously in the last two SafeCert audits of March 2017 and March 2018.

Additionally, the first aid qualification specifications on the SafeCert website are not current. The website still shows previous versions, though all providers monitored had the current versions.

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

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.

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

Providers 1 and 2 highlighted errors in the multiple choice question papers for the *SafeCert SCQF Level 6 Award in First Aid at Work*.

These errors have been highlighted to the awarding body by both providers 1 and 2 but changes had not been made to the assessment papers at the time of provider monitoring.

Provider 2 also commented that there had been errors in the question paper for the *SafeCert SCQF Level 4 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace* and that these had been corrected by the awarding body, though the provider had delayed some courses until the amendments were made.

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.

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

Page 16 of the *SafeCert Qualifications Delivery Manual* and page 7 of the *SafeCert EQA Guidance 2017* state that copies of external quality assurance reports will be circulated to providers.

Although there appears to be no timescale stated in the documents for this circulation, provider 1 had an external quality assurance visit in March 2018 and had not received the report at the time of provider monitoring nearly a year later, despite repeatedly contacting SafeCert to request it. Similarly, provider 2 had an external quality assurance visit in March 2018 but had only received the report after repeated requests, including highlighting to the awarding body that the report was being requested as part of SQA Accreditation's provider monitoring visit. Without the report, providers do not have a record of what actions may be required as a result of external quality assurance, which may cause delays to action plan completion.

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.

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

The external quality assurance report at provider 3 included an action for the provider to complete. However, in the risk assessment section of the report, where actions should be listed under 'actions needed', the external quality assurer had detailed general information and had failed to list the action identified. When actions are not stated clearly to providers in reports, there is a risk that the action is not completed as intended.

This error has occurred previously and was raised in the provider monitoring report of 2017–18.

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

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.

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

In terms of candidates who do not achieve the required score to pass the multiple choice assessment for first aid qualifications, page 4 of the *SafeCert Award Support, October 2017* states that candidates have an opportunity to resit the assessment. In this regard, assessors are required to contact SafeCert to request a resit paper.

Provider 1 commented to the Accreditation Auditor that it contacted SafeCert to request a resit paper. The provider wanted to have the resit paper in advance as, should it be required, there may not be time to contact the awarding body and undertake reassessment in the context of a short first aid course. However, the provider was informed that there was no resit paper, contrary to what is indicated in the SafeCert documentation.

This has been recorded as **Issue 6**.

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

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

The *SafeCert Qualifications Delivery Manual* (page 8) states that, ‘the certification process must be completed within a maximum of 14 days as specified in our Customer Service Statement’. The *SafeCert Customer Service Statement, September 2016* on the website actually states that there will be, ‘a turnaround of certificates from receipt of the results within 7 working days’, meaning there is a discrepancy in the information regarding certification timescales.

Provider 2 had delivered two courses on 15 November 2018 and 5 December 2018 but at the time of provider monitoring had not received certificates in accordance with either of the timescales stated. The Accreditation Auditor also viewed course results for a cohort that undertook the *SafeCert SCQF Level 6 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work* on 31 August 2018, which was not certificated until 10 October 2018. Timescales for certification were breached significantly for a cohort that undertook the *SafeCert SCQF Level 4 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace* on 28 June 2018, which was not certificated until 12 December 2018.

Further, both providers 2 and 3 commented that there were name errors in many of the certificates received and that these misspellings occurred in almost every cohort. This has led to more delays in candidate certification.

Provider 1 had not experienced delays to certification or many erroneous certificates, suggesting that the awarding body’s customer service to its providers is inconsistent.

Nonetheless, the delays to certification caused by both lengthy timescales for receipt and erroneous candidate details has caused considerable dissatisfaction at providers 2 and 3. There is a reputational risk to providers not able to supply the end product of a course to their candidates as expected, leading to candidate complaints, especially when the certificate is needed by them for employment opportunities.

This has been recorded as **Issue 7**.

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

and;

Regulatory Principles Directive: RPDIR — 3 Logos and certificate requirements for SQA accredited qualifications

The SafeCert certificate viewed at providers 1, 2 and 3 included:

- ◆ The Investors in People logo
- ◆ Various ISO standards logos

The SafeCert certificate viewed at provider 1 included:

- ◆ The provider name and telephone number

As stated in Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR 3, it is not permitted for certificates to include provider names, co-branding logos or logos from other organisations, professional bodies and standards setting organisations unless these organisations are in partnership to award the qualification.

The SafeCert certificate viewed at providers 1, 2 and 3 was missing the following information required according to Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR 3:

- ◆ The total number of SCQF credit points awarded to a candidate upon successful completion of a credit rated qualification/units.
- ◆ Where the qualification has been credit rated, a statement must also be included to acknowledge the credit rating body.

The total number of SCQF credit points is stated on a unit certificate uploaded by the awarding body to Regulatory Principle 15 within SharePoint. However, the three providers monitored commented that they only receive the full certificate to be issued to candidates, a unit certificate detailing the SCQF credit points is not included.

The SafeCert certificate viewed at providers 1, 2 and 3 had incomplete information. It is a requirement of Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR 3 to include:

- ◆ The Qualification code (4+2) allocated at the time of accreditation.

However, the certificate only has the 4-digit code, while the 2-digit part is missing.

This has been recorded as Issue 8.

2.3 Recommendations

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

Providers 1 and 3 did not have a provider approval certificate and commented that they had never received one. While it is not stated explicitly in the *SafeCert Qualifications Delivery Manual* that providers will receive an approval certificate, provider 2 had received one. Hence the awarding body should adopt a consistent approach to the issue of approval certificates.

Secondly, the *SafeCert Qualifications Delivery Manual* has been in existence since 2014. It is recommended that this document be reviewed for currency.

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

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

Providers 1 and 2 felt that communication from SafeCert generally was very poor at times, especially in terms of answering emails fully, supplying some documents and giving regular updates on best sector practice. Also, none of the providers monitored were aware of the secure access portal for SafeCert providers which the Accreditation Auditor highlighted to them. The portal gives providers access to various documents.

It should be noted that provider 3 felt that communication from the awarding body was very good, suggesting again, as highlighted in Issue 7, that the awarding body's customer service to its providers is inconsistent.

SafeCert should consider its communication strategy to providers to ensure consistency across providers.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 2**.

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 SafeCert SCQF Level 5 Award in Activity First Aid is assessed by short answer paper. Provider 3 commented that it mainly delivers this qualification to 14-year olds as part of a community outreach programme in schools. The provider felt it would be better if the assessment was completed through multiple choice questions, as many of the candidates have poor literacy levels and struggle with writing short answers. SafeCert may wish to give consideration to the assessment method for this qualification and should they decide to make changes, submit an amendment request to SQA Accreditation in advance of these changes.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 3**.

3 Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings

For and on behalf of SafeCert:

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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