



ThinkTalent Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Strategy

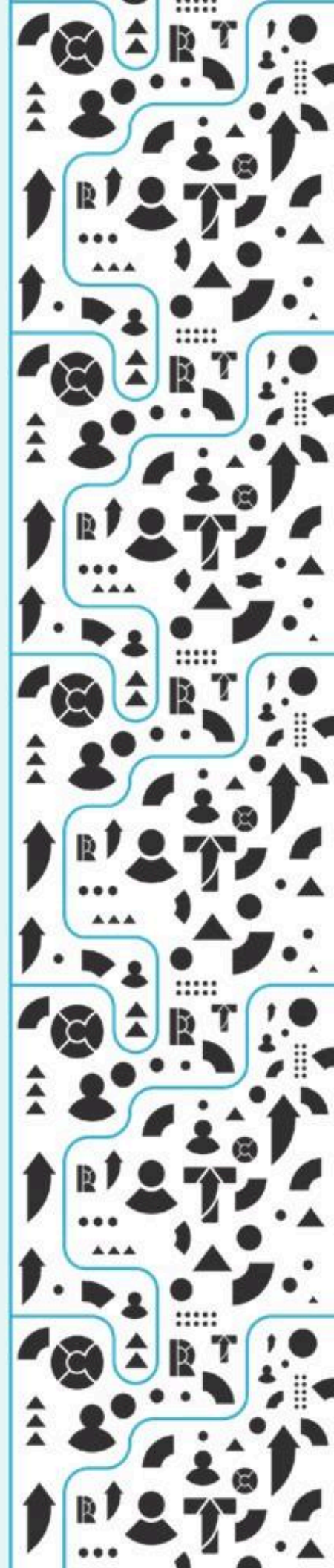
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Think Talent Institute

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1. Purpose

ThinkTalent is committed to ensuring that every assessment decision made on its programmes is accurate, consistent and fair, and that every certificate issued is fully supported by evidence.

This policy and strategy sets out how ThinkTalent plans, carries out, records and reviews internal quality assurance (IQA) of assessment across its short courses and its OTHM qualifications.

This policy operates within ThinkTalent's Quality Assurance Policy (QA190825), which is the overarching quality assurance policy of the Institute. Where this policy and the Quality Assurance Policy address the same matter, they are to be read together, and the Quality Assurance Policy prevails.

The policy supports ThinkTalent's commitment to:

- fair and reliable assessment decisions for all learners;
- consistent assessment practice across trainers, assessors, programmes and delivery locations;
- continuous improvement of assessment practice;
- compliance with the requirements of OTHM, MFHEA and other applicable regulatory bodies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- the Head of Institute;
- Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs);
- trainers and assessors, whether full time or freelance;
- administrative staff involved in assessment, registration, records or certification.

It covers all assessed programmes delivered by ThinkTalent, including OTHM qualifications and ThinkTalent short courses, whether delivered in person or online.

3. Definitions

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

The process by which ThinkTalent checks, through sampling, observation and standardisation, that assessment decisions are valid, reliable and consistent before results are confirmed and certificates are claimed.

Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)

A suitably qualified and occupationally competent person appointed by the Head of Institute to carry out internal quality assurance. An IQA must not quality assure their own assessment

decisions.

External Quality Assurance (EQA)

The monitoring of ThinkTalent's assessment and internal quality assurance by an awarding organisation, such as OTHM, or by a regulator, such as MFHEA.

Assessor

A trainer or other suitably qualified person who judges learner evidence against the stated assessment criteria and records an assessment decision.

Standardisation

Activities that bring assessors and IQAs together to agree a shared interpretation of the assessment criteria and the required standard, so that the same evidence receives the same decision whoever assesses it.

Sampling

The review by an IQA of a selection of assessment decisions and learner evidence, chosen according to the sampling plan in section 6.1, to confirm that decisions meet the required standard.

4. Principles

All assessment at ThinkTalent must be:

- **Valid:** the evidence and the assessment method measure what the assessment criteria require;
- **Authentic:** the evidence is the learner's own work;
- **Current:** the evidence shows the learner's present knowledge and competence;
- **Sufficient:** there is enough evidence to show that every criterion has been met;
- **Reliable:** the same decision would be reached by another assessor and on another occasion.

Assessment must also be fair, so that no learner is advantaged or disadvantaged by the way assessment is carried out, and consistent, so that the same standard is applied across all assessors, cohorts, programmes and delivery locations.

Internal quality assurance at ThinkTalent is supportive and developmental. Its aim is to improve assessment practice, not only to find errors.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Institute (QA Director)

The Head of Institute, acting as QA Director, is responsible for:

- approving and maintaining this policy and strategy;
- appointing IQAs and ensuring they are competent and impartial;
- approving the IQA annual calendar and sampling plans;
- monitoring IQA findings, action plans and trends;
- acting as the main contact for OTHM External Quality Assurance;
- ensuring that results are not confirmed and certificates are not claimed until any IQA concerns have been resolved;
- reporting on internal quality assurance within the reporting arrangements of the Quality Assurance Policy.

Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)

IQAs are responsible for:

- preparing and following a sampling plan for each programme and cohort;
- sampling assessment decisions and learner evidence;
- observing assessment practice;
- giving written feedback to assessors and agreeing action plans;
- leading or contributing to standardisation meetings;
- keeping accurate IQA records;
- reporting findings and concerns to the Head of Institute.

Trainers and Assessors

Trainers and assessors are responsible for:

- assessing learner evidence accurately against the assessment criteria;
- recording clear assessment decisions and feedback to learners;
- checking that learner evidence is authentic;
- attending standardisation meetings;
- acting on IQA feedback and completing agreed actions;
- making learner evidence and assessment records available for sampling when requested.

Administrative Staff

Administrative staff involved in assessment are responsible for:

- keeping accurate learner registration and assessment records;
- storing learner evidence and IQA records securely;
- supporting the scheduling of sampling, observations and standardisation meetings;
- making records available for internal and external quality assurance.

The Student Support Co-Ordinator works with assessors and the Head of Institute where a learner has approved reasonable adjustments or special consideration, so that these are applied

consistently and recorded in line with the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy.

6. Internal Quality Assurance Strategy

6.1. Risk Based Sampling Plan

IQAs prepare a sampling plan for each programme and cohort. The plan is based on risk and uses the CAMERA model, so that over time the sample covers:

- **Candidates:** learners across the cohort, including learners with reasonable adjustments or special consideration;
- **Assessors:** every assessor, whether full time or freelance;
- **Methods:** each assessment method used on the programme;
- **Evidence:** the different types of learner evidence submitted;
- **Records:** assessment records, feedback to learners and tracking documents;
- **Assessment sites and locations:** each delivery location and mode, including online delivery.

The size of the sample is set by the IQA according to risk and approved by the Head of Institute. A higher level of sampling applies to:

- new or less experienced assessors;
- new units or programmes;
- assessors, units or methods where issues have been found previously.

Sampling takes place at interim and summative stages. Interim sampling is carried out while the programme is running, so that issues are found and corrected early. Summative sampling is carried out before results are confirmed and certificates are claimed. Sampling is spread across the whole cohort and is not limited to the end of the course.

6.2. Standardisation

Standardisation meetings are held at least twice a year. They are attended by assessors and IQAs and are led by an IQA or by the Head of Institute.

Standardisation meetings may include joint review of learner evidence, agreement on the interpretation of assessment criteria, review of IQA and EQA findings, and updates from OTHM, MFHEA or other awarding organisations.

Minutes are kept of every standardisation meeting, recording attendance, the matters discussed, the decisions agreed and any actions. Assessors who cannot attend must read the minutes and confirm that they have done so.

6.3. Observation of Assessment Practice

Each assessor is observed carrying out assessment at least once a year. Observation may take place in person or online, and includes assessment activity, feedback to learners and the recording of assessment decisions. Observation of assessment practice under this policy is in addition to the trainer observations and annual appraisals set out in the Quality Assurance Policy.

6.4. Feedback and Action Plans

Following sampling or observation, the IQA gives the assessor written feedback. Where improvement is needed, the IQA and the assessor agree a written action plan with clear actions and target dates. The IQA checks that agreed actions have been completed. Concerns that are not resolved are referred to the Head of Institute.

6.5. IQA Annual Calendar

The Head of Institute approves an IQA annual calendar at the start of each academic year. The calendar sets out the planned interim and summative sampling, standardisation meetings, observations of assessment practice and the annual review of this policy. The calendar is updated when new programmes or cohorts start.

7. Assessor and IQA Competence

Assessors must be suitably qualified and occupationally competent in the subject they assess. IQAs must be suitably qualified and occupationally competent in the subject they quality assure and must have a sound understanding of the assessment requirements of the programme.

Assessors and IQAs keep their knowledge and practice up to date through continuing professional development, in line with the Staff Development Policy. Training needs identified through sampling, observation, standardisation or EQA feedback are addressed through the Staff Development Policy.

8. Records and Retention

ThinkTalent keeps records of:

- sampling plans and IQA sampling records;
- observation records;
- written feedback to assessors and action plans;
- standardisation meeting minutes;
- the IQA annual calendar;
- EQA reports and the actions taken in response.

IQA records and assessment records are kept securely for a minimum of three years, or longer where required by OTHM, MFHEA or other applicable legal, regulatory or institutional

requirements. Personal data in these records is handled in accordance with ThinkTalent's Privacy Policy.

9. External Quality Assurance

ThinkTalent cooperates fully with OTHM External Quality Assurance and with monitoring by MFHEA. This includes giving access to learner evidence, assessment records, IQA records, staff and learners as requested.

The Head of Institute ensures that EQA findings are acted on and that any actions are completed within the timescales set. EQA reports and the progress of related actions are reported to the Head of Institute and shared with assessors and IQAs through standardisation meetings.

10. Malpractice, Appeals and Complaints

Where sampling or observation identifies suspected malpractice or maladministration, the IQA reports it to the Head of Institute and it is handled under the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Learners who wish to challenge an assessment decision may do so through ThinkTalent's Appeals Procedure.

Complaints are handled under the Trainee Complaints Policy.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy and strategy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Institute, or sooner where:

- OTHM, MFHEA or other awarding organisation requirements change;
- IQA or EQA findings show that a change is needed;
- significant organisational changes occur.

Appendix A

IQA Sampling Record

Programme: _____

Unit or Module: _____

Cohort: _____

Assessor: _____

IQA: _____

Date of Sampling: _____

Sampling Stage

- ☐ Interim
- ☐ Summative

Learners and Evidence Sampled

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Assessment Method

- ☐ Written Assignment
- ☐ Examination
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Practical or Observation
- ☐ Other _____

Is the assessment decision valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is the feedback to the learner clear and accurate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

IQA Decision

- ☐ Assessment decision agreed
- ☐ Assessment decision not agreed, action required

IQA Feedback to Assessor**Actions Required and Target Date**

IQA Signature: _____

Date: _____

Assessor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Standardisation Meeting Record

Date: _____

Programme or Units Covered: _____

Led by: _____

Attendees

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Apologies

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Evidence Reviewed

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Points of Interpretation Agreed

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Updates from OTHM, MFHEA or Other Awarding Organisations**Actions Agreed****Action, Person Responsible and Target Date**

Minutes Recorded by: _____

Approved by (Head of Institute): _____

Date: _____



Document Owner: Head of Institute

Applies to: Trainers, assessors, Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs), the Head of Institute and administrative staff involved in assessment

