



# **Centre Monitoring Report**

**Excellence, Achievement and Learning Limited (EAL)**

**12 November 2013 to 23 December 2013**

## Note

Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence. However, please note the following:

- ◆ The findings of this report and the associated Action Plan will be presented to SQA's Accreditation Committee.
- ◆ The report and Action Plan will be published on SQA Accreditation's website following receipt of the signed acceptance of audit findings.
- ◆ The contents will contribute towards the Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards the quality assurance activity and timescales.

Please note that SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities are conducted on a sampling basis. Consequently, not all aspects of an awarding body's performance in quality assurance, contract compliance, implementation, awarding of certificates and fee arrangements (not an exhaustive list) may have been considered in this report to the same depth.

# Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope and approach of centre monitoring <b>defined.</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not</b>
1.2 Centre monitoring report timeline	2
1.3 Centre monitoring dates	2
1.4 Overview	2
<b>2 Centre monitoring findings</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Areas of good practice	3
2.2 Requirements	3
2.3 Recommendations	5
<b>3 List of documents reviewed during centre monitoring</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4 Risk rating of Requirements</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>5 Action Plan</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>6 Acceptance of centre monitoring findings</b>	<b>155</b>

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Scope and approach of centre monitoring

SQA Accreditation conducts quality assurance activities of all awarding bodies offering SQA accredited qualifications or Units. This involves monitoring a sample of the awarding body's approved centres/providers or assessment sites. All centre monitoring will be conducted in a consistent manner within and between centres. The aim of monitoring is to:

- ◆ Ensure compliance under **SQA Accreditation's *Regulatory Principles (2011)*, *Regulatory Principles Directives*, the requirements of the clauses within and any conditions attached to the Approved Awarding Body agreement and the Criteria for Accredited Qualifications.**
- ◆ Confirm that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted by the awarding body in accordance with its prescribed arrangements.
- ◆ Ensure that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted in a consistent manner, within and between centres.
- ◆ Inform future audit and monitoring activity for the awarding body.

All Principles were included within the scope of the monitoring activity.

A Requirement has been raised where SQA Accreditation found evidence that the awarding body has not met SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements.

The following timescales apply:

- ◆ SQA Accreditation will issue this report within 30 working days of the final centre monitoring date.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign and return the report and associated Action Plan within 30 working days of the centre monitoring report being issued.
- ◆ Within a further 20 working days of receiving the proposed Action Plan, SQA Accreditation will confirm whether the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Requirements. This will be subject to the actions proving appropriate to the Requirements raised.
- ◆ SQA Accreditation will monitor progress towards completion of the actions identified in the Action Plan.

A Recommendation may be recorded in instances where SQA Accreditation considers there to be scope for improvement. Where these are agreed during centre monitoring, they are recorded on the report for future reference. As Recommendations are recorded for awarding body consideration only, it is not necessary to agree either actions or timescales to resolve these in the awarding body Action Plan.

## 1.2 Centre monitoring report timeline

SQA Accreditation centre monitoring report date 22 January 2013

Date centre monitoring report and Action Plan to be signed and submitted by EAL 5 March 2014

## 1.3 Centre monitoring dates

Four centres were monitored between 12 November and 23 December 2013.

## 1.4 Overview

As a result of the centre monitoring activities, three Requirements have been raised and three Recommendations have been recorded.

The three Requirements form the basis of the EAL Action Plan. This must be completed and submitted to SQA Accreditation for agreement within 30 working days of the centre monitoring report being issued. The Action Plan must be submitted by 5 March 2014.

Outcome(s)	Area(s) of concern	Risk rating
Requirement 1	Principle 6	Low
Requirement 2	Principle 6	Low
Requirement 3	Principle 22	Medium
Recommendation 1	Principle 5	N/A
Recommendation 2	Principle 5	N/A
Recommendation 3	Principle 19	N/A

## 2 Centre monitoring findings

The following sections detail Requirements raised and Recommendations recorded against SQA Accreditation's *Regulatory Principles (2011)*, Regulatory Principles Directives, the requirements of the clauses within and any conditions attached to the Approved Awarding Body agreement and the Criteria for Accredited Qualifications.

### 2.1 Areas of good practice

The following areas of good practice were noted by centres.

The Co-ordinator at Centre 1 highlighted that:

- ◆ EAL's portfolio of qualifications is perfect for employers' requirements and suits sector needs
- ◆ EAL's qualification certificates are recognised overseas

The Co-ordinator at Centre 2 highlighted the:

- ◆ efficient and speedy service provided by customer support

The Co-ordinator at Centre 3 highlighted the:

- ◆ excellent level of guidance and support provided by EAL's External Verifiers, Quality and Customer Support Team and IT Staff, who are always very helpful and responsive
- ◆ regular workshop sessions for centres to discuss updates and to assist and encourage staff to network
- ◆ External Verifier, who is very approachable and readily available to assist promptly
- ◆ introduction of EAL's Smarter Touch system as a useful tool and very straightforward to navigate, complementing EAL's online services
- ◆ large choice of qualifications/awards EAL offers

The Co-ordinator at Centre 4 highlighted that:

- ◆ certification is extremely fast, usually within two weeks

### 2.2 Requirements

**Principle 6: The awarding body and their approved centres must have the relevant expertise, quality assurance procedures, technological, financial, human resources and other physical resources, to carry out their regulated functions, during the life of the qualifications and Units they offer.**

*EAL Centre Guidance — Being a Quality Assurer states that 'Monitoring should not be left to the end — it is a process of continuous sampling which will identify whether there are any areas where improvements need to be made'.*

Centre 1 completes a 100% internal verification sample; however, this is only done at the end of the course/session once the candidate has completed all Units contained within the SVQ qualification. The evidence available indicates that EAL does not meet the requirements of Principle 6. This has been raised as **Requirement 1**.

*EAL's QCS Business Rules, section 5.2 Conducting Centre Engagements states that 'The EV should refer to their previously created engagement strategy for the centre and liaise with a nominated centre contact prior to the visit to confirm the date of the visit and to outline any portfolios, learners, assessors, internal verifiers and locations that may be reviewed during the visit. In doing so, the EV will raise a 'Centre engagement form' and send it to the centre in advance of the visit with Section 1 — Engagement purpose — completed.'*

The Centre Co-ordinator from Centre 2 stated to the Accreditation Auditor that EAL's External Verifier had not visited the centre's assessment sites. Also, both Centre Co-ordinators from Centres 1 and 2 stated that EAL's External Verifier had not witnessed the assessment of its candidates either at the centre or at its assessment locations. Though, both Centre Co-ordinators confirmed that the External Verifier had met and interviewed candidates at the main site of both centres. This was confirmed by the Accreditation Auditor reviewing the *EAL Engagement Forms* for both centres held on Smarter Touch.

The evidence available indicates that EAL does not meet the requirements of Principle 6. This has been raised as **Requirement 2**.

**Principle 22: The awarding body must ensure that qualification and Unit certificates meet SQA Accreditation's minimum requirements, reflect learner achievement, are only issued on the basis of a valid claim, and are supplied within a reasonable and clearly communicated timescale.**

The Centre Co-ordinator from Centre 1 stated to the Accreditation Auditor at the time of the centre monitoring visit that it did not have a process to review the portfolios of those candidates who leave before completing the full SVQ qualification to see if they meet the requirements for Unit certification.

Consequently, candidates may not have received Unit certification to give recognition for the Units they had completed. The evidence available indicates that EAL does not meet the requirements of Principle 6. This has been raised as **Requirement 3**.

## 2.3 Recommendations

**Principle 5: The awarding body must promote a culture of continuous improvement within the organisation and throughout their approved centres, and have in place a system which allows them to manage risk.**

The Centre Co-ordinator from Centre 4 commented within its completed remote monitoring questionnaire that EAL has a lot of paperwork for internal verification, which could possibly be refined. **This has been recorded as Recommendation 1.**

EAL may wish to consider reviewing and refining its paperwork for internal verification.

Both Centre Co-ordinators from Centres 1 and 2 commented that EAL's Smarter Touch system could be improved to be more user-friendly and intuitive especially for less frequent users. **This has been recorded as Recommendation 2.**

EAL may wish to consider improving its Smarter Touch system to make it more user-friendly and intuitive for less frequent users.

**Principle 19: The awarding body must ensure that steps are taken to prevent malpractice and maladministration, inform SQA Accreditation when any cases, or suspected cases, of malpractice and/or maladministration are discovered, and develop and implement corrective action plans to prevent further occurrence.**

*EAL Centre Guidance — Being a Centre Co-ordinator states that 'centres need to have a policy on malpractice and how to prevent it from happening. Further guidance for centres on how to prevent and deal with cases is available from EAL. Please see guidance **Malpractice/Maladministration**'.*

However, *EAL's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy* appears to contradict the above as it states that '*centres have arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration*'.

The Accreditation Auditor was informed by the Centre Co-ordinator at Centre 2 that the centre had arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration. However the centre did not have a policy on malpractice.

EAL should standardise and clarify advice issued within its Centre Guidance and its Malpractice and Maladministration policy on whether centres need to have a policy on malpractice or if they are only required to have arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration. **This has been recorded as Recommendation 3.**



### 3 List of documents reviewed during centre monitoring

Document title	Date of issue	Version number
<b>Centre 1</b>		
EAL Centre Qualification Remit Printout	12/11/2013	
Centre Candidate Certifications for EAL Qualifications	September 2012 to September 2013	
Certificate of Employers' Liability Insurance	31/12/2012 to 30/12/2013	
Centre-devised HSE Policy Statement	21/11/2011	Rev 5
Centre-devised Group Equality Policy	01/01/2012	Rev 3
Recognised EAL Assessment Centre	Expires 31/08/2014	
EAL Centre Approval Criteria	19/08/2008	
Completed EAL Application for Approval for Level 3 SVQ in Engineering GC8A 23	16/07/2012	
E-mail from EAL to approve GC8A 23	16/07/2012	
EAL Engagement Forms	May 2013 October 2012	
Centre-devised Group Quality Policy	02/04/2013	Rev 6
Centre-devised Training & Education Policy	April 2008	
EAL Internal Verification Progress Plan	July 2013 – December 2013	
EAL Internal Verification Candidate Sampling Record		
EAL Internal Verifiers Feedback Sheet		
EAL Internal Verifiers Sampling Record		
EAL Candidate Portfolio Checklist		

Centre-devised Standardisation Meetings Minutes	1 May 2013	
EAL Assessor Performance Monitoring Checklist		
EAL Assessor Training Needs Analysis		
Centre-devised Induction Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of Assessment to Candidates</li> <li>• Explanation of SVQ</li> <li>• Safety Procedures on Site</li> <li>• Explanation of Awarding Body</li> <li>• Re-assessment Procedure</li> <li>• The Appeals Procedure</li> <li>• Authenticity</li> <li>• What is an Assessor</li> <li>• What is an Internal Verifier</li> <li>• What is an External Verifier</li> </ul>		
Centre-devised Employee Induction	Dec 2008	Rev 1
<b>Centre 2</b>		
Recognised EAL Assessment Centre	Expires 30/09/2014	
Centre-devised PEO Induction Timetable	6 September 2013	
Centre-devised Student Key Information	2013/14	
Centre-devised Health & Safety Policy	December 2012	
Centre-devised Equality & Diversity Policy	April 2013	
Centre-devised Assessment and Verification	August 2013	
Centre-devised Extended Learning Support Policy	July 2012	
Centre-devised Complaints Handling Procedure	June 2013	
Centre-devised Academic Appeals Procedure	September 2013	
Centre-devised Student Charter	2012/13	
Centre-devised Data Protection	January 2013	
E-mail from EAL regarding PEO re-accreditation	28 June 2013	
Centre-devised Engineering Modern Apprenticeship		

EAL Assessment Plan X/200		
Performance Assessment Plan and Evidence Record		
Feedback and Actions Agreed		
EAL Candidate Guide		Issue 1
EAL Internal Verification Progress Plan		
EAL Internal Verification Sampling Record		
EAL Internal Verification Sampling Progress Record		
EAL Assessor Training Needs Analysis		
EAL Internal Verification Sampling Summary		
EAL Internal Verification Standardisation Form		
EAL Assessor Monitoring Checklist		
EAL Action Plan Following Visit from External Verifier		
<b>Centre 3</b>		
Smarter Touch printout of Qualifications Centre Approved to deliver	08/12/2013	
Smarter Touch printout of Centre Staff	08/12/2013	
Smarter Touch Printout of Centre Staff Member Linked to Qualification(s) approved to deliver	08/12/2013	
EAL Centre Guidance — Being an Assessor	01/01/2013	Issue 1
EAL Centre Guidance — Being a Quality Assurer	01/01/2013	Issue 1
Centre-devised list of EAL Centre Assessment Team		
Completed EAL/X200/2		
Centre-devised Internal Verification Sampling Record	25/05/2013	
Standardisation Minutes of Meetings	31 July 2013 31 January 2013	

<p>Centre-devised Candidate Induction Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications?</li> <li>• Awarding and Standard Setting Bodies</li> <li>• How is your Qualification Comprised – Structure, Delivery and Duration</li> <li>• What is Assessment?</li> <li>• What is Competence?</li> <li>• What is Evidence – Performance and Knowledge?</li> <li>• What are the Benefits?</li> <li>• Who is Involved?</li> <li>• The Assessment Process</li> <li>• How Will Your Assessor Support You?</li> <li>• Planning the Assessment</li> <li>• Generating and Collecting Evidence</li> <li>• Judging the Evidence</li> <li>• Making the Decision and Giving Feedback</li> <li>• What is Expected from the Employer</li> <li>• What is Expected from the Candidate</li> <li>• Candidate Support</li> <li>• Appeals Process</li> <li>• Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• Plagiarism Process</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Overview of One File</li> <li>• Any Questions?</li> </ul>		
<b>Centre 4</b>		
Current EAL Registrations		
Centre-devised Equality and Diversity Policy	01/10/2012	Issue 1
EAL Opportunities and Diversity Policy	30/11/2011	Issue 1
Centre-devised Complaints Handling Procedure	01/08/2013	Issue 1
EAL Complaints Policy	05/08/2013	Issue 4
EAL Appeals Policy	10/06/2013	Issue 2
EAL Malpractice & Maladministration Policy	17/09/2013	Issue 2
Centre-devised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement	01/10/2012	Issue 3
Centre-devised Quality Management Policy	22/10/2012	Issue 1
Completed EAL Assessment Details	27/06/2013	
Completed EAL Performance Assessment Plan and Evidence Record		

Centre-devised Induction Programme		
Centre-devised Health and Safety Checklist		
EAL Guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning	21/03/2013	Issue 1.1
EAL Recognised Centre User Guide User Guide for Online Services (Certification)	01/06/2012	Issue 1
EAL Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations	30/11/2011	Issue 1
EAL Recognised Centre User Guide User Guide for Online Services (Registrations)	01/06/2012	Issue 1

## 4 Risk rating of Requirements

SQA Accreditation assigns a risk rating to each Requirement recorded as a result of awarding body quality assurance activity. The table below illustrates how the rating for a Requirement is assigned. A weighting is applied that depends on the risk identified and the possible impact on qualifications and/or the learner of failure to implement that Requirement.

The assignment of a risk rating allows an awarding body to assign their resources to areas which have been identified as having a major impact on the qualifications and/or the learner. The risk rating also allows SQA Accreditation to assign its resources to support awarding bodies in improving their performance.

Risk	Impact of Requirements identified through quality assurance activity
Very Low	The Requirement has been identified as 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 identified Requirement is unlikely to recur once resolved and no long lasting damage would be anticipated.
Low	The Requirement has been identified as low impact but is 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.
Medium	The Requirement has been identified as having the potential to 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.
High	The Requirement has been identified as having a potentially high impact on the integrity and reliability of the qualification, or the effective operation of the 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.
Very High	The Requirement has been identified as having a serious impact on the integrity and reliability of the qualification or the effective operation of the awarding body 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 Requirement is considered on its own merit, taking account of the context in which it was identified.



## 5 Action Plan

A separate document in Microsoft Word has been forwarded with this centre report.

Areas of concern	Requirement	Risk rating	Proposed action (Please include a description of your intended methodology and details of the evidence that will be provided.)	Target date for completion
Principle 6	EAL must ensure that its External Verifiers confirm that approved centres' internal verifiers are complying with <i>EAL Centre Guidance — Being a Quality Assurer</i> which states that <i>'Monitoring should not be left to the end — it is a process of continuous sampling which will identify whether there are any areas where improvements need to be made'</i> .	Low		
Principle 6	Where a centre has one or more assessment locations or satellite sites, EAL must ensure that an External Verifier visits them over a period of time and witness candidate assessments.	Low		

Areas of concern	Requirement	Risk rating	Proposed action (Please include a description of your intended methodology and details of the evidence that will be provided.)	Target date for completion
Principle 22	<p>EAL must provide guidance to its approved centres, and for its External Verifiers, to ensure that centres have a process to review the portfolios of those candidates who leave before completing the full SVQ qualification to see if they meet the requirements for Unit certification.</p> <p>Therefore, candidates who complete the requirements for a qualification or Unit will receive a certificate in the format agreed at the time of accreditation and within the awarding body's specified timescales.</p>	Medium		



**Signatures of agreement of Action Plan**

For and on behalf of EAL:

**Signature**

.....

**Date**

.....

For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

**Signature**

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**Date**

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## 6 Acceptance of centre monitoring findings

For and on behalf of EAL:

**Signature**

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**Designation**

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**Date**

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For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

**Signature**

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**Designation**

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**Date**

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