Safety Training Awards Approved Training Centre (ATC) Manual

Version 25.1

Contents

Introduction

Safety Training Awards is the Awarding Organisation of the Swimming Teachers Association (STA) which is a membership organisation and a registered charity.

Safety Training Awards (STA) specialise in qualifications for the leisure industry and are regulated by Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales and accredited by SQA Accreditation (Scotland). Further information relating to the qualifications awarded and the specific requirements for delivery and assessment are detailed within the qualification specification documents which can be downloaded from the website www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk.

This manual has been designed to support current and prospective ATCs to meet Safety Training Awards requirements for delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of qualifications. Our aim as an awarding organisation is to promote consistency, high standards and learner and public confidence in the qualifications we make available. To achieve this, it is essential that all ATC Co-ordinators, and those responsible for the assessment and internal quality assurance processes familiarise themselves with the contents of this manual. The ability of the ATC to meet these requirements, along with our approval requirements shall be assessed before approved ATC status is granted, and our external quality assurers will check ongoing adherence during each quality assurance activity. It is important that at any time if as a ATC you are unable to or are going to become unable to meet the obligations of your ATC approval as outlined in this manual, Safety Training Awards are informed immediately. Failure to adhere to our approval requirements may result in sanctions being applied in line with our sanctions policy.

Definition of an Approved Training Centre (ATC)

Safety Training Awards defines an ATC as any tutor, business or organisation who have the required resources and competence to deliver, tutor, assess and quality assure qualifications whilst meeting our approval criteria. This organisation could be an educational establishment such as a school or college, or a private training provider.

Contact Information

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How to Gain ATC Approval

Applying to become a Safety Training Awards (STA) Approved Training Centre (ATC) is an easy process.

ATCs simply need to have a named point of accountability that will become the dedicated ATC Co-ordinator and they must provide evidence that they have the resources, policies, and procedures in place to ensure continuous adherence to the relevant regulations and requirements. This is assessed by the Customer Services Team throughout the ATC application process.

Each ATC wishing to offer Safety Training Awards qualifications must first familiarise themselves with the approval criteria and ensure that the resources and requirements of Safety Training Awards can be met by the organisation. Please feel free to contact the Customer Services Team for advice and support at this stage. Once the prospective ATC is satisfied that they are able to meet our approval criteria an ATC application must be completed.

This can be done by visiting our website https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/ and accessing the 'Approved Training Centre' section where you will find more information on what is required to be an Approved Training Centre (ATC). Within this section you can select a button 'Become an Approved Training Centre (ATC)' where you can download an ATC application form and the additional evidence documentation needed to support your application. Once all documentation is complete please submit it to info@safetytrainingawards.co.uk to start the application process.

Please note, at the initial application stage, each prospective ATC must seek approval to deliver at least one qualification. Further qualifications can be added to the ATC approval at a later date, see the section 'Qualification Approval'.

Each application will be reviewed by the Customer Services Team, who may be in touch to request additional information or ask further questions. Once the ATC application has been submitted, the progress of the application will be communicated with the ATC Co-ordinator. As part of the application process the prospective ATC will have a remote desk-based review to verify the evidence that has been provided to support the ATC application. Once this review is complete the ATC will have a pre-approval visit / meeting with a member of the Quality Assurance Team.

Following completion of the pre-approval process Safety Training Awards will decide if Approved Training Centre (ATC) status will be granted. Once ATC status has been granted they will be given access to an IT administration system via STA Online, the system has been designed to allow ATCs to manage and standardise the administration element of the ATC to support compliance with the ATC requirements. At this stage the ATC will be able to register their first STA course and learners'. The ATC will be assigned a dedicated External Quality Assurer (EQA) who will provide guidance and support throughout.

Once the ATC has been approved, Safety Training Awards are required to monitor the ATCs performance against the approved qualifications, this will be achieved by selecting the first three courses for moderation as a minimum prior to the certification of learners.

The assigned EQA will conduct an external quality assurance monitoring visit within the first six months after approval to verify the ATCs performance. This will ensure that the appropriate resources, such as suitably qualified, experienced staff and the facilities are in place to be able to deliver Safety Training

For more details relating to the external quality assurance monitoring activities, please see section 'ATC Quality Assurance'.

Awards regulated / accredited qualifications, in accordance with the various qualification specifications and assessment strategies.

ATC Approval Application Process

Once an organisation is familiar with Safety Training Awards approval requirements and meet the approval criteria that is documented within this manual, a completed application may be submitted to the Customer Services Team at Safety Training Awards.

Below is a list of the information that must be included within the application:

- ATC Details - Tutor, business or organisation details seeking approval
- Site Details - Contact details for sites (venues) used for the delivery and assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications
- ATC Personnel - Provide details of key contacts within the ATC, ATC Co-ordinator, Administrator(s), accounts / finance contact, Tutor, Assessor and Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)
- Third Party and Sub-contracting Arrangements - Provide details of any third party, sub-contracting arrangements with ATC personnel, satellite ATC arrangements that are / or intend to be in place. Please refer to the Third Party and Sub-contracting Arrangements section for further guidance
- Approval Information - Provide details of any approved ATC status with other Awarding Organisations (AO). Please provide copies of any EQA reports from other AOs
- Qualifications - Provide information of which qualifications the ATC is seeking approval to deliver and provide an estimation of learner registration numbers for the first two years.

The ATC Co-ordinator must ensure a Tutor and Assessor Agreement and Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) Agreement is completed by all ATC staff when adding any ATC personnel to the ATC records, this is part of the approval process by Safety Training Awards.

> **For more details relating to the ATCs 'key contacts', please see section 'ATC Resources and Staffing'.**

In addition to the above the ATC Co-ordinator must submit copies of the following documentation to the Customer Services Team to support the application:

- Evidence supporting the Tutors, Assessors, IQA's qualifications and experience (copies of qualifications, CVs, CPDs)
- All necessary insurance policies
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy (where applicable)
- Complaints policy
- Appeals policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration policy
- Internal Quality Assurance policy
- IQA strategy and IQA sampling plan for future STA courses.

Once the ATC manual and ATC agreement have been read and understood, the ATC Co-ordinator must accept the final declaration at the application stage to confirm that the information provided is true,

accurate and that all the ATC personnel agree to adhere to Safety Training Awards policies, procedures, approval criteria and ongoing requirements.

ATC Approval

As part of the application process the prospective ATC will have a pre-approval visit / meeting with a member of the Quality Assurance Team, the purpose of the visit is to discuss Safety Training Awards requirements and expectations of an ATC and to provide guidance on how to use the IT ATC administration system via STA Online.

Following on from the pre-approval visit a report to summarise the evidence and findings collated throughout the process will be sent and the recommendations for approval / rejection of the application.

After careful consideration of the information and evidence provided by the ATC Co-ordinator, when Safety Training Awards are satisfied that the ATC has achieved the approval criteria we will grant ATC approval for a three-year period. At the end of the three-year period an ATC approval review will be carried out, this is called 'Time Limited Approval'.

At this stage we will review the ATCs performance and compliance history since approval and decide if ATC approval may be granted for an additional three-year period, this will be communicated with the ATC Co-ordinator.

Please note, if the ATC has a poor performance record, has a poor reputation, been investigated for non-compliance issues or had any sanctions applied we may withdraw ATC approval at any point during the three-year approval stage. If this is the case we will provide the ATC Co-ordinator with a suitable notice period to ensure all learners' registered against an STA qualification with that ATC have been able to complete any outstanding qualifications. Safety Training Awards will work with the ATC to ensure the interests of the learners are protected at all times. Please refer to the Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Sanctions Policy on the website for more information.

Safety Training Awards reserves the right to refuse ATC approval for anyone applying to become an ATC if we have evidence that suggests there have been compliance issues or cases of non-compliance previously with Safety Training Awards or another Awarding Organisation. This can be in relation to previous ATC, Tutor, Assessor, IQA performance.

Qualification Approval

At initial approval, ATCs are required to select a minimum of one qualification they wish to offer. The eligibility to deliver additional qualifications will automatically be applied, via STA Online, depending on the personnel (tutors, assessors, IQAs) allocated to the ATC. It is advisable to become familiar with the qualification specification to ensure that all the delivery, assessment and quality assurance requirements can be met before completing the additional qualification request form.

It is a recommendation that if you are requesting approval for aquatic qualifications you may need to apply for more than one, this is due to a pre-requisite requirement for specific qualifications. Please refer to the qualification specifications on the Safety Training Awards website for more information.

New qualifications approved will be subject to external quality assurance monitoring activity prior to certification of learners.

Approval with Another Awarding Organisation

ATCs that have approval with another awarding organisation and wish to gain approval to deliver Safety Training Awards qualifications, they must provide all relevant information at the application stage.

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Once the application form is received at Safety Training Awards we may contact the relevant awarding organisation to identify if the ATC has had a successful EQA visit recently, we will request that the ATC Co-ordinator provides us with a copy of the EQA report upon application. We may also ask the awarding organisation to provide a reference for the ATC where necessary. The Quality Assurance Team will identify an appropriate risk rating from the information provided, this will determine if an EQA visit or a desk-based monitoring activity is required.

ATC Management, Policies, Procedures and Legislation

In order to meet our regulatory requirements, Safety Training Awards has a number of policies and procedures that our ATCs, Tutors, Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) and learners' must be familiar with and adhere to, copies of all policies and procedures are available at www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk, they cover the following:

Complaints	**Covers the process for making a complaint to Safety Training Awards. Learners' must be made aware of the Safety Training Awards complaints procedure and how and when they are able to make a complaint relating to Safety Training Awards qualifications.**
Conflicts of Interest	Sets out our requirements for the identification, management and monitoring of conflicts of interest.
Equal Opportunities	A policy statement relating to ensuring our qualifications are accessible to all those who wish to complete them.
Enquiries and Appeals	Outlines the process for enquiring about results and appealing the results of assessment. This procedure must be made available to learners at registration.
Malpractice, Maladministration and Whistleblowing	Sets out the process we follow to investigate potential malpractice, maladministration, and whistleblowing.
Privacy Policy	The privacy policy for the Swimming Teachers Association, which includes Safety Training Awards.
Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations	Covers the process for requesting reasonable adjustments and applying special considerations to our delivery or assessment process, enabling all learners to access our qualifications. This procedure must be made available to learners at registration.
Sanctions	Describes the sanctions we may apply when ATCs are not able to demonstrate they are adhering to our approval criteria and ongoing requirements.

In addition, we require our ATCs to have in place a number of policies and procedures to support the effective delivery of Safety Training Awards qualifications. ATCs may choose to have additional policies and procedures in place at their discretion, but the following is an overview of the minimum requirement:

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity policies must ensure that they reflect current legislation and describe how the ATC will ensure learning and assessment is accessible to all.

Appeals

ATCs must have in place an appeals procedure which is transparent and available to all learners' which covers as a minimum:

- The situations under which learners are able to appeal
- The process to be followed if a learner has an enquiry or appeal about the results of their assessment
- How and when appeals should be submitted
- Ensuring that appeals are dealt with impartially and fairly
- Timescales for submitting and dealing with appeals
- The process to be followed if a learner is not satisfied with the results of their appeal and appealing to Safety Training Awards.

For ATCs delivering SQA Accredited qualifications, they must include a complaints escalation to SQA Accreditation in their policy to allow learners to complain about an appeals decision and in order to meet regulatory requirements. For further information on this please refer to Appendix II.

All appeals should be recorded, along with suitable evidence and the outcome, as the external quality assurer may wish to review these as part of their visit.

Complaints

ATCs must operate a fair and transparent complaints system for the benefit of learners', which covers as a minimum:

- The situations under which learners are able to make a complaint
- To whom their complaint should be addressed
- The timescales for dealing with their complaint
- How the complaint is escalated / what the learner can do if they are not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint and under what circumstances they are able to complain to Safety Training Awards.

For ATCs delivering SQA Accredited qualifications, they must include a complaints escalation to SQA Accreditation in their policy to allow learners to complain about an appeals decision and in order to meet regulatory requirements. For further information on this please refer to Appendix II.

Any complaints received by the ATC should be logged along with action taken as appropriate. Complaints that relate to malpractice of ATC personnel must be dealt with in line with the malpractice policy. Any complaints which relate to the design of qualification products and resources should be forwarded directly to Safety Training Awards.

Malpractice and Maladministration

ATCs must have a procedure for dealing with allegations of potential malpractice and maladministration, which covers as a minimum:

- Procedure and timing for notifying Safety Training Awards
- How and when any investigations will take place
- Co-operation with and following direction of Safety Training Awards

- Ensuring investigations, where sanctioned by Safety Training Awards are undertaken by individuals of appropriate competence who have no interest / involvement in the outcome
- Timescales for the investigation
- Reporting to Safety Training Awards.

All ATCs must ensure the malpractice and maladministration policies escalation procedures are in line with Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. The malpractice and maladministration policy must be circulated to all ATC personnel who are involved in the delivery and assessment process of STA qualifications. The ATC Co-ordinator must keep a record of all standardisation and ensure this information is available when requested by Safety Training Awards and / or the allocated EQA, please see Appendix II.

Further information on Safety Training Awards requirements surrounding the management of suspected or actual malpractice within our ATCs is detailed in Safety Training Awards Malpractice, Maladministration and Whistleblowing policy.

Safeguarding

Each ATC is required to have a safeguarding children and vulnerable adult's policy and procedure which meets the requirements of relevant legislation and best practice and covers as a minimum:

- The designated safeguarding contact within the organisation
- Action to take in case of an allegation or disclosure
- Good practice in the care of children and vulnerable adults.

Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment Procedures

ATCs should ensure that they operate within current legislative and best practice requirements. Further information and guidance can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive, procedures should cover as a minimum:

- Responsibilities for health and safety within the ATC
- Suitable training and instruction
- Reporting and recording of concerns, accidents and near misses
- Process for identification of hazards and assessing risks
- Maintenance of premises and equipment
- Risk reduction.

Evidence to support the risk assessment process, accident reporting, and near misses must be maintained within the ATC.

Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

- Training, qualification, professional development and experience of internal quality assurers
- Responsibility for undertaking quality assurance activities
- An appropriate sampling methodology for the qualifications being delivered covering whole population over time
- Frequency of quality assurance activities
- Improving the assessment standards and action planning.

Further details relating to Safety Training Awards' internal quality assurance requirements can be found in Safety Training Awards Internal Quality Assurance Guidance, which is available via STA Online.

Policies and procedures must:

- Be provided to Safety Training Awards and their representatives upon request
- Be effectively communicated and understood by all ATC staff, personnel and learners' where appropriate
- Be applied in the day-to-day operations of the ATC by all personnel
- Be kept up to date through review and revision (new legislation / requirements new equipment, technology or ways of working).

Version Labelling and Control Procedures

Safety Training Awards would highly recommend that ATCs adopt a version control and / or a review date process to all of the policies and procedures. This will clearly show a full audit trail of what procedures are current and being followed by ATC staff / personnel. This may be useful for internal / external quality assurance purposes, learner complaints and appeals.

For ATCs based in Scotland, in order to meet regulatory requirements it is mandatory that they introduce a 'Version Control Procedure' to all ATC policies, procedures and documentation that relates to Safety Training Awards qualifications:

- What is version labelling and control?

  Version labelling and control is the process by which different drafts and versions of a document are managed. It involves the naming and distinguishing between a series of draft documents which lead to a final version. Please see Appendix I for addition guidance

Requirements for Delivery of Qualifications

Data Protection and Confidentiality

ATCs must ensure that they adhere to legislation surrounding GDPR and DPA 2018. Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Information Commissioners Office.

Insurance

All ATCs must have adequate insurance that is appropriate to their business. The level of insurance needed will depend on the size of the business. Safety Training Awards will request a copy of the ATCs insurance certificate to add to the records and we will require an updated copy annually within 3 months of the renewal date. If this information is not provided Safety Training Awards will notify the EQA to request this information from the ATC Co-ordinator and may be added as an action point on the ATCs STA Online account.

ATC Resources and Staffing

The organisational structure of each ATC will depend on the size and the business model; however, Safety Training Awards requires personnel to fulfil certain roles as part of the approval process, they are as follows:

- ATC Co-ordinator
- ATC Administrators
- Tutors, Assessors
- Internal Quality Assurers (IQA).

In certain cases, one person may undertake a number of roles, however the ATC must clearly identify who will fulfil each role on the application. Please note, ATCs do not have to change the internal role names to reflect the above titles.

Safety Training Awards expect all ATCs to be aware of any perceived or actual cases of conflict of interest and how to appropriately manage them, please refer to the 'Conflict of Interest' section of this manual for further information and examples of perceived or actual cases.

Conflicts of interest are a high-risk area to the regulators therefore Safety Training Awards recommend that if you believe there is a perceived or actual cases of conflict of interest the ATC Co-ordinator is responsible for putting appropriate measures in place to mitigate any risk to the assessment process or learner journey. An example of this may be the Tutor and Assessor on a course are family members or close friends, this would be deemed as an 'actual' conflict of interest. To mitigate any risk to the assessment process or learner journey Safety Training Awards would expect that ATC to appoint an 'Independent person' to the process. This could be a different Assessor or arrange for the IQA to carry out a face-to-face observation of the assessment, providing an independent review of the assessment process. Please refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy on our website for more information.

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

Included below is an outline of the key responsibilities of all parties involved in the Safety Training Awards approval system. This includes Safety Training Awards ATCs and their key staff, Internal Quality Assurers (IQA), Tutors, Assessors, Markers, and learners'. We have included a brief explanation of how everyone may fulfil their responsibilities, please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

Who	Responsibility	How this may be fulfilled
Safety Training Awards	- Design and develop qualifications to provide ATCs with a sufficient range to meet their needs - Set high quality standards for ATCs that meet the requirements of the regulators for our qualifications - Ensure all ATCs are delivering qualifications under Safety Training Awards accreditation continue to meet the quality standards.	- Continued market research to ascertain what qualifications are required - Robust approval application process ensuring ATCs meet initial requirements - Adequate information for use of the ATCs to ensure they meet the required standard - Ongoing regular monitoring of ATCs to ensure continued

		• adherence to quality assurance standards • Provision of ATC support ensuring all requests and queries are dealt with promptly and effectively.
Approved Training Centres (ATC)	• Meet Safety Training Awards requirements to deliver and assess accredited qualifications • Plan and promote training courses delivered at suitable sites (venues) by approved Tutors • To provide adequate training equipment and materials to Tutors and issue pre-course information to learners' • Will maintain accurate records of courses, learners' and IQA processes for the lifetime of the qualification to comply with regulatory and legislative requirements.	• Ensure key staff are in place, are aware and understand Safety Training Awards requirements • Ensure that robust organisational structures, policies and procedures are implemented that meet Safety Training Awards requirements • Provide information and evidence to fulfil Safety Training Awards application criteria for each qualification • Ensure all Tutors, Assessors and IQA's hold the relevant qualification as detailed by the qualification specification and associated assessment strategies and have been approved by Safety Training Awards • Ensure all training materials provided are suitable for the activities.
Named Point of Accountability / ATC Co-ordinator	• The main point of accountability for all requirements laid down by Safety Training Awards • Responsible for ensuring the ATC and all ATC personnel meet the approval criteria on an ongoing basis, and informs Safety Training Awards immediately if at any time it is unable, or it will become unable to comply • Liaise with Safety Training Awards to arrange an External Quality Assurance (EQA) visit / request for sampling and make any necessary arrangements in accordance with the external quality	• Must have the authority to make decisions and answer queries on behalf of the ATC • Ensure record keeping, quality assurance and all other requirements are met • Ensure full co-operation with Safety Training Awards, its representatives and regulatory authorities relating to all monitoring activities and investigations • Keep Safety Training Awards informed of all changes, conflicts of interest and any other information that they expect to be made aware of.

	assurance monitoring visit plan	
	• Liaise with the allocated Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) to arrange suitable IQA monitoring activities to meet Safety Training Awards requirements and make any necessary arrangements in accordance with the internal quality assurance strategy and sampling plan	
	• Be available during quality assurance visits and ensure that all evidence related to learners' portfolios and assessment, the internal verification and quality assurance processes is available	
	• Receive feedback at the end of IQA / EQA monitoring activities	
	• Receive the report of the IQA / EQA monitoring activity and distribute its findings to responsible persons within the ATC.	
ATC Administrators	• Support with course registration and post course administration task such as submitting results and moderation paperwork • Receive feedback at the end of IQA monitoring activities • Receive the report of the IQA monitoring activity and distribute its findings to responsible persons within the ATC.	• Ensure record keeping, quality assurance and all other requirements are met • Ensure full co-operation with Safety Training Awards, its representatives and regulatory authorities relating to all monitoring activities and investigations • Keep Safety Training Awards informed of all changes, conflicts of interest and any other information that they expect to be made aware of.
External Quality Assurers (EQA)- appointed by Safety Training Awards	• Conduct on site visits to ATCs to monitor and ensure the IQA and the ATC are adhering to all requirements set out by Safety Training Awards • Investigate any areas for concern raised by complaints and / or desk-based monitoring	• Visit the ATC on a risk-based approach as and when instructed by Safety Training Awards • Report to the Director of Education at Safety Training Awards with any findings and / or recommendations.

	activity by Safety Training Awards • Maintain records of your continual professional development (CPD).	
Internal Quality Assurers (IQA)	• Have relevant experience in delivering and / or assessing the subject they are internally quality assuring or be occupationally competent in that area • Have a working knowledge of the requirements of the qualification • Knowledge and understanding of the role of Tutors / Assessors and internal quality assurance procedures • Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place • Work with the ATC Co-ordinator to develop an internal quality assurance process and prepare strategies and sampling plans to implement the support for new and experienced Tutors / Assessors in line with the qualification assessment strategy • Keep accurate and up-to-date records of the internal quality assurance process including standardisation activities • Advise and standardise Tutors, Assessors, Markers on the appropriateness of assessment evidence regarding the level, validity, authenticity, reliability, consistency and sufficiency • Take part in the formal stages of any appeal • Liaise with the ATC Co-ordinator to arrange the EQA sampling / visit request and provide samples for external quality assurance, as required by Safety Training Awards • Provide the ATC Co-ordinator and Safety Training Awards	• Complete regular quality assurance activities on all Tutors / Assessors using Safety Training Awards approved documentation • Ensure the consistency of the delivery and assessments are in line with Safety Training Awards qualification specifications and assessment guidance documents • Complete audits of record keeping and assessment security processes by Tutors, Assessors and administration personnel to ensure they continually meet the requirements • Observe Tutors / Assessors carrying assessment activities with learners' and providing feedback and Interview learners' • Sample assessments to verify Tutors / Assessors' judgements, ensuring that they are impartial, consistent, fair and reliable • Provide standardisation activities for Tutors / Assessors to ensure consistency in the assessment process, ensure that any appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary • Report any findings to the ATC Co-ordinator and the Quality Assurance Team at Safety Training Awards.

	with feedback as and when appropriate	
	• Monitor external quality assurance reports and undertake any remedial action as required	
	• Share good assessment practice between all Tutors / Assessors	
	• Ensure resources are available that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately	
	• Maintain records of your continual professional development (CPD).	
Tutors and Assessors	• Tutors and assessors must be qualified for their role and suitably occupationally competent and must maintain their continual professional development (CPD) as specified in the assessment requirements or assessment strategy for the qualifications	• Follow Safety Training Awards qualification assessment guidelines using documentation provided by or approved by them
	• Deliver and assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment criteria set out by Safety Training Awards and the regulators	• Maintain the security of assessment papers both prior to and after assessments have been completed
	• Ensure that all assessment activities meet the occupational standards for assessment	• Record and evidence all knowledge, experience, and qualifications.
	• Use sector knowledge and experience to assess learner's evidence against the requirements of the qualifications provided by Safety Training Awards	
	• Engage in standardisation activities to ensure consistency in the assessment process	
	• Keep accurate and up-to-date records of your assessment activity	
	• Engage learners in the planning of assessment and the assessment process	

	• Provide feedback to learners at both formative and summative stages on the suitability of assessment evidence with regard to level, sufficiency, validity and consistency • Support learners to take appropriate corrective action where necessary.	
Learners	• Generate assessment evidence under the required conditions which is authenticable • Provide accurate information to facilitate course registration • Be aware of opportunities for special considerations, reasonable adjustments, complaints and appeals and submit any of these in line with Safety Training Awards procedures • Attend courses of learning for the requisite number of hours.	• Attend a training course and successfully complete the assessment.

Continual Professional Development (CPD) Requirements

It is a requirement, that Tutors, Assessors and IQA's maintain their competency to deliver and assess Safety Training Awards qualifications. This can be achieved through keeping relevant qualifications up to date, as detailed within the qualification specification, and through engagement with a programme of continual professional development (CPD).

It is an ongoing and planned development process that:

- Contributes to work based and personal development
- Increases knowledge, experience and understanding
- Covers all types of training
- Increases confidence and self-esteem
- Ensures continuing competence (competence refers to having the relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes to do a certain job in a particular way to an agreed standard).

CPD can take many forms:

- Course attendance
- Seminars / workshops
- Shadowing peers
- Reading newspapers
- TV documentaries
- Research
- Supervision
- Accredited learning
- Secondments
- Mentoring
- Formal learning leading to recognised awards
- Membership of appropriate professional bodies
- Informal learning (experience in life and work)
- Reflection on what's been learnt through planned / unplanned experiences at work
- In-house courses
- Study days / undertaking specific training
- Standardisation meetings
- Feedback from others to improve performance
- Distance learning courses.

Appropriate recording of CPD is good practice and will demonstrate to the EQA that competence is being maintained. It should detail 'when' the activity took place, 'how' it was relevant to professional development and reflect on what was learnt, ensuring it highlights any skills or knowledge learnt. ATC personnel may use the following form to record evidence of professional development.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Record

Name:	
From:	
To:	

Key Dates	What did you do?	What did you learn from this?	How will you use this? Any further action?

Conflicts of Interest

Safety Training Awards expect all ATCs to be aware of any perceived or actual cases of conflict of interest and how to appropriately manage them, please refer to the sections below or the 'Conflict of Interest Policy' on our website for further information and examples of perceived or actual cases.

Conflicts of interest are a high-risk area to the regulators therefore Safety Training Awards recommend that if ATC believes if you believe there is a perceived or actual cases of conflict of interest the ATC Co-ordinator is responsible for putting appropriate measures in place to mitigate any risk to the assessment process or learner journey. An example of this may be the Tutor and Assessor on a course are family members or close friends this would be deemed as an 'actual' conflict of interest. To mitigate any risk to the assessment process or learner journey Safety Training Awards would expect that ATC to appoint an 'Independent person' to the process. This could be a different Assessor or arrange for the IQA to carry out a face-to-face observation of the assessment, providing an independent review of the assessment process.

All ATC staff who are involved in the administration, delivery and / or assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications are required to complete a conflicts of interest disclosure form, available via STA Online, if there may be a perceived or an actual conflict of interest in place.

Conflicts of interest are a high-risk area to regulators, so therefore it is vital that all ATCs disclose any conflicts whether they may be perceived or actual cases to Safety Training Awards when they are recognised. Please refer to Safety Training Awards Conflicts of Interest Policy for further guidance, this is available on the Safety Training Awards website.

It isn't possible to provide a definitive list of examples of conflicts of interest that could compromise the integrity of Safety Training Awards assessments and qualifications. However, the following situations could lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest (this list is not exhaustive):

- Tutors or Assessors delivering, assessing, marking / quality assuring husband, wife, partner, members of their family or friends
- Tutors, Assessors or IQAs assessing / quality assuring their own work
- Personal relationships with partners, family members or friends linked to ATC staff and / or learners' that could influence decision making and qualification outcomes
- Subcontracting Tutors, Assessors and IQAs from another ATC
- Agreeing to fulfil the mandatory roles in more than one ATC
- Business or commercial interests linked to an ATC and / or Safety Training Awards that may affect professional judgement
- Mutually beneficial arrangements with an ATC and Safety Training Awards personnel which may compromise an individual's ability to make reliable and professional judgements
- Where favourable arrangements have been negotiated, for example supplying information to certain individuals and / or groups who are preparing for or carrying out an assessment
- A person connected with an ATC and / or Safety Training Awards who are engaging in some capacity or have a material financial interest in a business or enterprise that compete with Safety Training Awards
- An ATC has an interest in any activity which has the perception to lead it to act contrary to its interests in the development, delivery, and award of qualifications in accordance with the conditions of the ATC.

The existence of interests such as those above does not necessarily imply conflict but is likely to give an appearance of conflict and as such should be declared to Safety Training Awards by completing and submitting the conflict of interest disclosure form, available via STA Online.

Safety Training Awards require all ATCs that may have a perceived or actual conflict of interest to disclose how this will be managed and monitored effectively by completing the conflict of interest form via STA Online.

Failure to declare a perceived or actual conflict of interest may be deemed as a high risk to Safety Training Awards regulated / accredited qualifications, which can affect the risk rating that is awarded to an ATC. This may lead to additional External Quality Assurance (EQA) monitoring activities. If additional EQA monitoring is required due to the ATC being rated as high risk, the ATC is responsible for the additional EQA fees.

Failure to declare a perceived or actual conflict of interest may also be deemed as a perceived case of non-compliance of the approval criteria, in these cases sanctions may be applied to the ATC. For further information please refer to the Safety Training Awards Sanctions Policy, this is available on the website.

Safety Training Awards would encourage all ATCs to monitor any perceived or actual conflicts of interest on an ongoing basis as and when there are any staff changes / additions to the ATC. If an ATC is unsure of any circumstances that would be deemed as a conflict of interest, please contact the EQA.

Partnerships

It is a requirement that ATCs notify Safety Training Awards of any formal agreements, third party, subcontracting, or satellite ATC arrangements. If an ATC is in a partnership with another organisation and / or personnel, they must provide details and documentation showing the roles and responsibilities for each additional partner. These agreements and any procedures must be documented to protect the interests of learners.

If any of the above may cause any perceived or actual cases of conflicts of interest, then this must be disclosed to Safety Training Awards using the conflicts of interest disclosure form via STA Online.

Franchising within an Approved Training Centre (ATC)

What is 'Franchising an ATC', this is where an ATC Co-ordinator has agreed for a Tutor / Assessor to register an STA course under their ATC name but allows the Tutor / Assessor to take responsibility of the organising of the STA course and are not ensuring the ATC requirements are being adhered to.

Safety Training Awards follow a robust validation method upon application ensuring all ATC personnel are suitably qualified to deliver, assess and carry out internal quality assurance monitoring activities for STA regulated / accredited qualifications. This validation process ensures the authenticity of regulated / accredited qualifications and protects the interests of learners'.

Anyone who wishes to register and deliver STA regulated / accredited qualifications must apply in their own right to become an ATC or sign the relevant agreements to operate under an ATC to fulfil the mandatory roles such as Tutor, Assessor or IQA. To operate as an ATC, the Co-ordinator you may choose to allow other Tutors, Assessors and IQA's to work within the ATC to deliver STA regulated / accredited qualifications. In this instance the ATC Co-ordinator is responsible for notifying Safety Training Awards of the personnel by adding the Tutor, Assessor or IQA to the 'Personnel' area within STA Online. ATC Co-ordinators must ensure all relevant Safety Training Awards Agreements and conflict of interest disclosure forms have been completed.

ATC Co-ordinators are responsible for the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance monitoring activities and the learner journey for STA regulated / accredited qualifications. The responsibility is from organising STA courses through to quality assurance monitoring activities and data retention for the lifetime of the qualification.

Safety Training Awards do not permit franchising of ATCs, if STA courses are organised and registered within an ATC there is a responsibility to follow the requirements as stated above. Any franchising cases may be deemed as malpractice.

If a potential case of franchising is identified, Safety Training Awards will carry out an investigation in line with the Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy to identify if this is a case of malpractice. If it is proven that an ATC is franchising out to others, these actions are a breach of the ATC Agreement, approval criteria and the regulatory requirements. This is deemed as a very serious matter and sanctions will be applied. Please refer to Safety Training Awards Sanctions policy for further guidance, this is available on the website.

Third Party and Sub-Contracting Arrangements within an Approved Training Centre (ATC)

A 'Third Party' arrangement is any party that provides services on behalf of the ATC. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to Safety Training Awards regulated / accredited qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners.

A member of ATC staff may operate for the ATC on a self-employed, freelance, casual basis or may be ad hoc as and when needed to support the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance of an STA course, this arrangement would be deemed as a 'Third Party'. This definition does not include a contract of employment between an ATC and an employee.

A 'Sub-Contracting' arrangement is when an ATC sub-contracts sites / venues and / or other suitably qualified personnel to carry out a service that they feel they are not best suited and / or qualified to do. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to STA regulated / accredited qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the marketing, advertising, recruitment or enrolment of learners.

As part of the ATC approval, it is a requirement that ATCs notify Safety Training Awards of any formal agreements, third party, or subcontracting arrangements. If an ATC is in a partnership with another organisation and / or personnel, they must provide details of the roles and responsibilities for each additional partner. Please provide this information in writing via email so these agreements and any procedures may be documented within the ATCs STA Online account.

If any of the above may cause a perceived and / or actual case of a conflict of interest, then this must be disclosed to Safety Training Awards using the conflicts of interest disclosure form via STA Online.

ATC Records, Data and Access

Administration and Record Keeping

Each ATC must have a robust system in place to ensure accurate administration and record keeping, ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements, facilitate effective quality assurance and provide a safeguard against erroneous certificate claims.

It is a requirement that all records of training are stored for the lifetime of the qualification to comply with Safety Training Awards data retention requirements and legislative requirements.

They must be made available on request to Safety Training Awards. The records must include:

- Qualification course dates, including names of Tutors, Assessors, Markers, and IQAs
- Course delivery records including tutoring and assessing, covering the requisite training hours and assessment strategy in line with Safety Training Awards policies and procedures
- Names and details of learners'
- Assessment evidence which is current and authenticated- including portfolios, worksheets and practical marking sheets for each learner covering all assessment criteria, signed by the learner, Tutor, Assessor and IQA (as required)
- Details of any reasonable adjustments and / or special considerations which have been approved by Safety Training Awards
- Records of complaints, enquiries or appeals
- Records of any accident / incident that occurs during tutoring or assessing
- Evidence that effective internal quality assurance has taken place, including sampling plans, report forms, action plans and feedback given to the delivery and assessment teams
- External quality assurance report forms and associated action plans
- Evidence of approval from Safety Training Awards for all Tutors, Assessors and IQA's prior to them delivering, assessing, quality assuring, including evidence of relevant qualification, professional development, in-service training and insurance
- Conflicts of interest disclosure forms giving details of any potential or actual cases.

Please note, ATCs are required to allow Safety Training Awards, EQAs and Regulators access to sites, training venues and rooms including swimming pools as and when required.

It is recommended that any Tutors, Assessors or IQA's who operate within an ATC remain within the ATCs 'Personnel' area, within STA Online, for a minimum of 12 months due to quality assurance purposes that may take place.

The EQA that is assigned to an ATC will have access to the data on the ATCs STA Online account and can view all the reports and information that is held for quality assurance purposes.

Data Retention Requirements

Please refer to the Safety Training Awards Data Retention Requirements for the current guidance, this is available via STA Online.

Please note, STA course documentation and assessment evidence may be stored either in hard copy or electronically, this is down to the individual ATC.

ATC Quality Assurance

Qualification Standards, Requirements and Regulation for Delivery and Assessment

The requirements for delivery and assessment for each qualification can be found within the qualification specification and assessment guidance. External Quality Assurers (EQA) will assure that these requirements are being consistently met. ATCs will be required to demonstrate:

- They have access to appropriate facilities for the required learning hours. These should have been risk assessed to ensure it meets the requirements for health and safety
- They have the appropriate amount of the required equipment to deliver and assess the qualification, it is in an appropriate condition and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. For aquatic qualifications, the required number and ability of participants must be provided
- That Tutors, Assessors and IQAs are appropriately qualified and up to date in the specific discipline, in line with the requirements laid down in the qualification specification
- Standardisation takes place to ensure the consistency of assessment decisions
- They are able to provide the required conditions for assessment.

Safety Training Awards Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Requirements

Ofqual and Qualifications Wales have enforceable regulations in place that must be adhered to by all awarding organisations (AO) and ATCs delivering, assessing and quality assuring regulated qualifications. For Safety Training Awards to mitigate the risk to its compliance, they are required to develop and maintain a Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy for all regulated qualifications.

The purpose of this strategy is to set requirements for all ATCs who are making assessment judgements on behalf of the awarding organisation, Safety Training Awards. The strategy will ensure that all ATC assessments are subject to a form of 'Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny' prior to issuing results.

Definition of the term Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS):

CASS

- The process through which an awarding organisation –
    - (a) periodically scrutinises the marking of assessment by an ATC to ensure it has not deviated from the required standards
    - (b) considers whether it is appropriate to correct any mark and, if appropriate, corrects that mark (including where changes are required under condition H2.5(b))
    - (c) in line with condition H6.3(b), considers whether it is appropriate to correct any incorrect result and, if appropriate, corrects that result, and
    - (d) takes action to prevent such deviation from recurring.

Ofqual definition of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS), December 2020

The suite of regulated qualifications that may be marked by an ATC are tutor assessed or externally assessed and verified by a second marker or Internal Quality Assurer (IQA). This provides an additional

quality assurance inspection of the assessment process, verifying the assessment decisions made by the Tutor and / or external Assessor prior to submitting the results and certificating learners'.

The regulated qualifications that cannot be verified as above will be moderated by Safety Training Awards to ensure the standards and validity are maintained prior to certification. More information regarding moderations can be found in the 'Safety Training Awards Moderation Procedures' section of this manual.

For ATCs who are offering STA qualifications where the assessments may be marked by an ATC, once Safety Training Awards are satisfied that an ATC has met the required standards they will be granted Direct Claim Status (DCS). This will give the ATC the ability to certificate learners after the assessments are marked by appropriately qualified ATC staff and the appropriate validation checks are completed, as noted above.

For ATCs who offer STA qualifications that cannot be verified by an ATC and must be moderated by Safety Training Awards, DCS will not be granted DCS for this suite of qualifications. ATCs will not have the ability to certificate learners' regardless of having been granted DCS for other STA qualifications.

> **More information regarding DCS for STA qualifications can be found in the 'Direct Claim Status (DCS)' section of this manual.**

Standardisation

ATC Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are consistent across all venues and all Tutors, Assessors and IQA's within the ATC. The EQA will want to see how this has been achieved in practice and will sample assessment decisions to ensure consistency is maintained. The EQA will be able to provide support with devising and delivering standardisation activities.

Please note, qualification specifications and assessment guidance issued by Safety Training Awards should always be used as a starting point.

Records must be kept of all activities and / or meetings that are used for standardisation purposes. This information may be stored within STA Online's Document Hub for quality assurance purposes. Standardisation is an opportunity for Tutors, Assessors and IQAs to:

- Share ideas
- View each other's practice, compare work and completed documentation
- Reach a common understanding about the ATC requirements
- Consider approaches to delivery and assessment
- Consider and compare others judgement decisions

Below are some examples of standardisation activities that could be used:

Standardisation activity	What is involved
Discussing requirements and agreeing on expected outcomes	ATC Co-ordinator, Tutors, Assessors and IQA's discuss the contents of a unit to identify what and how they need to be delivered, what are learners asked to do to meet their learning outcomes and what results are expected.

Assessing other learners	ATC Co-ordinator provides the ATC staff with assessments from a unit from one learner to discuss the outcome.
Observation of a recorded activity to provide feedback	ATC Co-ordinator / IQA records an activity being assessed by an Assessor and provides other Assessors with the recording to assess the activity and complete the relevant documentation. Assessors can compare their judgements and feedback that would be delivered to the learners'. This needs to be conducted in line with ATC procedures in relation to use of recording equipment and all participants need to give their consent.
Observation of a recorded activity to provide feedback	ATC Co-ordinator / IQA records a training session, ATC staff observe the recording, completes an observation checklist, and give feedback to the Tutors. This needs to be conducted in line with ATC procedures in relation to the use of recording equipment. All participants need to give their consent.
Assessors judging evidence together	Assessors to examine and discuss evidence, agree on the assessment decisions, and produce feedback for the learner.
Observations	ATC staff can observe others planning with learners', making assessment decisions and providing feedback to learners. The observer may complete an IQA observation form and use this to provide feedback that can be discussed and agreed upon.

The Structure of Internal Quality Assurance

Safety Training Awards have laid down the requirements that ATCs must adhere to covering the delivery and assessment of all qualifications within the qualification specification.

In addition to the information above the following areas are also included within Safety Training Awards quality assurance expectations:

- Policies and procedures
- Qualification standards, including requirements and regulation
- Venues and equipment
- Learner registration and identification checks
- Making claims for certification.

ATCs working together with Safety Training Awards share an organisational responsibility for quality assurance. The ultimate success of this process depends on the individuals who implement it. This means that everyone involved in the quality assurance of qualifications must be clear:

- What their role and responsibilities are in relation to quality assurance
- Why they should be doing it
- How they should be doing it
- When they should be doing it
- What standards they should be achieving; and
- Who is responsible for different parts of the quality assurance system.

An internal quality assurance (IQA) strategy and IQA sampling plan must be developed to ensure that quality assurance is maintained not only in the standards of assessment but also the administration procedures and systems in place within the ATC. The monitoring of all aspects of the assessment process through the strategy will allow the ATC to be pro-active and progressive in continually improving standards.

Monitoring of assessment provides a quality assurance process which allows the IQA to ensure that assessment strategies are being utilised in accordance with Safety Training Awards requirements, the monitoring activities will vary between Tutor and Assessor experience. The amount of contact will be determined from the results of a risk rating assessment.

 The purpose of monitoring of assessment will be to:

- Check the progress of the learner
- Ensure that there is consistent interpretation of the standards and assessment strategy
- Directly observe part of the assessment process
- Identify and resolve any problems
- Carry out informal training where required in particular with the completion of documentation
- Identify any training needs and agree upon a training plan
- Review risk ratings and learning needs
- Sign off completed units not identified for sampling.

Please note, all ATCs are required to have effective internal quality assurance procedures in place. In order to achieve this Safety Training Awards requires all ATCs to develop and continually update an IQA strategy and IQA sample plan for all future STA courses being delivered under that ATC. Please refer to the Internal Quality Assurance Guidance Document and IQA Sampling Plan Guidance, within STA Online, for further information.

The IQA Strategy and IQA Sample Plan should be uploaded to STA Online via the Document Hub, this will allow Safety Training Awards to monitor the ATCs performance and update the risk ratings accordingly.

The Structure of External Quality Assurance

Safety Training Awards Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Requirements

Ofqual and Qualifications Wales have enforceable regulations in place that must be adhered to by all awarding organisations and ATCs delivering, assessing and quality assuring regulated qualifications. For Safety Training Awards to mitigate the risk to its compliance they are required to develop and maintain a Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy for all regulated qualifications. As part of this

strategy Safety Training Awards are required to include 'Moderation' as one form of 'Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny'.

Definition of the term Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS): **Moderation**

- A particular form of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny through which the marking of assessments by centres is monitored to make sure it meets the required standards and through which adjustments to a centre marking are made, where required to ensure that results are based on the required standard. Moderation takes place before final results are issued under condition H6.1.

Ofqual definition of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS), December 2020

Safety Training Awards Moderation Procedures

Safety Training Awards carry out moderation monitoring activities on course paperwork in line with regulatory requirements to mitigate the risk to Safety Training Awards compliance. Safety Training Awards identify the frequency of moderations for all ATCs using a risk-based system.

These quality assurance activities ensure all ATCs maintain a level of consistency and high standards, it also enables Safety Training Awards to monitor that the assessment process is being carried out correctly and the IQA is completing internal quality assurance monitoring activities in line with Safety Training Awards requirements prior to issuing learner results.

Newly approved ATCs are subject to the moderation monitoring activities on the first three courses as a minimum. Once it has been established there is no risk to the delivery and assessment of the regulated qualifications or any risk to the learners' results, the new ATC may be granted Direct Claims Status (DCS) for the approved qualifications.

For existing ATCs, moderations will be completed as part of the annual monitoring activities, the frequency will depend on the ATCs performance and risk rating and the level of risk within the qualifications they are approved to deliver. If any areas of concern are identified during this process Safety Training Awards will notify the ATC Co-ordinator of this and, moderation of the ATC course paperwork and learner results will continue until we are satisfied the required standards are consistently achieved.

When an ATC delivers and assesses new qualifications, the first three courses as a minimum that are delivered will be subject to the moderation monitoring activities as stated above. Once it has been established there is no risk to the delivery and assessment of the regulated qualifications or the learners' results, the ATC may be granted DCS for that qualification.

Safety Training Awards courses being delivered internationally are deemed as high risk; therefore Safety Training Awards will continue to moderate all courses until we are satisfied that the ATC has the appropriate procedures in place and that there is no risk to the assessment process or the learner journey.

Where evidence shows the ATC is consistently meeting all requirements and adhering to the assessment processes, Safety Training Awards may consider granting DCS for the approved qualifications.

When a course is required for moderation, no certificates will be issued to learners until moderation of paperwork has been completed and shows the required standard has been achieved.

Once the results have been submitted to STA Online, if the course is required for moderation, Safety Training Awards will request the course paperwork. The course paperwork can be submitted at the time of the results being submitted via an upload evidence box.

The paperwork required for moderation:

- Learner Pre-Course Application and Post-Course Feedback forms
- Unit Failure Reports (where applicable)
- Learner Assessment Material (practical marking sheets, tutor / assessed skill sheets, portfolios, worksheets, theory assessment papers)
- Tutor and / or Assessor Feedback forms (where applicable)
- Evidence of learner pre-requisites (where applicable).

Safety Training Awards aim to complete the moderation monitoring activities with 10 working days from the date of submission, however if any issues arise that may cause a delay in meeting the 10-day deadline this will be communicated with the ATC Co-ordinator as soon as this is known.

Once a minimum of three courses have been moderated to a satisfactory standard and sufficient IQA activity has been evidenced, Direct Claim Status (DCS) may be awarded to the ATC for a period of time, however, the frequency will be determined by the ATCs risk rating and the current EQA report / evidence will also be taken into consideration.

Safety Training Awards can request further moderation's before DCS is granted if evidence shows the course paperwork is not completed to a satisfactory standard or within the stated requirements.

> **For more details relating to certification, please see section 'Making Claims for Certification'.**

External Quality Assurance Activities and the Role of the EQA

The External Quality Assurer's (EQA) prime function is to provide advice, guidance and support to ATCs who deliver qualifications, or who wish to deliver qualifications to maintain the quality of assessment and internal quality assurance practice within the ATC and ensure Safety Training Awards requirements are being met. Other aspects of the role include:

- Providing ATCs with up-to-date information, advice, and support in line with awarding organisation and regulatory authority guidance and requirements
- Providing advice and support to ATCs in respect of awarding organisation requirements and procedures, including assessment arrangements, appeals, reasonable adjustments, special considerations, and complaints
- Monitoring the internal quality assurance process through effective sampling to ensure that assessment decisions within the ATC are valid, authentic, and sufficient evidence is available to confirm achievement
- Sampling assessment decisions to confirm that they are valid, authentic, and sufficient evidence is available to confirm achievement and that agreed standards are being consistently maintained
- Confirming that assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally competent Assessors
- Checking that claims for certification are authentic, valid and supported by auditable records
- Monitoring ATC action plans ensuring that corrective actions as required by the awarding organisation have been completed within the set time frame
- Recommending the imposition of appropriate sanctions on ATCs that fail to meet the requirements.

The EQA will liaise with the ATC Co-ordinator to identify themselves and notify the ATC of their contact details.

The EQA will arrange a date and time for the initial visit, this will be communicated via email. Once the ATC Co-ordinator has agreed the date and time the EQA will outline the requirements for the visit, which will include any particular requests the ATC may have. If the assessments have been conducted over several sites, the EQA is required to monitor all the different assessment sites, over time. It is important that the information provided to the EQA is checked and correct in preparation for any internal quality assurance activities, particularly if there are any changes to the IQAs / Tutors / Assessors. The ATC Co-ordinator must ensure all requested documentation is available and if there are any concerns this should be communicated immediately to the EQA.

Safety Training Awards reserves the right to undertake quality assurance monitoring activities at any time, including short notice visits, unannounced visits, or direct contact with learners who have undertaken STA qualifications and assessments. All ATCs will receive a minimum of one face to face monitoring visit per year. Where an ATC has no registered learners, they remain subject to risk-based monitoring, however normally only an annual desk-top audit will be carried out.

Safety Training Awards expects each ATC to have a minimum of one external quality assurance visit per year, but an increased number of visits may be required, for ATCs that operate from a range of sites and are new to delivering Safety Training Awards qualifications. The external quality assurance activities will be dependent upon the risk rating of the ATC. If an EQA visit is not conducted within a 12 month period, Safety Training Awards may increase the risk rating and undertake additional quality assurance activities including additional visits.

Additional visits are not permitted without prior consent from Safety Training Awards. Any requests by the ATC Co-ordinator for additional visits or remote sampling should be directed to the Quality Assurance Team at Safety Training Awards, who will then make the decision and notify the EQA to make contact and confirm the necessary arrangements.

Please note, a charge may be applicable for additional visits.

> **If a pre-arranged visit is cancelled at short notice, there must a legitimate reason and provided in writing to the EQA. The cancellation can result in the withholding of any claims for certification until a verification visit has been completed. Safety Training Awards reserves the right to charge the current visit fees for visits that have been cancelled at short notice.**

The EQA will:

- Agree a visit requirement plan with the ATC Co-ordinator
- Agree a schedule for the visit which will normally include reviewing internal quality assurance plans, reports and records, including records of standardisation meetings, assessment records and the validation of assessment judgements through sampling learner portfolios and evidence
- Review the internal quality assurance for the qualification – checking the internal quality assurance strategy and sampling plan, IQA records, records of standardisation meetings and feedback to Tutors and Assessors
- Review the occupational competence and qualifications including the assessment and quality assurance qualifications of the ATC personnel, including professional development plans for Assessors and IQAs
- Ensure that ATC personnel have all the necessary current documentation
- Check assessment practice against the requirements of the overarching assessment strategy and validate the quality and consistency of Assessor's judgements against Safety Training Awards qualification specification criteria
- Sampling assessment decisions

- Inform the ATC Co-ordinator promptly of any areas of weakness and agree an action plan for improvement
- Provide positive feedback and encouragement when good practice is identified
- Make full use of retrospective sampling where necessary. Learner portfolios must be retained for all learners certificated between verification visits in order to allow the EQA to undertake retrospective sampling
- Recommend access to certification or actions to be undertaken by the ATC, as appropriate
- Where necessary, recommend limitation or suspension of certification, or suspension of registration.

In exceptional circumstances, if it is considered that an ATC is low risk because it has good quality assurance history then it is possible to arrange for verification of programmes to be conducted remotely. The EQA will verify samples of learners' evidence, reviewing Tutor, Assessor and IQA's records and possibly contacting learners.

External Quality Assurance Monitoring for ATC's who are new to STA Regulated Qualifications

All ATCs who are new to registering, delivering and assessing Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications are subject to external quality assurance monitoring activities on the first three courses as a minimum. The assigned EQA may carry out an approval visit on the first registered course to ensure Safety Training Awards requirements have been met, in line with the qualification specifications and regulatory requirements. Following the approval visit the second and third course will be subject to external quality assurance desk-based activities. Once it has become clear there is no risk to the delivery and assessment of the regulated qualifications and learners' results the new ATC may be granted Direct Claims Status (DCS), please refer to the 'making claims for certification' section of this manual for further information.

External Quality Assurance Monitoring for ATC's who have a Third Party or a Sub-Contracting Arrangement in place

ATCs who have any third party, sub-contracting arrangements and / or conflicts of interest in place, delivering and assessing Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications will be subject to additional external quality assurance monitoring activities within a twelve-month period. This can be conducted by additional moderations, face to face observations and remote sampling. The frequency will be dependent upon the ATCs risk rating. The ATC Co-ordinator will receive a notification from Safety Training Awards and / or the assigned EQA prior to any additional EQA monitoring activities taking place.

Pre-Visit Information for EQAs

The EQA, particularly if newly appointed to the ATC, may ask to see materials and documentation before finalising the visit plan, so they can familiarise themselves with the organisation and highlight any matters for discussion. This information may include:

- A list of designated Tutors, Assessors and IQAs for each qualification
- Any changes to the designated Tutors, Assessors and IQA's for each qualification since the last EQA visit
- CV's and authenticated copies of Tutor, Assessor and IQA qualifications
- Registered learners for each qualification (and their locations if provision is dispersed)

- Details of the assessment methods used
- Records of learners certificated since the last external quality assurance visit.

Annual Declaration of Compliance

Safety Training Awards require all ATCs to complete an annual Declaration of Compliance to determine the level of compliance and future compliance against the ATC approval criteria and STA qualification requirements. If areas of improvement are identified STA will work with the ATC Co-ordinator to support them in addressing these.

The submission will be shared with the ATC's allocated EQA and where applicable it may also be shared with the regulators.

The Declaration of Compliance is divided into three sections,

1. Declaration of current and future compliance
2. Key lines of enquiry
3. ATC Co-ordinator Final Declaration.

The ATC Co-ordinator must complete and sign the Declaration of Compliance, ensuring all boxes are completed and the information given is accurate with sufficient detail.

STA have a regulatory obligation to take appropriate action against an ATC, if the Declaration of Compliance is not completed and returned within the required timeframes, in line with the sanctions policy which may include suspension of registration.

The key lines of enquiry within the Declaration of Compliance change each year and allow Safety Training Awards ask specific information to better understand areas of ATC operations in more detail.

Types of External Quality Assurance Visits

The main types of external quality assurance visits are as follows:

Approval Visit

This visit is completed by an EQA assigned by Safety Training Awards; it will be completed by an observation visit. For experienced Tutors and Assessors, the approval monitoring activity may be completed via remote sampling. The type of monitoring activity chosen will depend upon the ATCs experience of delivering Safety Training Awards qualifications and the initial risk rating that is determined following the application stage of the process. At the approval stage it is the intention to provide support and guidance to the ATC Co-ordinator, to ensure that all the information that was provided at the application stage is accurate and all internal quality assurance systems are in place. This visit will focus on the following areas:

- Personnel - To verify there is appropriate human resource in place to adequately deliver and assess Safety Training Awards qualifications, also to fulfil the required roles for an efficient internal quality assurance system

- Course administration - To verify that aspects of training course administration can be adequately managed

- Training venues - To verify that the training venues meet regulatory requirements and are fit for purpose

- Maintenance of standards - To verify that the ATC has appropriate monitoring systems in place to maintain Safety Training Awards ATC status

- Training outcomes - To verify that the ATC has appropriate systems in place to assess the effectiveness of its training courses.

Approval Visit or Newly Approved Qualification

The EQA's first visit to a newly approved qualification will include a review of the Safety Training Awards recognition and approval criteria to confirm that the ATC is meeting the requirements.

The ATC Co-ordinator should have a copy of the recognition and approvals submissions available for the EQA. If it is found that there are serious discrepancies between the submissions and current practice, the EQA will notify Safety Training Awards Director of Education.

Monitoring Visit

All monitoring visits are completed by the ATCs assigned EQA and the focus will be on the following areas:

- To verify compliance with Safety Training Awards ATC approval criteria

- To verify the ATC has adequate systems in place to meet regulatory requirements in the delivery and assessment of Safety Training Awards qualifications

- To monitor and verify an adequate internal quality assurance system is in place which maintains standards and develops training and assessing within the organisation

- Verify that there are adequate internal training arrangements in place for ATC personnel, these arrangements will support CPD, satisfy pre-requisites where appropriate for renewal learners' and maintain standardisation procedures

- Monitor and verify that there are appropriate systems in place to adequately assess learners'

- Monitor and verify that any previous agreed action points have been appropriately actioned

- To ensure any changes of circumstances within the ATC have been updated and submitted to Safety Training Awards.

Remote Desk Based EQA Monitoring Activities

An EQA and / or the Quality Assurance Team may conduct additional remote monitoring activities within a twelve-month period, the frequency will depend upon the ATCs risk rating.

- The EQA agrees the units, learners', portfolios and other related records required in the sample and confirms arrangements in writing

- The ATC Co-ordinator must provide original paperwork, evidence or records when the EQA and / or the Quality Assurance Team request this information for monitoring purposes. Safety Training Awards would highly recommend that the ATC retains copies of all paperwork prior to submission

- If the ATC Co-ordinator wishes to send the original paperwork via post, Safety Training Awards would highly recommend it is sent recorded delivery.

Arranging the Visit and the Visit Schedule

The EQA will request a visit having reviewed which courses are running, and whether there are learners registered. The EQA and ATC Co-ordinator will then agree a date for the visit and timings for key activities. The date of this visit should be appropriate for when learners require certification. The EQA will send a monitoring visit plan setting out what has been agreed.

ATC Co-ordinator's should structure activities so that the best use is made of the EQA's time. The visit must be of sufficient duration for the EQA to complete all necessary verification activities in order to make recommendations on certification.

The follow up should include time to cover the:

- Courses / qualifications to be verified

- Internal quality assurance (IQA) strategies, IQA sampling plans and their implementation

- Records of standardisation meetings

- Assessors and IQAs to be seen

- Evidence to be made available on the day, or in advance

- Follow up of action points from previous reports

- Observation of assessment practice

- Sampling of learner work and interviews with learners'

- Named sites to be visited, where provision is dispersed

- Review of the assessment strategy requirements and their implementation

- Feedback to the ATC Co-ordinator and, in some cases, the assessment team.

In some cases, it may not be practical for the EQA to complete their report during their visit, but the main action points are discussed and agreed with you during the visit and feedback will be given. The EQA will submit the completed External Quality Assurance monitoring visit report via STA Online within 10 working days following the visit.

Preparing for the Visit

Preparation for the EQA visit is important so that best use is made of the time available for both the ATC personnel and EQA. To support ATCs in preparing for their EQA visit, a What to Expect From your EQA Visit guidance document and preparation checklist are available via STA Online. For each visit, the following information should be available although there may be minor variations.

For the Qualification

- The current version of the ATC manual
- Internal quality assurance policy (IQA), IQA strategy and IQA sampling plan, including proposed and actual sampling
- Copies of assessment planning, assessment instruments or assignments and the internal quality assurance records for these
- Appeals / complaints / malpractice / maladministration records relevant to Safety Training Awards qualifications
- Equality and diversity policy
- Complaints policy
- Appeals policy
- Malpractice and maladministration policy
- Safeguarding policy (where applicable)
- Health and safety policy and procedures, including monitoring of satellite sites

For Learners

- Start date and membership number
- Initial assessment, including learning needs and recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Tutor / Assessor allocation
- Progress review dates, including latest action agreed
- Records of assessments and summative decisions
- Unit progress and completion.

For Tutors / Assessors / Markers

- Details of any changes to the assessment team since the last visit
- Up-to-date CV's, relevant to the qualifications assessed
- Tutor / Assessment qualification certificates or validated copies of the originals
- Personal development plans for Tutors and Assessors showing professional updating / development on a rolling basis
- Learner workload including assessment sites (if provision is dispersed)
- Records of monitoring Tutor and Assessor performance including feedback
- Specimen signatures of Tutors and Assessors.

For IQAs

- Details of any changes to the IQA team since the last visit
- Up-to-date CV's, relevant to the qualifications assessed
- Quality assurance qualification certificates or validated copies of the originals
- Personal development plans as IQAs, showing ongoing professional updating / development
- Tutors, Assessors and IQA locations
- Learner locations
- IQA Strategy and IQA Sample plan
- Records of monitoring Tutors and Assessors performance including feedback
- Specimen signatures of IQAs
- Monitoring of assessment practice records and feedback
- Sampling of assessment decisions and feedback
- The previous quality assurance report
- Certification claims for current learners' and those made since the last visit
- Records of Tutors, Assessors, Markers meetings and standardisation activities
- Records of internal quality assurance meetings, where there is more than one IQA
- Specimen signatures of any "expert witnesses", validated by the IQA (if applicable).

Much of the above is sensitive information and should be held securely and restricted to named personnel. Where information is stored electronically, access to the system should be password protected and accessible only to those authorised to make amendments. It should be kept up-to- date, preferably by a named officer, and be easily retrievable. It is a requirement that all records of training are stored for a minimum term of the lifetime of the qualification to comply with Safety Training Awards data retention requirements and legislative requirements. This includes all learner records; internal quality assurance and assessment evidence reports.

The Visit

The visit should follow the agreed schedule and enable the EQA to make a decision whether or not to recommend certification and Direct Claims Status (DCS). The EQA will make decisions based on the ATC recognition and approval criteria and our requirements listed within the external quality assurance monitoring visit report.

The ATC Co-ordinator has a responsibility to provide evidence to demonstrate that these requirements are being met.

The EQA verification will begin by the reviewing the quality of internal quality assurance system to confirm that it is rigorous and robust. The EQA needs to be sure that all IQAs:

- Understand ATC systems and procedures
- Are knowledgeable about the standards and sector assessment requirements / strategy
- Are knowledgeable about the learners'
- Understand their own role in quality assurance and standardisation of Tutors and Assessors
- Copies of all internal quality assurance activities must be available
- IQA strategy and IQA sampling plans

- Internal quality assurance records for any written, structured evidence generating opportunities, assessment instruments or assignments
- Sampling records, including feedback to Tutors and Assessors
- Records of standardisation meetings
- Records of monitoring assessment practice, including feedback to Tutors and Assessors.

Sampling Learner Evidence

The sampling of learners' is central to quality assurance. The EQA will sample learner work at every visit to determine whether the assessment criteria are being consistently maintained, with a view to either defer or confirm Direct Claim Status (DCS). If a learner's work is not available when requested, the EQA report will make a record of this and any reasons, if no work is sampled at the visit then certification is not usually allowed and DCS may be removed.

The sample will:

- Be carefully planned to ensure that the EQA can reach a judgement on standards
- Ensure it includes formative (interim) and summative (final) stages, particularly for new ATCs or inexperienced teams and where qualifications methodology have changed
- Will include the support and guidance offered to learners.

The number of learners' that need to be sampled depends on the total number of learners registered on the units of the respective qualifications. The selection of the sample for each ATC will vary according to the requirements of the EQA's sampling strategy. EQA's will also select independently some of the learner's evidence which will be sampled to ensure the validity of the sampling process.

The EQA will select their sample based on:

- Separate verification of different Safety Training Awards qualifications
- Reliability (to be sure sufficient learner evidence and Assessors have been seen)
- Different assessment methods
- Tutors, Assessors and IQAs – changed personnel, number, experience, workload and location
- Number of assessment sites and satellites
- Learner range
- Introduction of Safety Training Awards qualifications or additional units
- All units and, in particular, any challenging units
- Inclusion of IQA verified and non-verified assessment decisions
- Any special requirements of the assessment strategy
- Retrospective sampling of learners for whom certification has been claimed between EQA visits.

Meeting the Team and Learners

During a visit, an EQA will normally want to meet the people involved in the qualification process but will also want to review evidence of learner performance relevant to the qualification(s) being quality assured. The EQA may suggest that it is appropriate for some sampling of learner portfolios to take place outside visits, for example, sampling of knowledge only qualifications.

The EQA will check details such as:

- Learner enrolment and registration dates

- Access to assessment and to unit achievement
- Assessment and quality assurance dates.

The EQA will want to see evidence of continuous professional development (CPD) for all Tutors, Assessors and IQA's to confirm that they meet the occupational competence requirements for the qualifications they are tutoring, assessing, quality assuring. These requirements are usually set out in the assessment strategy.

ATCs should review and agree personal development plans with staff, which will support them in their roles. If staff are no longer actively working in the qualification sector in which they are assessing and verifying, consider how their occupational competence remains current.

The EQA will check the qualifications for Tutors, Assessors and IQAs. Where Tutors, Assessors, Markers, and IQAs are qualified with D units or A and V awards, they must operate to the new standards for assessment and quality assurance. They do not need to achieve the new awards, but evidence of an updating session should be available that indicates their understanding of the new requirements, particularly with regard to assessment requirements / strategies and independent assessment.

The EQA may want to witness assessment practice by observing an assessment taking place.

A crucial part of the EQA's role is to advise and support the ATC. The EQA will factor in time to discuss concerns or to answer queries. Where issues are outside the EQA's remit or experience they will obtain the relevant information directly or refer you to the appropriate person / department at Safety Training Awards.

Conclusion of the Visit / Meeting

The EQA will discuss the findings of the visit with the ATC Co-ordinator at the end of the visit on a follow up meeting and advise on any actions for improvement.

Any action points will be directly related to the non-compliance with the relevant ATC recognition and ATC approvals criteria and the qualification requirements for the delivery of assessment, which will be indicated on the report for each component qualification.

The ATC Co-ordinator will need to fully understand any actions required and clarify any issues before the end of the visit. It is important that the actions and target dates agreed are clear and realistic. Failure to complete the actions within the timeframe may lead to limitation or suspension of certification or suspension of registration.

Reporting Outcomes

- The EQA will submit the external quality assurance report to the ATC Co-ordinator via STA Online within 10 working days of the quality assurance monitoring activity
- The report will show whether each of the ATC recognition and approval indicator continues to be fully met (i.e. consistently throughout), or not met. Where evidence has not been seen, an explanation will be given. For example, if requested information is not available either before, or at the visit
- When an indicator is marked as "Requirements not met", comments will be provided by the EQA to explain the reason why. Any indicator marked as "Requirements not met" will trigger an action point

- Where the EQA identifies quality issues in significant failings in the delivery of qualifications, i.e. assessment process is found to disadvantage learners', Safety Training Awards will exercise the right to:
    - Direct you to take action
    - Limit or suspend certification
    - Suspend registration.
- The report will also identify any issues, this may result in limitation or suspension of certification or suspension of registration. The EQA will inform the ATC Co-ordinator that they intend to recommend suspension of certification or suspension of registration and explain the next steps.

Making Claims for Certification

Pre-requisites

All pre-requisites must be met prior to completing a qualification and must be checked by the ATC Co-ordinator before confirmation is submitted to Safety Training Awards via STA Online. They must be valid to enable learners to complete the qualification and be certificated once all requirements have been met (please see the qualification specifications on the website for more information for the required pre-requisites).

> **Please note, it is the ATC Co-ordinators responsibility to ensure all learner pre-requisites are complete and this must be done prior to submitting learner results to STA Online and / or submitting paperwork for moderation.**

Results

At the end of a course the Tutor / Assessor must confirm all the pass / refer outcomes of the learner's achievements, and this must be submitted to Safety Training Awards via STA Online within 10 working days of the assessment date, once IQA has been completed.

Provided that the ATC has been granted Direct Claim Status (DCS), the ATC Co-ordinator has submitted all relevant information, and that all requirements have been satisfied by Safety Training Awards, successful learner's will receive an automated email to login or create an STA Online account to gain access to their certificate.

All replacement certificates can be downloaded via the learners' STA Online account. For a paper copy please contact Safety Training Awards to request a copy, this service is subject to an administration fee.

Replacement certificates will be printed on the most current certificate layout and may not be an exact copy of the original certificate. Where a lost certificate is being replaced, the issued certificate will be marked as a 'replacement'.

Direct Claim Status (DCS)

Safety Training Awards grant Direct Claims Status (DCS) to ATCs on a risk-based approach. When ATC have been granted DCS for approved qualifications they are responsible for claiming certificates. The ATC Co-ordinator must ensure that the assessment materials have been marked in line with Safety Training Awards qualification specifications and assessment strategies and the appropriate internal quality assurance checks are complete prior to submitting results and claiming a certificate.

Direct claim status (DCS) is awarded when an ATC has been approved by Safety Training Awards to register and certificate learners' without moderation, this status is awarded when an ATC has a low-risk rating and all IQA procedures in place.

Safety Training Awards will recommend DCS for the approved qualifications when the ATC has met the following requirements as a minimum, please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- Appropriate workforce in place to deliver, assess and quality assure STA regulated / accredited qualifications
- The required policies and procedures in place to protect the interests of learners throughout the learner journey

- Effective Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) procedures in place, including an effective IQA strategy and IQA sample plan for all STA qualifications that will be delivered, assessed, and quality assured by that ATC. A copy of these documents must be uploaded to the ATC's STA Online account or provided to STA upon request. These documents must be continually updated to reflect the performance within the ATC. More information can be found in the 'Approved Training Centre Quality Assurance - The Structure of Internal Quality Assurance' section of this manual
- Has a good track record of delivering and assessing qualifications
- Previous EQA's have not identified any significant issues relating to the delivery and assessment of qualifications
- No sanctions have been made against the ATC during any previous EQA visit
- There is evidence that the ATC personnel have consistently shown integrity in the delivery and assessment of qualifications.

For qualifications that have DCS, the portfolios of those learners for whom certification is claimed between EQA visits must be retained for inspection by the EQA and / or Safety Training Awards when requested.

When DCS has been awarded to an ATC who offer Safety Training Awards qualifications where assessments may be marked by an ATC, they have the ability to certificate learners' once assessments have been marked and verified by appropriately qualified ATC staff.

Where ATCs are responsible for claiming certification, claims will only be accepted through the accurate submission of evidence via STA Online.

If an ATC has not been granted DCS for approved qualifications, they are responsible for submitting the course paperwork to Safety Training Awards for moderation checks prior to the certificates being released. Once we are satisfied that the assessment criteria has been achieved by the learner, certificates will be released via STA Online.

Safety Training Awards reserves the right to reject a claim for certification where there is a cause for concern regarding maladministration and / or malpractice, fraudulent and / or a non-valid claim.

Fraudulent certificate claims will be escalated to the Compliance Team and an investigation will be carried out in line with the Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration policy. As part of this process, we are also required to notify other awarding organisations and the relevant Regulatory Authority. Certificates will not be issued if there is an ongoing investigation.

Certificates for all newly approved qualifications are automatically refused until Safety Training Awards and / or the EQA are satisfied that the qualification standards are being consistently met and the internal quality assurance activities are robust.

Registration only and / or Limited Certification Status

For registration only status, the assessment decisions would need to be verified by the IQA, EQA or Safety Training Awards prior to certification of learners to ensure the assessment criteria has been met throughout the course, confirming the validity and authenticity of the qualification. This status is also determined on the risk rating of the ATC on approval of the application.

Where there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate consistency in the application of the assessment strategy or to reflect other circumstances at an ATC, EQAs may recommend 'limited certification' to release certification for specified learners.

Recommended Suspension

If an area of concern has been identified with delivery and assessment of a qualification, the EQA may recommend suspension of certification and / or suspension of registration depending on the risk, authenticity, and validity of the qualification.

If a suspension of certification or registration is confirmed:

- The EQA will inform the ATC Co-ordinator directly and provide the ATC with access to the external quality assurance monitoring visit report via STA Online
- The EQA will work with the ATC Co-ordinator to address the issues
- If additional training is required, the assigned EQA can support the ATC Co-ordinator to secure appropriate expertise to provide this
- A charge may be made to the ATC for additional EQA monitoring activity, arising from a quality assurance issue.

Withdrawal of Qualifications and / or Approval Status

Safety Training Awards Qualification Withdrawal

Safety Training Awards reserves the right to withdraw or make changes to the qualifications offered; or may withdraw a qualification due to the following reasons:

- There is a lack of demand for the qualification
- A change to the skills required which leads to the qualification no longer being fit for purpose
- Safety Training Awards ceases to deliver or award a qualification to learners'
- Safety Training Awards surrenders its recognition in respect of the qualification
- Regulators withdraw recognition of a qualification.

On occasions Safety Training Awards may redevelop a qualification to ensure the content is current and fit for purpose. In this situation, a replacement may be introduced, and Safety Training Awards will make arrangements for the transfer of learners to a revised version.

Safety Training Awards will consider the interests of ATCs and learners' as part of the management of the withdrawal of any qualification. Safety Training Awards will ensure ATCs are given sufficient notice to deal with registrations and certifications and can offer guidance on alternative qualifications where necessary.

ATC Status Withdrawn by Safety Training Awards

When an ATC has approval removed, they must not offer any Safety Training Awards qualifications, products or services or continue to use the Safety Training Awards logo in any capacity.

In these situations, the ATC Co-ordinator will be contacted by Safety Training Awards to notify them of the withdrawal of ATC status and will provide the ATC Co-ordinator with a suitable notice period to ensure all registered learners' have been able to complete any outstanding qualifications.

Safety Training Awards aim to protect the interest of learners at all times. Safety Training Awards will work alongside the ATC Co-ordinator to support any current and / or perspective learners' who may be affected by this decision, ensuring there are opportunities for reassessments where necessary.

Where approval status has been removed due to non-compliance or malpractice reasons Safety Training Awards are obliged to inform the relevant regulatory authorities and other awarding organisations. Please refer to the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Sanctions Policy for more information.

If an ATC wishes to appeal the decision to withdraw approval status they should follow Safety Training Awards appeal process, please refer to the Safety Training Awards Enquiries and Appeals policy for further guidance.

ATC Approval Status Withdrawal Request

Where an ATC wishes to withdraw its approval status with Safety Training Awards, they must give us one months' notice in writing.

Safety Training Awards aim to protect the interest of learners at all times, working alongside the ATC to support any current and / or perspective learners' who may be affected by this decision, ensuring there are opportunities for reassessments where necessary. An ATC will not be closed until all learners have been certificated.

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ATC Learner Registration and Support

It is the responsibility of the ATC Co-ordinator to ensure that all learners are registered correctly on their chosen qualification. Learners' must be registered within 48 hours of the course commencing, using STA Online. At the point of registration, learners must provide evidence of:

- Any required pre-requisite qualifications - originals should be seen by the Tutor and copies uploaded to STA Online. Learners' who have changed their name since their pre-requisite qualifications were issued must provide evidence of the name change.

- Learner identification, which is verified through provision of photographic ID. Acceptable forms of ID are:
    - Passport
    - Driving Licence (with photograph)
    - Student ID Card (with photograph)
    - Company ID Card (with photograph)
    - Travel Pass (with photograph).

The pre-course application form should be completed in full, the form of identification must be recorded on the bottom of the form and signed by the Tutor. To prevent personation, all practical mark sheets, portfolios and assessment papers must include the learners' full name as it appears on the ID, this is the name that will be recorded on the learners' certificate. In addition, once registered, each learner will be issued an identification number which should be utilised when registering learners for subsequent courses.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Safety Training Awards is committed to ensuring a fair and equal assessment for all learners. To facilitate this, ATCs have access to and must follow the Safety Training Awards Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations policy which details clear guidance on adjustments Safety Training Awards can implement upon application with supporting evidence from the ATC, as well as have their own policy in place.

Reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements are available to ensure all learners receive recognition of their achievement providing there is evidence that the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. These arrangements should not be used to make assessments easier for learners' or give learners' a head start and should not disadvantage other learners.

Reasonable Adjustments relate to any actions that help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which may place the learner at a disadvantage during the delivery of a qualification or an assessment situation. An application may only be authorised for a learner who has a disability or need and must relate to the assessment.

> **For licence to practice qualifications, Safety Training Awards cannot alter a practical assessment. Learners' must be able to competently complete all elements of the practical assessment to achieve the qualification.**

Please refer to Appendix III for details on the reasonable adjustments that must be approved by Safety Training Awards before being implemented by the ATC. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be reviewed on an individual basis and all the evidence received will be considered.

The Safety Training Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations form is available via STA Online, please select that you are requesting a 'Reasonable Adjustment' and provide supporting

evidence for your request. This should be submitted to Safety Training Awards via STA Online as soon as possible to prevent any delays which may disadvantage the learner(s).

Special Considerations are a post assessment adjustment to the marks of a learners' assessment paper or rearrangement of an assessment time and / or date. An example of a special consideration is if sufficient participants of the correct ability are not available for an assessment, the ATC may request a special consideration to teach a reduced number of participants. A special consideration may be granted after an assessment has taken place if a learner may have been disadvantaged.

Special considerations should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should it mislead an employer / training provider regarding the learners' achievements for certification. The learners' results must reflect the achievement in assessment and not their potential ability.

The Safety Training Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations form is available via STA Online, please select that you are requesting a 'Special Consideration' and provide supporting evidence for your request. This should be submitted to Safety Training Awards via STA Online as soon as possible to prevent any delays which may disadvantage the learner(s).

The ATC Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring the ATC has the required policies in place to operate as an ATC, the policies must be available for all learners upon induction of completing an STA qualification with the ATC. This will ensure the learners' interests are protected at all times and that they are fully aware of the procedures that must be followed.

ATC Promotion

Safety Training Awards expect ATCs to seek permission to use the ATC or Safety Training Awards logos within marketing and communication materials, for example on promotional material, signage and on any exhibition stands or press adverts promoting courses leading to Safety Training Awards qualifications.

Please refer to Safety Training Awards' Branding Guidelines and Logo Permission Form for guidance or contact the marketing team for more information.

> **Safety Training Awards' logo must be used in line with the brand guidelines.**
>
> **For any queries about the use of logos please contact marketing@sta.co.uk.**

Glossary of Terms

Below is a list of words (a glossary). Meanings and explanations of the words are given to the right.

Word	Meaning / Explanation
Action Points	Any action points will be directly related to areas that need improving or are non-compliant with the following areas: • ATC approval criteria • Regulatory / legislative requirements • Qualification requirements for the delivery and/or assessment.
Approval Criteria	Set requirements that must be met and adhered to in order to gain and maintain approval status.
ATC	Approved Training Centre (ATC) - Safety Training Awards defines an ATC as any Tutor, business or organisation who have the required resources and competence to deliver, tutor, assess and quality assure qualifications whilst meeting the approval criteria. This organisation could be an educational establishment such as a school or college, or a private training provider.
ATC Co-ordinator	The main point of accountability for all requirements laid down by Safety Training Awards. Responsible for ensuring the ATC meets the approval criteria on an ongoing basis and informs Safety Training Awards immediately if at any time it is unable, or it will become unable to comply.
Awarding Organisation	An awarding organisation designs, develops, delivers and awards the recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and / or competencies) of an individual following an assessment and quality assurance process that is valued by employers, learners' or stakeholders.

Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS)	The process through which an awarding organisation periodically scrutinises the marking of assessment by a centre to ensure it has not deviated from the required standards.
ATC Personnel	Key contacts within the ATC, ATC Co-ordinator, accounts / finance contact, Tutor / Assessor and IQA.
Conflict of Interest	A situation in which a person or ATC is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another. Typically, this relates to situations in which the personal interest of an individual or ATC might adversely affect a duty owed to make valid assessment decisions, having a negative impact on learners.
Direct claim status	Direct claim status is awarded to an ATC when they have been approved by Safety Training Awards to register and certificate learners without verification by the EQA.
EQA	External Quality Assurance must take place on behalf of an awarding organisation in an Approved Training Centre. This is to ensure the learners' who have been registered with them have received a quality service, and that the assessment decisions are valid and reliable. External Quality Assurer also seeks to ensure that assessment and internal quality assurance activities have been conducted in a consistent, safe and fair manner.
Equality Act	The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The act is in place to ensure everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Franchising	Franchising is where an ATC Co-ordinator has agreed for a Tutor / Assessor to register an STA course under their ATC name but allows the Tutor / Assessor to take responsibility of the organising of the STA course and are not ensuring the ATC requirements are being adhered to.
GDPR	The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union (EU).
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance can be defined as a system to monitor and evaluate a product and / or a service. It should identify and recommend measures to make improvements to standards and performance, or at least maintain the status quo if everything is working well. Internal Quality Assurance relates to the monitoring of all the teaching, learning and assessment activities which learners will undertake. The activities should form part of an organisation's overall quality assurance system.
Maladministration	Maladministration is in effect any activity or practice which results to non-compliance with administrative requirements and regulations, this includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within the ATC including inappropriate learner records.
Malpractice	Malpractice is defined as any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and / or validity of certificates of a qualification awarded by Safety Training Awards.
Moderation	Moderation monitoring activities are carried out on course paperwork in line with the relevant assessment criteria for that discipline. This process also includes a comparison against a moderation of course paperwork checklist to support the external quality assurance strategy. These quality assurance activities ensure all ATCs maintain a level of consistency and high standards, it also enables Safety Training Awards to monitor that the assessment process is being carried out correctly and the IQA is completing internal quality assurance monitoring activities in line with Safety Training Awards requirements.

Monitoring Observation / Activity	A face-to-face review of delivery and / or assessment methods.
Non-Compliance	Failure or refusal to comply, as with a law, regulation, or term of a contract.
Pre-Approval Visit	A pre-approval visit is to ensure the appropriate validation checks have been carried out prior to approval status being granted, this process ensures the ATC has achieved the approval criteria and will continue to meet the requirements set out by Safety Training Awards.
Quality Assurance	It is the process of verifying whether a product meets required specifications and customer expectations.
Reasonable Adjustments	A reasonable adjustment relates to any actions that help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which may place the learner at a disadvantage during the delivery of a qualification or an assessment situation.
Regulation	Rules or directives made and maintained by an authority.

Regulators	Regulators are an organisation appointed by the government to regulate an area of activity such as qualifications.
Remote Desk Based Review / Activity	A review / monitoring activity being completed from another location (office based) using a variety of communication methods (telephone, Teams, email) to verify evidence.
Risk Rating	A risk assessment is the combined effort of identifying and analysing potential events that may negatively impact individuals, qualifications and / or the environment; and making judgments "on the tolerability of the risk on the basis of a risk analysis" while considering influencing factors. These factors will influence the ATCs risk rating.
Risk Based Approach	A risked based approach is to identify the potential risks within the operations of the ATC. The approach you take to due diligence should reflect the level of risk that is highlighted. By identifying risks, they can then be mitigated by implementing adequate policies and procedures that are proportionate to these risks. Having these adequate policies and procedures in place, provides a certain level of protection to the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications.
Sanctions	This is an official order to suspend certification status or suspension or registration status. The level of sanction is dependent upon the severity of the non-compliance within the ATC.
Special Considerations	A special consideration is a post assessment adjustment to the marks of a learner's assessment paper or rearrangement of an assessment time and / or date. A special consideration can be granted after an assessment has taken place if a learner may have been disadvantaged.

Sub-Contracting Arrangements	A sub-contracting arrangement is when an ATC sub-contracts venues and / or other suitably qualified personnel to carry out a service that they feel they are not best suited and / or qualified to do. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to STA regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the marketing, advertising, recruitment or enrolment of learners.
Third Party Arrangements	A 'Third Party' arrangement is any party that provides services on behalf of the ATC. Services means delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance activities related to Safety Training Awards regulated qualifications and support services and / or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. A member of ATC staff may operate for the ATC on a self-employed, freelance, casual basis or may be ad hoc as and when needed to support the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance of an STA course, this arrangement would be deemed as a 'Third Party'. This definition does not include a contract of employment between an ATC and an employee.
Whistleblowing	Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual discloses information relating to a case of malpractice, maladministration or wrongdoing.

Appendix I

Version Labelling and Control Procedure

What is version labelling and control?

Version labelling and control is the process by which different drafts and versions of a document are managed. It involves the naming and distinguishing between a series of draft documents which lead to a final version.

Development of new and revised documents

1. If developing a new document, begin the development using the Approved Training Centre branding templates. This will ensure that the correct guidelines are being used for logos, fonts and headers and footers

2. Apply a watermark showing the word 'DRAFT' which is visible on each page of the document. This is so all editors and reviewers can easily distinguish the documents status

3. Enable the software's tracked changes functionality, which allows the recording of changes and feedback, which will assist in the development of the document if multiple people are involved

4. Whilst in a draft state, the filename should contain the word DRAFT at the end of the description. For example, a draft document could be titled 'ATC Complaints Policy – DRAFT'.

5. It is important that draft documents are saved in an appropriate location on a secure file server. Please ensure you save it to a location whereby all people who need access have relevant permissions to do so.

Version Labelling

Once a draft document has been approved, it must then be allocated a version label, as detailed below:

Version labelling consists of four elements:

- A letter 'v' to represent the word 'version'

- Two digits to represent the year the document was created

- A decimal point

- A digit or digits which represent the number of versions of a document put live within the current year (starting from .1).

The version label must be added at the end of a document's filename. Depending on the document type, the version label is displayed differently within the document itself, detailed further on in this procedure.

An example file name, including its version label would be as follows: 'ATC Complaints Policy v19.3'

This signifies that the above titled document:

- Was created in 2019

- Is the third version published within 2019.

Elements to be included

Below details the mandatory versioning elements which must be present on a variety of ATC documents:

General documents (usually created in Microsoft Word)

- Its version label, shown clearly within the document's filename

- Its version label, shown clearly in the document's footer.

Policy or procedure documents (usually created in Microsoft Word)

- Its version label, shown clearly within the documents filename

- Its version label, shown clearly in the document's footer

- A date which the policy or procedure came into force

- A date which the document is to be reviewed

- A grid / table detailing information on changes within previous versions, including:

  - Version label

  - Launch date

  - Details of revisions made.

Version Control

Version Label	Launch Date	Details
v19.1	12th April 2019	Complete overhaul of procedure
2018	2018	Original version

Finalising a draft document

When a draft document is ready to be finalised, the following process must be followed:

1. Document is sent to the relevant ATC personnel for approval, written confirmation, usually in an email, should be obtained

2. A 'launch date' should be discussed with all ATC personnel involved and any relevant plans put in place

3. All draft documentation and supporting information which has contributed to the finalised document should be filed electronically on the ATCs secure file server

4. Document(s) must be checked and finalised by the relevant ATC personnel, it is important to detail the 'launch date, and:

   - Check branding is correct and in-line with current ATC guidelines

   - Allocate a version label, as detailed below

   - Convert to PDF or locked format (which prevents the original content being altered)

   - Move the document to the appropriate place within the ATCs file server and ATCs STA Online account, re-locating any documents which the new document supersedes.

Note: Other procedures may need to be adhered to depending on the document type and intention. For example, if the 'ATC Complaints Policy' included some procedural changes these must be followed when the new policy is approved and launched.

Appendix II

SQA Accreditation Complaints Escalation Procedures

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the final response from the ATC they may submit their complaint to Safety Training Awards by following the procedures set out within the policy: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/complaints-policy/.

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint to Safety Training Awards, they may refer the complaint to SQA Accreditation (Scotland). If the complaint relates to delivery by a school, or public leisure centre, or any other public body in Scotland, the complaint could also be referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman. Please see below for the relevant contact details:

SQA Accreditation (Scotland)

SQA Accreditation, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ

Tel: 0345 213 5249

Website: accreditation.sqa.org.uk

Email: accreditation@sqa.org.uk

For complaints relating to schools or public leisure centres in Scotland a complaint can be raised with the Scottish Public services Ombudsman as follows:

SPSO

Freephone adviceline: 0800 377 7330

Fax: 0800 377 7331

Website: https://www.spso.org.uk/how-to-complain-about-public-service

Online contact form: www.spso.org.uk/contact-form

You can fill in our complaints form online at www.spso.org.uk/complain/form

In Person: SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road**,** Edinburgh**,** EH7 4NS

By Post: Freepost SPSO

SQA Accreditation Appeals Escalation Procedures

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the final response from the ATC they may submit their appeal to Safety Training Awards by following the procedures set out within the policy: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/enquiries-and-appeals-policy/.

If a customer or learner is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to Safety Training Awards, they may refer the complaint to SQA Accreditation (Scotland). If the complaint relates to delivery by a school or public leisure centre, or any other public body in Scotland, the complaint may also be referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman. Please see below for the relevant contact details:

SQA Accreditation (Scotland)

SQA Accreditation, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ

Tel: 0345 213 5249

Website: accreditation.sqa.org.uk

Email: accreditation@sqa.org.uk

For complaints relating to schools or public leisure centres or any other public body in Scotland a complaint can be raised with the Scottish Public services Ombudsman as follows:

SPSO

Freephone adviceline: 0800 377 7330

Fax: 0800 377 7331

Website: https://www.spso.org.uk/how-to-complain-about-public-service

Online contact form: www.spso.org.uk/contact-form

You can fill in our complaints form online at www.spso.org.uk/complain/form

In Person: SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road**,** Edinburgh**,** EH7 4NS

By Post: Freepost SPSO

Malpractice and Maladministration Procedures for all ATC assessment staff

It is important that all ATC personnel involved in the management, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of STA regulated qualifications, and learners', are fully aware of the contents of the Malpractice and Maladministration policy and that the ATC has arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and/or maladministration.

Please refer to the Safety Training Awards Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, it sets out the steps the ATC, and learners' or other personnel must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice and / or maladministration and responsibilities in dealing with such incidents. It also sets out the procedural steps to be followed when reviewing any cases.

Appendix III

Reasonable Adjustments Permissions Table

Reasonable adjustment	Assessment NOT completed under exam conditions	Assessments completed under exam conditions
Extra time up to 25%	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Adjustment by ATC permitted
Extra time more than 25%	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Supervised rest breaks	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Taking the assessment at an alternative site / venue	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Adjustment by ATC permitted
Assessment material in enlarged format	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Assessment material on coloured paper	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Use of a reader	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Use of a scribe	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Use of a BSL / English interpreter	Adjustment by ATC permitted	Apply to STA via STA Online
Other	Apply to STA	Apply to STA via STA Online

** For quality assurance purposes, when an adjustment has been made by an ATC evidence of this must be stored with the relevant course paperwork, in line with Safety Training Awards data retention requirements.

Additional Information

Please refer to the Safety Training Awards website https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/news/ to keep up to date with any news, updates, guidance and support regarding ATC processes and ongoing requirements. For any queries regarding the administration activities within your ATC please contact Safety Training Awards.

Please note: The Safety Training Awards Approved Training Centre (ATC) Manual and approval requirements are subject to change, dependent upon current legislation and regulatory requirements.