# *External quality arrangements for the review of Modern Apprenticeship Off-the-Job and On-the-Job training delivered by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) contracted providers*

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# 1 EDUCATION SCOTLAND QUALITY FRAMEWORK

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The indicators in this framework are arranged under **three key principles**, addressing **five questions** which Education Scotland is adopting for evaluation purposes.

### Outcomes and Impact

- How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

### Service Delivery

- How good is our delivery of training?
- How good is management of service delivery?

### Leadership and Quality culture

- How good is our strategic leadership?

  These questions are underpinned by a wider principle on the contracted provider's Capacity for Improvement and the question *How good is our capacity to improve?*

### Capacity for Improvement: Judgment not graded

- How good is our capacity to improve?

These powerful questions are set out in a quality framework in the annexe 1 of this document.

## 1.2 USING THE FRAMEWORK OF QUALITY INDICATORS IN EXTERNAL REVIEW

The quality framework provides a structure for external review which can be used in different ways.

It includes indicators which Education Scotland can use to reach a professional judgement of the extent to which *Apprentice outcomes and impact, Delivery of training, Leadership and quality culture and Capacity for improvement* are being delivered by SDS contracted providers.

There are 25 quality indicators in the framework covering all aspects which help determine quality. Of these 25, only nine are considered **core** to all reviews. This set of nine [1]core quality indicators, set out in Appendix 1, brings together evaluations of:

**Element 1: Key performance outcomes**

**Element 2: Impact on apprentices**

**Element 3: Impact on staff**

**Element 4: Impact on the community**

**Element 5: Delivery of key processes**

**Element 6: Operational management**

**Element 7: Management and support of staff**

**Element 8: Partnerships and Resources**

**Element 9: Strategic leadership**

**Element 10: Capacity for improvement**

Together, the **core quality indicators** will provide the minimum requirements for Education Scotland to form evaluations summarised in grades for each of the five high-level questions. Other quality indicators in the framework may be used as required in a proportionate way when other significant factors are identified.

[1] Please note – elements 3, 4, 6 and 7 do not contain core QIs.

## 1.3 USING CORE QUALITY INDICATORS AND SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

The gathering of evidence on which to base evaluations will be kept manageable by carefully planned sampling and cross-referencing of all evidence sources. The key sources of evidence during external review will come from professional dialogue, from what reviewers actually observe, from evidence provided by SDS, data of various sorts, and from the views of people who are closely involved with the training, such as apprentices and employers, as well as training contracted providers.

# 2 EXTERNAL REVIEW METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Aims and objectives of external review

External reviews are designed to:

- be sector specific and to highlight best practice and key areas for improvement for the whole sector;
- support and promote quality enhancement in contracted providers to provide the best possible experience for the apprentice;
- provide information to Scottish Ministers and the public on the quality of the training delivered;
- provide an independent evaluation to assist contracted providers in informing prospective and current apprentices and employers of the quality of the training;
- evaluate delivery against the three key principles of *Outcomes and Impact, Delivery of Training, Leadership and Quality Culture* and make comment on the wider principle *Capacity for Improvement;*
- complement internal review and self-assessment procedures;
- contribute to a strategic overview of the quality of training for modern apprentices across provision for Scottish Government (SG); and
- identify excellent practice.

In realising the above aims, external reviews will provide a breadth and depth of activity that is proportionate to scale and scope of delivery.

## 2.2 Key features of external review

The evaluation of modern apprenticeship training will be reviewed over a seven-year period. The scope of reviews in 2015-22 will be determined from intelligence established and updated through evaluative activities, such as SDS Quality Assurance reports. Three reviews, which focussed on off-the-job training delivery arrangements, have been completed. Following ongoing review of the original process, it has been agreed to expand the scope of future reviews to look at both on and off-the-job training delivered by SDS contracted providers. This reflects the diverse nature of apprenticeship delivery across the various sectors. The fourth review will be treated as a pathfinder to allow us to evaluate the revised arrangements. Adjustments may be made to the timing of external reviews to reflect changing information about the context and effectiveness of training. The external reviews will be structured according to the quality framework *External quality arrangements for the evaluation of Modern Apprenticeship training,* which can be found in Annexe 1 in this document.

Reviews will always involve the core quality indicators, which provide the minimum requirements for Education Scotland to evaluate the delivery against the five high-level questions and make comment on the Capacity to improve question . There will be scope for review teams to use other quality indicators in the framework in a proportionate way, depending on identification of risk, excellence or analysis of a contracted provider's context.

The external review will consist of a programme of core activities. Education Scotland will work with SDS to plan and agree a programme of activities appropriate to the sample of contracted providers.

Reviewers will report the outcome of external review visits in terms of strengths and areas for further development with grades awarded for each of the five high-level questions. The team will provide a summary for the question on capacity to improve. After each review visit, the team will provide a verbal feedback on key strengths and areas for development to senior managers in the provider. The Lead Inspector (LI) for the visit will discuss and agree with the review team provisional grades from the six point scale to assign a grade to each of the five high-level questions. The grades will be shared verbally with the contracted provider after each visit.

In addition, a short report will be written and issued to contracted providers within 10 working days of the completion of the review visit. This will contain the areas of strength, areas for development and the grades for the five questions. SDS will also receive a copy of the short report.

These grades will be aggregated into the national report on the industry sector. The national report will have grades for each of the five questions. It will reflect findings from all of the visits and will be published after all the review visits have taken place.

## 2.3 The external review process

Reviews will generally be planned a year in advance and Education Scotland will alert all of those contracted providers selected in the sample for visits, eight weeks before the first visit commences. The duration of each visit will be determined by the scale and scope of training activities. For contracted providers with large numbers of apprentices, the team's activities will normally be over two days, followed by a day for team discussions and feedback to managers. For contracted providers with smaller numbers, it could be one day, followed by a day for team discussions and feedback. However, the LI will ensure that the visits to the contracted providers will be at a time suitable to their business needs. In some cases, the training environment might require visits to be spread over a longer period. This is a flexible arrangement to ensure the review team can cover the trainining activities to suit trainers, employers and apprentices.

Following the completion of the visit to the contracted provider, the review team will hold a meeting to discuss their findings. The Lead Inspector (LI) for the visit will return with the team to deliver a verbal report on the findings. The contracted

provider may also invite representatives from any organisations to which they sub-contract training or employers which send apprentices for training.

Approximately eight working weeks before the review visit, Education Scotland will brief the contracted provider's managers about the external review process. A Managing Inspector (MI) from Education Scotland will lead the process overall and is responsible for producing the national report. For each visit, the LI will confirm the scope of the review with the contracted provider, which will be based on latest intelligence provided by SDS. The LI will also be responsible for planning and organising the visit. This will be completed in conjunction with a named co-ordinator from the contracted provider.

In the pre-review period, the LI will liaise with the co-ordinator and discuss the scope of the review visit including the nature and extent of any additional activity necessary beyond the core quality indicators. Each contracted provider will be invited to provide current information for the review team. The LI will plan a programme of review activities for each visit.

Before the review visit, the LI from Education Scotland will discuss and agree with the co-ordinator the proposed nature and level of engagement with managers, staff, apprentices, contractors and employers. Education Scotland will encourage contracted provider managers and staff to work in partnership with reviewers to identify appropriate evidence.

Education Scotland will also work with colleagues from SDS to plan and agree a programme of activities appropriate to the contracted provider.

A review visit will normally last for two days, spent undertaking evaluative activities. On the morning of Day 1, the review team will be briefed by the manager(s) delivering the training. Over the period of Day 1 and Day 2, the review team will:

- engage with apprentices, contractors and employers;
- observe both on-the-job and off-the-job training activities and provide feedback on strengths and areas for development;
- observe progress reporting meetings;
- consider evidence of good practice;
- conduct meetings and undertake other activity required to determine the extent of concordance between documentary evidence and practice;
- evaluate evidence against the core quality indicators; and
- identify key strengths and areas for development.

On Day 3, after the team has met to discuss their findings and the gradings for each of the five high-level questions, the LI and the team will provide verbal feedback to the manager(s) of the contracted provider. A written report will be prepared confirming these findings, shared with the contracted provider and SDS within ten working days. This report will contain the grades awarded by the team for the five high-level questions.

## 2.4 Composition and deployment of review teams

The review team will include an LI, and team members who will be a combination of HMI, SDS staff and Associate Assessors (AA). Associate Assessors have been drawn from senior staff in colleges responsible for delivering MA programmes and senior staff from independent training providers (ITP). They have strong industry experience and knowledge of delivering training in that sector.

The number of reviewers on each team will be adjusted to take account of the size and complexity of the training activities. Additional reviewers may be appointed to extend or enhance coverage of themes as part of the external review process. Education Scotland will give due consideration to requests from contracted providers for engagement by reviewers to undertake additional review activities.

## 2.5 Expressing the outcomes of external review

The review activities will normally extend over a three month period during which time review teams will visit the sample of contracted providers. A national report on the external review will be published on the Education Scotland website within eight working weeks of the final visit to the sample of contracted providers. Overall grades for each high-level question will be published.

Education Scotland will express the outcome of and evaluations from external review through a six-point scale. These are:

- Excellent - *Outstanding and sector leading;*
- Very good - *Major strengths;*
- Good - *Important strengths with some areas for improvement;*
- Satisfactory - *Strengths just outweigh weaknesses;*
- Weak - *Important weaknesses; and*
- Unsatisfactory - *Major weaknesses.*

## 2.6 Concerns

If a contracted provider believes that the review team has arrived at a judgment or grade in the absence of all relevant information or evidence, they should submit any additional evidence in writing to the LI within five working days of the verbal feedback by the review team. This material must consist of evidence which is new in nature and is not a further submission of evidence of the type already considered by the team. Education Scotland will consider additional new evidence and convey the decision to the delivery contracted provider in writing, after full consideration by the review team.

Any other concerns should be raised in the first instance with the LI by the contracted provider's managers during the course of the review visit. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the senior managers involved, it should be raised

with the Lead Officer responsible for the external review programme, who will seek to resolve the issue.

## 2.7 After the review visit

After the review visit has taken place, the LI will produce a report of the evaluation of the visit within ten working days. This report will contain the grades awarded for the five high-level questions and areas of strength and areas for development. The report will be sent to the contracted provider and also shared with SDS. This report will not be published, but the findings will contribute to the national report for the industry sector.

The LI will provide the grades for the five questions and text on the findings for each key principle to the MI for inclusion in the national report. Approximately eight weeks after the final review visit has been completed, Education Scotland will publish the national report, with grades, for that industry sector.

One year on from publication of the national report, all contracted providers are required to submit to SDS senior management a report on their progress against the actions arising from the external review. For those colleges participating in the sample for the review, the link college HMI will assess the progress that has made for each of the areas of development in the individual college reports.

All SDS contracted providers, excluding colleges, are required to update their Self Assessment and Action Plan one year on from the publication of the national report , highlighting their progress against actions arising from the external review.

SDS will work with appropriate industry sector skills bodies and other interested parties through a national steering group to progress recommendations made within the national report.

HMIs from Education Scotland will work with colleges to ensure that recommendations from national reports are being addressed in those colleges which offer modern apprenticeship training.

SDS staff will work with industry lead bodies and Sector Skills Councils to ensure that any relevant recommendations from national reports are being addressed through these or other appropriate channels.

## 2.8 Complaints

If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved through the processes outlined above, the contracted provider should pursue the matter through Education Scotland's published complaints procedure, which is available at www.Education Scotland.gov.uk.

## Annex 1 The quality indicators: indicative themes for external reviewers

Note – the core quality indicators are indicated in **bold.**

### Outcomes and impact

***How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant high quality outcomes?***

1. Key performance outcomes

**1.1 How effective are training providers at achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery?**

**1.2 How well do providers adhere to statutory principles and guidance?**

***How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?***

2. Impact on apprentices and employers

**2.1 How well do apprentices make progress, and achieve individual outcomes?**

3. Impact on staff

3.1 How motivated, supported and enabled are staff?

4. Impact on the community

4.1 How well does training meet the needs of apprentices and employers?

### Service delivery

***How good is our delivery of key training?***

5. Delivery of key processes

**5.1 How well does the design and delivery of training meet the needs of apprentices and employers?**

5.2 How effective are relationships with apprentices**?**

5.3 How accessible, flexible and inclusive is training?

**5.4 How well is training delivered?**

**5.5 How well do staff reflect on provision to improve training?**

6. Operational Management

6.1 How effective is policy review and development?

6.2 How well do employers and apprentices participate in the development and planning of training*?*

6.3 How effective is planning of key processes?

***How good isour management of training delivery?***

7. Management and support of staff

7.1 How well does the organisation manage and deploy staff?

7.2 How well do staff participate in effective professional learning?

8. Partnerships & Resources

**8.1 How well does the organisation work with partners to improve outcomes for apprentices?**

8.2 How effective is the organisation's financial management?

8.3 How effective is the organisation's resource management?

8.4 How effective is the organisation's knowledge and information management in supporting training?

### Leadership & Quality Culture

***How good is our strategic leadership?***

9. Strategic Leadership

**9.1 How appropriate and influential are the contracted provider's vision, values and aims?**

**9.2 How effective is leadership for partnership working and delivery of training?**

9.3 How well do leaders develop and lead people?

9.4 How effective is leadership for innovation and change?

**9.5 How well do leaders secure improvement of quality and impact of training?**

10 What is our capacity for improvement? **How good are internal evaluation and self-reflection activities to ensure we have the capacity to improve and enhance the delivery of training?**

**Capacity for improvement - based on evidence of all key areas in particular, outcomes, impact and leadership**

**Note: Those QIs not core to the review are highlighted in grey.**

**The Quality Indicators:**

**Indicative themes for the external review of modern apprenticeship training training.**

## Element 1: Key performance outcomes

This element is concerned with the contracted provider's progress in achieving key aims, objectives and targets and the extent to which action taken leads to improvement. It considers progress against targets and performance indicators, particularly against identifiable trends. It also evaluates how well the contracted provider has responded to legislation and national directives.

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **1.1 Improvement in performance** | • Achievement of aims, objectives, targets and key performance indicators.<br>• Progress on key aims and objectives.<br>• Performance data and measures showing success rates on programmes.<br>• Apprentice progress on working towards achieving individual goals. |
| *How effective are training providers at achieving and maintaining high-levels of service delivery?* | **This QI will utilise trend data derived from SDS quality assurance framework and activities.** |

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **1.2 Adherence to principles and fulfilment of statutory and regulatory duties** | • Relevant legislation.<br>• Relevant directives and regulations.<br>• Requirements of statutory and regulatory bodies.<br>• Equalities. |
| *How well do providers adhere to statutory principles and guidance?* | |

## Element 2: Impact on Apprentices and Stakeholders

This element is concerned with how well the contracted provider identifies and responds to the needs of potential and current apprentices. It explores the availability, appropriateness, accessibility, and effectiveness of provision and delivery. It also considers apprentice feedback on services delivered.

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **2.1 Impact on apprentices and employers** | • Accessibility and flexibility of programmes.<br>• Relevance and range of programmes to apprentice and employer needs.<br>• Apprentice achievement of essential skills.<br>• Preparation for employment and/or further learning.<br>• Value added to employers. |
| *How well do apprentices make progress and achieve individual outcomes?* | |

## Element 3: Impact on Staff

This element is concerned with how well the contracted provider engages staff in working towards meeting organisational aims and objectives. It explores the arrangements for keeping staff informed about objectives and priorities. It considers the motivation and engagement of staff in contributing to service delivery and how well staff reflect and share excellent practice. It also explores collaboration and team working by staff.

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| **3.1 Impact on staff** | • Staff motivation and engagement to achieve training aims and objectives.<br>• Communication and direction of priorities for staff.<br>• Staff involvement with planning.<br>• Impact of CPD on professional practice.<br>• Adoption of best practice.<br>• Team working and collaborative working. |
| *How motivated, supported and enabled are staff?* | |

## Element 4: Impact on the community

This element is concerned with how well the contracted provider meets the needs of stakeholders. It considers arrangements for contributing and responding to priorities at local and national level and responsiveness to current and anticipated needs. It explores partnership arrangements for providing training to meet specific needs. It also considers stakeholder involvement in the design and evaluation of provision.

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| **4.1 Impact on the community** | • Relevance of programmes to the economy and employers.<br>• Responsiveness to priorities at local and national level.<br>• Links and partnerships with appropriate partners and other contracted providers.<br>• Employer and apprentice satisfaction with provision.<br>• Employer and apprentice participation in the design and evaluation of programmes. |
| *How well does training meet the needs of apprentices and employers?* | |

## Element 5: Delivery of key processes

This element is concerned with the organisation and delivery of provision. It evaluates how well provision meets the needs of all current and potential apprentices. It explores the effectiveness of arrangements to provide accessible, flexible and inclusive provision and considers how well provision is delivered. It evaluates how well staff reflect on the delivery of programmes to inform improvement.

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **5.1 Planning and design to meet apprentice and employer needs** | • Programmes meet the needs of all apprentices and employers.<br>• Appropriate range of services and resources.<br>• Relevance of the programme to the economy and employers.<br>• Design of programmes to reflect employer and apprentice needs.<br>• Motivation and engagement of apprentices.<br>• Progress of apprentices on achieving goals.<br>• Planning of activities by staff to support apprentices and employers.<br>• Arrangements to meet the needs of specific groups. |
| *How well does the design and delivery of training meet the needs of apprentices and employers?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| **5.2 Relationships with apprentices and stakeholders** | • Quality of partnerships and links with employers and stakeholders.<br>• Quality of relationships between staff and apprentices and employers.<br>• Apprentice and stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. |
| *How effective are relationships with apprentices and stakeholders?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| **5.3 Accessibility, flexibility, and inclusion** | • Identifying and responding to needs.<br>• Range and flexibility of delivery approaches.<br>• Arrangements to meet the needs of specific groups.<br>• Apprentice and stakeholder feedback. |
| *How accessible, flexible and inclusive is training?* | |

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **5.4 Delivery of training** | • Planning of high quality delivery.<br>• Application of professional knowledge and use of resources.<br>• Promotion of independence and confidence in developing vocational and core skills.<br>• Delivery environment.<br>• Links between training and employer and sector needs.<br>• Quality of relationships between staff and apprentices and employers.<br>• Apprentice and employer feedback and satisfaction with programme. |
| *How well is training delivered and how well are apprentices supported?* | |

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **5.5 Reflection and professional discussion** | • Arrangements for quality assurance and improvement.<br>• Reflective practice leading to improvement and enhancement of services.<br>• Employer and apprentice participation in the design of the programme.<br>• Sharing and adoption of effective practice.<br>• Effectiveness of action taken. |
| *How well do staff, employers and apprentices reflect on provision to improve training?* | |

## Element 6: Operational management

This element is concerned with the effectiveness of planning for the range of training programmes. It considers the range of policies, strategies and plans and the extent to which they are understood and acted on by staff and their impact on operations. It evaluates planning for the delivery of training and the extent to which staff plan for responding to change.

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| **6.1 - Policy review and development** | • Operational planning and links to organisational strategies.<br>• Management of actions to achieve aims, objectives and targets of plans.<br>• Development and review of key policies and procedures.<br>• Managing and responding to changing environments.<br>• Responding to key post-16 drivers. |
| *How effective is policy review and development?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| **6.2 – Participation of apprentices, employers and other stakeholders** | • Involvement of staff, apprentices, employers and stakeholders in planning learning.<br>• Identification and agreement of standards for achievement of actions.<br>• Communication of plans and associated actions and targets. |
| *How well do employers and apprentices participate in the development and planning of training?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***6.3 – Planning of key processes*** | • Clarity of key processes, responsibilities and targets.<br>• Managing risk and effective use of resources.<br>• Review of previous performance and management of new developments and initiatives. |
| *How effective is planning of key processes?* | |

## Element 7: Management and support of staff

This element is concerned with the qualifications and experience of staff. It explores arrangements for the recruitment, selection, induction, deployment and retention of staff and with workforce planning. It considers the relevance and effectiveness of continuous professional development in equipping staff to deliver an effective service. It also refers to arrangements to take account of care and welfare of staff.

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***7.1 – Management and support of staff*** | • Recruitment, selection and retention of staff.<br>• Qualifications and experience of staff.<br>• Target-setting and performance review.<br>• Staff working relationships and collaboration with external stakeholders.<br>• Workforce planning. |
| *How well does the organisation manage and deploy staff?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***7.2 - Career-long professional learning*** | • Identification of staff development and training needs.<br>• Support for training and development.<br>• Staff participation.<br>• Effectiveness and impact of training and development. |
| *How well do staff participate in effective professional learning?* | |

## Element 8: Partnerships and Resources

This element is concerned with the effectiveness of the contracted provider's partnerships. It considers how well it seeks out appropriate links and uses them to develop training. It focusses on collaboration to design training, support apprentices, enhance flexibility and promote equality. It also considers the management of resources and the use of management information which relates to the evaluation of training and improvement plans for delivery.

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| **8.1 – Partnership working** | • Strategic links and collaborative arrangements with partners.<br>• Collaboration arrangements to support apprentices and improve training.<br>• Responsiveness to government priorities and the requirements of awarding bodies and other agencies.<br>• Effectiveness of partners and stakeholders in planning provision and transitions. |
| *How well does the contracted provider work with partners to improve outcomes for apprentices?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***8.2 - Financial management*** | • Financial management overview and risk management.<br>• Cost-effective delivery linked to strategic aims and objectives.<br>• Collaborative and joint commissioning arrangements.<br>• Financial reporting arrangements. |
| *How effective is the contracted provider's financial management?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***8.3 – Resource management*** | • Alignment with strategic aims and objectives.<br>• Planning, deployment and monitoring of resources.<br>• Sufficiency, accessibility and adequacy of resources.<br>• Sustainable use of resources. |
| *How effective is the contracted provider's resource management?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***8.4 – Knowledge and information management*** | • Use of management information.<br>• Organisational records management policies, supporting procedures and guidance.<br>• Compliance with statutory requirements.<br>• Sharing of appropriate data with partners. |
| *How effective is the contracted provider's knowledge and information management?* | |

## Element 9: Strategic Leadership

This element is concerned with the leadership of the delivery of training. It considers the extent to which national policies and local factors influence strategic development. It evaluates the effectiveness of the leadership for planning and delivery of training. It explores the extent to which there is a culture of innovation and change within the contracted provider.

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***9.1 - Vision, values and aims*** | • Clarity, comprehensiveness and responsiveness of the organisation's vision, values and aims.<br>• Responsiveness to relevant local, national and international policy drivers and frameworks.<br>• Relevance of programmes to the economy and employers.<br>• Staff understanding, commitment and engagement. |
| *How appropriate and influential are the contracted provider's vision, values and aims?* | |

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***9.2 - Leadership and direction*** | • Vision, strategies and direction of the trainer's programmes and services.<br>• Strategies for improvement.<br>• Team leadership.<br>• Involvement and motivation of staff. |
| *How effective is leadership for partnership working and delivery of training?* | |

| Quality Indicators | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***9.3 - Leading people and developing partnerships*** | • Strategic links with partners/employers/stakeholders.<br>• Leadership of collaborative arrangements.<br>• Leadership of teams and individuals. |
| *How well do leaders develop and lead people?* | |

| Quality Indicators - | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***9.4 - Leadership of innovation, change and improvement.*** | • Leadership of a culture of excellence and continuous improvement through development and innovation.<br>• Excellence in and improvement of training.<br>• Involvement and innovation of staff and teams.<br>• Leadership of change. |
| *How effective is leadership for innovation, change and improvement?* | |

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***9.5 – Driving and securing improvement of quality and impact of programmes.*** | • Involvement of apprentices, employers and delivery staff in enhancing experiences and outcomes.<br>• Impact of self-evaluation and action planning for improvement.<br>• Improvement and enhancement in programmes, including key outcomes and impact on delivery, users, staff and the community. |
| *How well do leaders secure improvement of quality and impact of training?* | |

## Element 10: Capacity for improvement

This element is based upon the evidence from all key areas.

| Quality Indicators (Core) | Themes |
|---|---|
| ***10. - Capacity for improvement*** | • Based upon all mandatory, quality indicators.<br>• Confidence in the trainer's capacity to continue to improve through self-evaluation and external scrutiny. |
| *How good are internal evaluation and self-reflection activities to ensure we have the capacity to improve and enhance the delivery of training?* | |

# Annex 2

## Grades used in reporting

A common grading scale will be used in making judgements for organisational inspections:

- Grade 1 EXCELLENT – *Outstanding and sector leading*
- Grade 2 VERY GOOD – *Major strengths*
- Grade 3 GOOD – *Important strengths with some areas for improvement*
- Grade 4 SATISFACTORY - *Strengths just outweigh weaknesses*
- Grade 5 WEAK – *Important weaknesses*
- Grade 6 UNSATISFACTORY – *Major weaknesses*

Grades will be awarded for the following 5 questions:

- **Outcome and Impact**
  1. How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant high quality?
  2. How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

- **Service Delivery**
  3. How good is our delivery of key training?
  4. How good is our management of training delivery?

- **Leadership and quality culture**
  5. How good is our strategic leadership?

The judgement of *Capacity to improve* will be influenced by the evidence and gradings from the other questions and a professional judgement on the contracted provider's capacity to continue to improve training and services.

- **Capacity to improve**
  Capacity for improvement, based on evidence of all key areas.

## Summary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Excellent** | *Outstanding and sector leading* |
| **Very Good** | *Major strengths* |
| **Good** | *Important strengths with some areas for improvement* |
| **Satisfactory** | *Strengths just outweigh weaknesses* |
| **Weak** | *Important weaknesses* |
| **Unsatisfactory** | *Major weaknesses* |

- An evaluation of ***excellent*** applies to training which is of a very high quality. An evaluation of *excellent* represents an outstanding standard of training which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the current provision. It implies that very high-levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

- An evaluation of ***very good*** applies to training characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of *very good* represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide training without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the contracted provider will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.

- An evaluation of ***good*** applies to training characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of *good* represents a standard of training in which the strengths have a significant positive impact. However, the quality of apprentices' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the contracted provider should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, but take action to address the areas for improvement.

- An evaluation of ***satisfactory*** applies to training characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of *satisfactory* indicates that apprentices' have access to a basic level of training. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of apprentices' experiences. It implies that the contracted provider should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.

- An evaluation of ***weak*** applies to training which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of *weak* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish apprentices' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the contracted provider.

- An evaluation of ***unsatisfactory*** applies when there are major weaknesses in training, requiring immediate remedial action. The training experience for apprentices is at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for training evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the immediate support given by the contracted provider.