

## Regulatory Principles Guidance Note – Principles 1 and 7

### Reporting Incidents to SQA Accreditation

This guidance provides examples of the type of incidents which we expect awarding bodies to report to SQA Accreditation in line with Regulatory Principle 1 which states that "*The awarding body shall have clearly defined and effective governance arrangements*" and Regulatory Principle 7 which states "*The awarding body shall have effective arrangements for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation*".

We expect awarding bodies to work in an open and co-operative way with us and disclose anything which SQA Accreditation would reasonably expect to be made aware. By this we mean any identified risks or incidents which could have a significant or adverse impact on:

- learners
- members of the public
- the reputation, delivery or assessment of accredited qualifications
- the operation, financial stability or reputation of the awarding body and its providers
- the awarding body's ability to comply with SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles, Regulatory Principles Directives or Accreditation Licence
- the reputation of SQA Accreditation

Awarding bodies should consider whether some incidents constitute malpractice or maladministration and should be reported under Regulatory Principle 14. Please refer to *Regulatory Principles Guidance Note – Principle 14 Reporting and Managing Cases of Malpractice and Maladministration* for further information. Awarding bodies should engage with their assigned Regulation Manager at the earliest opportunity when raising an incident.

SQA Accreditation may decide to raise an Extraordinary Issue out with the normal audit cycle to ensure that incidents are dealt with appropriately through our Quality Enhancement Rating (QER) process.

## Examples of Reportable Incidents

The following have been provided as examples of what could constitute incidents, however, this is not an exhaustive list.

SQA Accreditation would expect to be made aware of:

- Change to Accountable Officer or key contact personnel
- Significant change to governance, ownership, trading status, branding, business direction, mergers or acquisitions
- Conflicts of interest which have an adverse impact on the delivery or assessment of accredited qualifications
- IT security incidents which lead to loss or integrity of data or learners' personal information
- Cyber security breaches, hacking of awarding body online systems
- Theft or breach of confidentiality to examination material
- Incidents involving failure or changes to working arrangements with third parties involved in the delivery or assessment of accredited qualifications
- Incidents of fraud, bribery or disqualification of personnel within the awarding body or its providers
- Misconduct of personnel involved in the delivery or assessment of accredited qualifications
- Awarding body financial instability or anticipated financial issues such as bankruptcy or loss of funding streams
- Provider closure where learners are left unsupported or unable to complete qualifications
- Fraudulent issue or claims for certificates which do not meet SQA Accreditation requirements
- Significant failures with internal/external quality assurance or awarding body processes, procedures or systems
- Actions or negligence which could cause reputational risk to SQA Accreditation

## Involving Third Parties

In some cases it will be necessary for awarding bodies to involve third parties such as the police, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman or Information Commissioner; this is not the responsibility of SQA Accreditation.

## Further information

If you require further information or clarification on what you should report or how to report it, please contact your appointed Regulation Manager.

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