



# **SQA Accreditation**

## **Visit to Safety Training Awards (STA) Training Provider Report**

**22 September 2010 — 7 October 2010**

## **Note**

The findings of this report will be presented to the Scottish Qualifications Authority's (SQA) Accreditation Committee and made available to colleagues from the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) with a view to the contents informing future accreditation and re-accreditation submissions submitted by the awarding body.

The report will be published on SQA Accreditation's website.

Please note that SQA Accreditation monitoring activity is conducted on a sampling basis. As a consequence, not all aspects of an awarding body's performance in quality assurance, contract compliance, implementation, awarding of certificates, and fee arrangements have been considered in this report to the same depth.

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# Section 1: Introduction

## The purpose of the visit

SQA Accreditation conducts audits of all awarding bodies offering SQA accredited qualifications or Units. The audit methodology includes visits to a sample of the awarding body's approved training providers. The aim of these visits is to:

- ◆ confirm that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted by the awarding body in accordance with its prescribed arrangements
- ◆ satisfy SQA Accreditation of the awarding body's performance against SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)* and against all other regulatory requirements pertinent to the delivery of the qualifications or Units the awarding body is approved to offer
- ◆ confirm that the awarding body's quality assurance arrangements are being conducted in a consistent manner, in and between training providers
- ◆ inform future monitoring activity for the awarding body

## Visit dates

Three visits were conducted between 22 September 2010 and 7 October 2010.

## Section 2: Scope of monitoring visits

The following Key Goals were included within the scope of the monitoring visits:

Key Goal		The awarding body's processes for the criteria were:		
		Compliant	In need of improvement	Non-compliant
1	The awarding body has robust and transparent governance arrangements.	✓		
2	The awarding body's leadership is effective.	✓		
3	The awarding body has an effective business planning process.	✓		
4	The awarding body has a culture of continuous quality improvement.	✓		
5	The awarding body has robust systems in place for the management of the service it offers.	✓		
6	The awarding body has an effective communications strategy that supports its awarding body activities.	✓		
7	The awarding body has systems and procedures for the approval of centres.	✓	✓	
8	The awarding body has a customer service statement and identified service levels.	✓		
9	The awarding body has open and transparent procedures for complaints and appeals.	✓		
10	The awarding body has an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates.	✓		
11	The awarding body has implemented a diversity and equality strategy.	✓		
12	The awarding body has a policy and procedure for malpractice and/or maladministration.	✓		
13	The awarding body provides clear written guidance for awarding body representatives and prospective or approved centres and their staff.	✓		
14	The awarding body has a record retention policy that takes into account any regulatory or statutory requirements.	✓		
15	The qualification and associated structure has been designed to ensure it is appropriate and meets the needs of the occupational sector.	✓		

Key Goal		The awarding body's processes for the criteria were:		
		Compliant	In need of improvement	Non-compliant
16	The awarding body has designed an assessment methodology that is fit for purpose.	✓		
17	The awarding body submits timely and detailed qualification submissions.	✓		
18	The awarding body's assessment methods produce results that are authentic, reliable and consistent.	✓	✓	
19	The awarding body ensures its approved centres have access to appropriately qualified personnel for the range of qualifications they are approved to deliver.	✓		
20	The awarding body's systems and procedures for the appointment, training, registration, deployment and monitoring of external verifiers are effective and robust.	✓		
21	The awarding body has systems and procedures for monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment provided at any location.  These systems must ensure that assessment is uniformly systematic, valid, and to the defined standard.	✓		

## Section 3: Discussion

### Areas of good practice

The following areas of good practice were noted:

STA approved Providers 2 and 3 stated that the quality of guidance documentation and support provided by the awarding body with respect to qualification delivery was generally of an excellent standard and this opinion is supported by the Accreditation Auditor. Also, Provider 1 was of the opinion that the online systems that STA operate, particularly with respect to tutor support, were of a high quality.

### Areas of non-compliance

No non-compliances were identified during the three monitoring visits carried out.

### Areas for improvement

The auditor considers that the following areas, whilst meeting SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria*, have the potential for improvement:

#### ◆ **Key Goal 7: The awarding body has systems and procedures for the approval of centres.**

Specifically criterion:

7.16 The awarding body must inform its approved centres that they must provide SQA's accrediting body with timely access to locations and records for monitoring purposes.

On the day of the arranged monitoring visit with Provider 3 (held at the Provider's place of work), the Accreditation Auditor was unable to access any candidate records as these were held at the Provider's home and had not been transported to the meeting location to allow perusal. Provider 2 also only held partial candidate records at their place of work (where the arranged visit took place), with all other records held at their home location. This is noted as an observation: observation 1 refers.

It is recommended that STA reminds all approved training providers/tutors that they must make all records relating to qualification delivery and candidate registration and certification available for perusal on the arranged day of any SQA Accreditation monitoring visit.

◆ **Key Goal 18: The awarding body's assessment methods produce results that are authentic, reliable and consistent.**

Specifically criterion:

18.2 The awarding body must ensure that assessment is, where appropriate, standardised.

When discussing tutor standardisation, Provider 3 stated to the Accreditation Auditor that STA did hold standardisation meetings but that they were normally held in England (ie Walsall) and budgetary constraints and working schedules made attendance impossible. This has been noted as an observation: observation 2 refers.

It is recommended that STA consider holding some tutor standardisation meetings in Scotland to enable more approved tutors operating in that country to attend.

## Section 4: Action plan

A non-compliance will be recorded where the Lead Auditor finds evidence of non-compliance with either any of the criteria contained in SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)* or any of the conditions attached to SQA accredited qualifications at the time of accreditation. When recording a non-compliance, the Lead Auditor will agree the action to be taken by the awarding body and a timetable for the resolution of each non-compliance.

SQA Accreditation risk rates each non-compliance recorded during an audit of the awarding body. This section lists the grade of risk attached to each of the awarding body's non-compliances. See Appendix 2 for an explanation of the grades of risk.

An observation will be noted to ensure that any area of potential improvement is noted for future reference. As observations are recorded for awarding body consideration only, it is not necessary to agree a timescale to resolve the observation in the awarding body action plan.

Once agreed, the action plan is signed by representatives from both SQA Accreditation and the awarding body and will inform future monitoring activity for the awarding body.

Non-compliance	Agreed action and date	Criterion	Risk rating
n/a			

Observations	Recommended action	Criterion
1. On the day of the arranged monitoring visit with Provider 3 (held at the Provider's place of work), the Accreditation Auditor was unable to access any candidate records as these were held at the Provider's home location and had not been transported to the meeting location to allow perusal. Provider 2 also only held partial candidate records at their place of work (where the arranged visit took place), with all other records held at their home location.	It is recommended that STA reminds all approved training providers/tutors that they must make all records relating to qualification delivery and candidate registration and certification available for perusal on the arranged day of any SQA Accreditation monitoring visit.	7.16

Observations	Recommended action	Criterion
2. When discussing tutor standardisation, Provider 3 stated to the Accreditation Auditor that STA did hold standardisation meetings but that they were normally held in England (ie Walsall) and budgetary constraints and working schedules made attendance impossible.	It is recommended that STA consider holding some tutor standardisation meetings in Scotland to enable more approved tutors operating in that country to attend.	18.2

# Signatures of agreement to awarding body action plan: Safety Training Awards 2010

For and on behalf of Safety Training  
Awards:

For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

Signature

Signature

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Designation

Designation

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Date

Date

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## Appendix 1: Documents reviewed

The following documents were reviewed during the course of the centre monitoring visits.

Document title	Version number (if known)	Issue date (if known)
STA Tutor Manual — Foundation Unit		2009
STA Peer Review, Observation and Development Programme	8.0	10 June 2009
NARS Senior Tutor Manual	8.0	10 June 2009
NARS Pool Rescue Training Programme: Teacher and Examiner Technical Unit Manual		2009
STA Procedures Manual	Issue 7	
STA Course Application Form (1) — Certification and Re-validation Courses		
Online Registration Procedures for STA Courses		22 September 2010
NARS Emergency First Aid at Work — Course Overview		
NARS Qualification Status Route Description		
STA Scottish Council	Draft 2	14 May 2009
Sample Letter to Tutors Re: Procedure Clarification		September 2008
STA's Core Business		
STC Full Practical Marking Sheet		
Continuous Assessment for STC		
STA Complaints Procedure		
STA Equal Opportunities Policy		
Duty of Care		
STA Certificate in Teaching Swimming — Beginners' Syllabus		
STC Course Planning Sheet/Timetable		

Invigilation Arrangements		
STA Candidate Manual		

## Appendix 2: Risk rating of non-compliances

SQA Accreditation assigns a risk rating to each non-compliance recorded as a result of an awarding body audit or through our centre monitoring activity. The table below illustrates how the rating for a non-compliance is assigned and identifies the possible impact of the non-compliance on qualifications and/or the learner.

The assignment of a risk rating allows an awarding body to target their resources to areas that have been identified as having a major impact. The risk rating also allows SQA Accreditation to target its resources to support awarding bodies in improving their performance.

Rating	Risk	Impact of non-compliance
1	Very low	The non-compliance is likely to cause minimal concern and would not threaten the integrity of the qualification or impact adversely on the learner. Any overall effect is likely to be small scale and/or localised, rather than widespread. The issue identified is unlikely to recur once resolved and no long lasting damage would be anticipated.
2	Low	The non-compliance is of low impact but of sufficient importance to merit intervention, with a low threat to the systems or procedures associated with the qualification and/or impact on the learner. Disruption may not just be localised but more widespread and would possibly cause residual damage; however, this could be easily corrected without further consequence.
3	Medium	The non-compliance could potentially damage the credibility of the qualification and/or be detrimental to the learner. There may be some impact to the systems or procedures that support the qualification or the operational effectiveness of the awarding body.
4	High	The non-compliance could have a high impact on the integrity and reliability of the qualification or the effective operation of awarding body as a whole if corrective action is not quickly taken. There is a high probability that the qualification and/or learner will be negatively affected.
5	Very high	The non-compliance will have a serious impact on the integrity and reliability of the qualification or the effective operation of the awarding body if considered on its own merit, taking account of the context in which it was identified and if corrective action is not immediately taken. There is a very high probability that the qualification and/or learner will be negatively affected.

In assigning a risk rating, each non-compliance is considered on its own merit, taking account of the context in which it was identified.