Provider Monitoring Report

Lantra Awards Limited

3 September 2014

Contents

1   Background

On 3 September 2014, one provider was visited.

1.1   Scope

SQA Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy.* This involves monitoring a sample of the awarding body's approved providers or assessment sites. Provider monitoring visits will be conducted in a consistent manner within and between providers.

The aim of monitoring is to:

♦ ensure awarding body compliance with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements
♦ confirm that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted by the awarding body in accordance with its prescribed arrangements
♦ ensure that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted in a consistent manner, within and between providers
♦ ensure that providers are receiving the appropriate guidance, support and documentation from the awarding body in order to facilitate a high standard of qualification delivery
♦ inform future audit and monitoring activity for the awarding body

All Principles may be included within the scope of the provider monitoring activity.

Awarding body documentation considered for review includes all documents banked on the awarding body's Quickr Place at the time of provider monitoring and information supplied by providers to support provider monitoring activity. Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence.

1.2   Provider Monitoring Report Timeline

Lantra Awards Limited provider monitoring date: 3 September 2014

Provider Monitoring Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 24 September 2014

Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by Lantra Awards: 5 November 2014

Action Plan to be e-mailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by Lantra Awards: 5 November 2014

The process will apply in relation to the timescales specified above:

♦ The awarding body will be sent two signed copies of the Provider Monitoring Report by post.
♦ The awarding body must sign both copies of the Provider Monitoring Report and return one by post to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.
♦ The awarding body will also be e-mailed a copy of the Provider Monitoring Report (for information only) and an electronic copy of the Action Plan.
♦ The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and e-mail this in Microsoft Word format to regulation@sqa.org.uk.
♦ SQA Accreditation will confirm when the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Issues and present it to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for approval.
♦ Following approval by ACG, the awarding body will be sent two signed copies of the approved Action Plan by post.
♦ The awarding body must sign both copies of the Action Plan and return one by post to SQA Accreditation.

The findings of this Provider Monitoring Report and the associated Action Plan will be published on SQA Accreditation's website following signed agreement.

SQA Accreditation will continually monitor progress towards completion of the proposed actions identified in the Action Plan and update the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating as appropriate.

1.3   Summary of Provider Monitoring Issues and Recommendations

An Issue has been recorded where evidence shows that the awarding body is not compliant with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements. The awarding body must address the Issues and specify corrective and preventative measures to address them through its Action Plan. The Action Plan is e-mailed to Lantra Awards as a separate document to the Provider Monitoring Report and must be submitted to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2.

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

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 5	The Accreditation Auditor found incomplete and inaccurate qualification and provider information in different parts of the awarding body website. This could disadvantage potential candidates and providers and, in turn, be detrimental to the uptake of SQA accredited qualifications. Lantra Awards must ensure that its website contains clear and correct information, appropriate to SQA accredited qualifications.	Medium
2. Principles 5 and 15	Lantra Awards documentation states that it is a requirement that awarding bodies capture the Scottish Candidate Number (SCN); however, it is not a regulatory requirement. Lantra Awards paperwork requests the SCN and when candidates in Provider 1 did not have their SCN at the time of registration, the trainer registered the candidates for a QCF qualification instead. Lantra Awards must ensure that its published information on the SCN is accurate and that the registration of candidates is effective and reliable in this regard.	Low
3. Principle 10	According to Lantra Awards documentation, the frequency of external verification visits is normally between one and three yearly. Despite being an active centre, Provider 1 has not been subject to external verification since 2010. Lantra Awards documentation also stipulates that an annual continuing professional development (CPD) record be submitted to the awarding body. The trainer in Provider 1 stated to the Accreditation Auditor that there has been no requirement to submit this record for some years. Lantra Awards must ensure it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.	High

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for improvement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations noted as good practice; however, measures to correct or prevent these are not mandatory and therefore do not form part of the Action Plan.

Recommendation	Detail of Recommendation noted
1. Principle 6	The provider list uploaded to Quickr by Lantra Awards contains all the qualifications being delivered by each provider in one data field. This means that the number of registrations and certifications for each qualification at each provider cannot be determined. Lantra Awards should populate the provider list with each qualification detailed separately for each provider.
2. Principles 9 and 15	The trainer at Provider 1 had experienced problems with the awarding body website and the Quartz website, which is designed to aid the administration of qualifications online. Lantra Awards may wish to review the functionality of both websites.
3. Principle 10	The trainer at Provider 1 felt that the limited information which can be included on the awarding body's Site Specific Risk Assessment (SSRA), especially with regards to site specific hazards and responses to these, did not allow learners to be fully aware of all the ways in which risk could be managed. Lantra Awards may wish to consider reviewing the SSRA to allow more detail to be included and ensure risk is mitigated fully as intended.

1.4   Risk Rating of Issues

SQA Accreditation assigns a rating to each Issue recorded depending on the impact or risk on the awarding body's operations, its SQA accredited qualifications and/or the learner.

Issues recorded during provider monitoring will count towards the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards future quality assurance activity. Further detail on how the Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated can be found on the SQA Accreditation website http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42387.2733.html.

2   Good Practice, Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail:

♦ good practice noted by providers
♦ Issues recorded and Recommendations noted against SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements

2.1   Good Practice

The following areas of good practice were noted by providers:

Provider 1 highlighted the:

♦ helpful customer contact
♦ timely certification of candidates

2.2   Issues

Regulatory Principle 5. The awarding body shall provide clear information on its procedures, products and services and ensure that they are accurate and appropriate to SQA accredited qualifications.

The Training and Qualifications part of the Lantra Awards website contains a page on Chainsaw and Aerial Training qualifications. When detailing why it is necessary to train, this page states that, *'anyone working in or on trees is expected to have a recognised QCF qualification'*. The page makes no reference to the fact that the qualification could be SQA accredited and be credit rated for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The page also features an option to display the latest qualifications and courses available in this sector and when selected, a document is presented for *Forestry and Arboriculture Training and Qualifications.* The document states that it contains a list of all the training qualifications and courses but there are no SQA accredited qualifications listed within the document, only QCF qualifications.

When using the course search facility available on the website, SQA accredited qualifications are displayed when SCQF is searched as the keyword. The Accreditation Auditor selected two qualifications from the list: Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-cutting at SCQF Level 5 and Felling and Processing Trees up to 380 mm at SCQF Level 5. The qualification pages included the facility to download course details which are correct. However, both pages include an additional information section on the number of units which is incorrect as it displays the structure for QCF qualifications. Both pages also allow users to search providers who offer these courses but neither returned any matches, despite the fact that these courses are offered currently by providers in Scotland.

The incomplete and inaccurate information found by the Accreditation Auditor in different parts of the awarding body website could disadvantage potential candidates and providers and, in turn, be detrimental to the uptake of SQA accredited qualifications. Accordingly, Lantra Awards must ensure that its website contains clear and correct information which is appropriate to SQA accredited qualifications.

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

Regulatory Principle 5. The awarding body shall provide clear information on its procedures, products and services and ensure that they are accurate and appropriate to SQA accredited qualifications.

and;

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

In reference to the Scottish Candidate Number (SCN), Lantra Awards *Centre Guidance,* page 18 states that, *'it is a requirement that ABs capture the SCN'.* Collection of the SCN was part of SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)* but did not feature in SQA Accreditation's *Regulatory Principles (2011)* and does not feature in the updated 2014 version.

Historically, the SCN was captured for SVQs by awarding bodies in order that candidate information could be included within their quarterly data returns. The information was then captured in the candidate Record of Achievement issued by SQA. These Records are no longer issued however, meaning that collection of the SCN is no longer necessary.

When the trainer at Provider 1 was first trying to register candidates for SQA accredited qualifications, the Lantra paperwork requested the SCN. Candidates did not have their SCN at the time of registration and amidst time constraints, the trainer registered the candidates for the QCF version of the qualification instead. The trainer has registered candidates for SQA accredited qualifications on subsequent courses and given the responsibility of obtaining candidates' SCNs to Lantra.

Lantra Awards must ensure that its published information on the SCN is accurate and that the registration of candidates is effective and reliable in this regard.

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

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

In relation to external verification activity, the Lantra Awards *Centre Guidance for Forestry and Arboriculture Qualifications (SCQF) Levels 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8,* August 2013, page 26 states that, *'the exact frequency of monitoring activities will be determined by number and types of products offered and level of activity. The frequency of visits is normally between one and three yearly.'* Provider 1 is an active centre, delivering a range of the awarding body's courses in different sectors, some of which are SQA accredited qualifications and some which are not. Despite this activity, the provider has not been subject to any external verification in recent years.

The last visit which Provider 1 received from the awarding body was a training audit visit in 2012**.** The focus of this visit was to conduct an instructor assessment and did not include the centre's systems and processes or assessor/candidate records, which would occur in the context of an external verification visit. The visit which preceded this in 2010 was an external verification visit.

For some qualifications, including Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-cutting at SCQF Level 5 and Felling and Processing Trees up to 380mm at SCQF Level 5 delivered by Provider 1, Lantra Awards recommends that the trainer is a different person to the assessor but where this cannot be the case, mitigates it by its external standardisation and verification activities. Provider 1 only has one trainer who also acts as the assessor, which makes external verification even more important for this type of provider. The trainer at Provider 1 also commented that the absence of a designated external verifier, meant there was no specific contact to provide technical support should this be required during or after courses.

Lantra Awards *Centre Guidance*, page 33 stipulates that an annual continuing professional development (CPD) record be submitted to the awarding body. The trainer in Provider 1 stated to the Accreditation Auditor that there has been no requirement to submit this record for some years. Provider 1 did have current records available at the time of monitoring but since these had not been submitted, and since verification activity had not taken place, these records had not been viewed by the awarding body to validate continuing professional development.

Provider 1 operates in a high risk, dangerous industry which makes external verification activities and the monitoring of CPD records vitally important.

Lantra Awards must ensure it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

This has been recorded as **Issue 3.**

2.3   Recommendations

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

The provider list uploaded to Quickr by Lantra Awards contains all the qualifications being delivered by each provider in one data field. This means that the number of registrations and certifications for each qualification at each provider cannot be determined. Currently, the awarding body only has a small number of active providers, with a small number of qualifications and candidates which minimises the impact of the way in which the list has been completed.

To ensure data can be interpreted accurately by the regulator however, Lantra Awards should populate the provider list with each qualification detailed separately for each provider.

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

Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body shall ensure that it has robust systems and processes for the identification, design, development, implementation and review of qualifications, which meet the needs of users.

and;

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

The trainer at Provider 1 stated to the Accreditation Auditor that the awarding body website was problematic when trying to download qualification materials.

The trainer further commented that the Quartz website, designed to aid the administration of qualifications online, did not work properly and that candidate registration and claims for certification still had to be processed manually by the provider.

Lantra Awards may wish to review the functionality of both websites.

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

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

Lantra Awards requires a Site Specific Risk Assessment (SSRA) to be completed by providers for each assessment and returned to the awarding body. The trainer at Provider 1 commented to the Accreditation Auditor that the awarding body's SSRA did not allow sufficient space to include all learner details and emergency contact information, nor the number/extent of hazards and related control measures. The trainer felt that the limited information which could be included on the SSRA, especially with regards to site specific hazards and responses to these, did not allow learners to be fully aware of all the ways in which risk could be managed. Accordingly, Provider 1 has developed its own version of the SSRA.

The trainer explained that although the awarding body does produce a detailed, comprehensive generic risk assessment, the information on the SSRA is crucial as it relates directly to the environment in which training is taking place and the learner is more familiar with the SSRA.

Lantra Awards may wish to consider reviewing the SSRA to allow more detail to be included and ensure risk is mitigated fully as intended.

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

3   Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings

For and on behalf of Lantra Awards Limited   For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

Print Name   **Print Name**
                                                    Scott Markwick

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Signature   **Signature**

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Designation   **Designation**
                                                    Senior Regulation Manager

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Date   **Date**
                                                    24 September 2014

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