Coach Verifier Training & Resources: A review

Functional Overview – context related

Submitted: Friday 10th December 2010

Purpose

This document has been produced following an initial version submitted to sports coach UK and the author in September 2010 and receipt of feedback. The purpose of this overview is to assist the review of the Coach Verifier training and resources (the products). The main aim of the document is to:

- Provide a role-based functional overview (as per the template provided); with a context applied to coaching
- Incorporate policy-related issues summarising role-based qualifications literature as appropriate.

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## Functional Overview – Coach Verifier

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Coach Verifier</th>
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### Purpose of (the Coach Verifier) Role

(Definitions of purpose/function)

The Coach Verifier or Internal Verifier (IV) has traditionally been the role that quality assures the assessment process within a centre.

Within coaching, this role was implemented to a greater extent following the introduction of the UKCC endorsement criteria (post-2005); sports have to demonstrate that they have some form of quality assurance of training and qualifications of coaches.

In respect of the changes to the *NOS for Learning and Development*, the ‘verifier’ was viewed as too narrow a description of the role and more a function of the role. Hence, the terminology being advocated is ‘quality assure’. Subsequently, the IV term is being replaced by the term IQA or Internal Quality Assurance.

The broader purpose of internal quality assurance (IQA) is to:

- monitor processes and improve the quality of practice in vocational education.

In respect of the IQA role, the purpose of the role is to:

- monitor assessment processes and decisions within an organisation (usually a training provider) and help maintain and improve the quality of assessment.

Hence, for the purpose of this review, the focus is on the quality assurance of assessment practice.

Practice within coach education suggests that many current IVs fulfil a broader role than that described above. Evidence from a range of sectors and also within sports coaching suggests that IVs also provide support and guidance around the delivery of training / qualifications.

For the purpose of the review, it is proposed that the terminology ‘Internal Quality Assurance’ (IQA) is used as this is consistent with the change to the NOS and the new associated qualifications.

A useful reference to the role can be found at:


### Outstanding issue within coaching:

There is a need to confirm if there is a desire for IVs to have a broader quality assurance role of supporting and guiding the teaching and learning components in coach education. If this chosen, there are additional attributes to the review process that is focussed on assessment.
On reflection of the reviews, two previously separate sections of the overview have been merged here as there is overlap between the two areas – internally held values / beliefs and an external output – principles (or behaviours).

As with the coach educator and the assessor review, it would not be the intent of this review of the IV role to teach individual values / beliefs. However, the review offers an opportunity to develop a common understanding of what values/beliefs are considered important to the quality assurance role (and also related to the educator and assessor roles).

To be consistent – IQAs are integral to the learning and development opportunity – it is recommended that the principles that underpin the role are consistent with those proposed for the coach educator and the coach assessor review.

**The Code of Professional Practice**

The emergence of the IfL as the professional body for practitioners involved in learning offers a suitable place to adopt some principles for IQAs (and also the educator and assessor). The Code of Professional Practice as used by the professional body – IfL – can be seen below:

**Code of Professional Practice**

These apply to any practitioner involved in the delivery, management and quality assurance of learning and thus it is these that are recommended to be adopted for the future IQA role. If the practitioner becomes a member of the IfL, they abide by the Code; from a policy perspective (UKCC[?]), it could be advocated that the Code is utilised and followed even though its application may not be legally challenged outside of IfL membership.

There is some commonality with the educator and assessor roles with regards values and beliefs, as the IQA is involved in the process of providing quality education and training opportunities. Therefore, the values/beliefs of the IQA can relate to those of the educator ('teacher') and the assessor recognising that these roles are focussed on learners whereas the IQA focuses on the practitioner.

For the IQA review, there should be an awareness of the values described in the *Professional standards* - **Domain A** of the *Professional standards*:

**Domain A of Professional Standards**

*Note:* Values / beliefs are individual and influenced by many factors. A common set of values for QA would be advantageous, for example, ensuring high standards, quality of service, improving practice – implicit within the role and the related standards (Standard 11).
As quality assurance personnel are integral to the learning and development opportunity, the attributes of future IQAs should reflect those of the educator and assessor.

**Qualities**

Qualities in an individual can manifest themselves in a variety of ways however, these, to some extent, could be related to the values / beliefs above. Not every IQA will have all the desired qualities to the extent of others – there will be strengths and weaknesses in everyone. Thus, as long as there is a common understanding of what qualities an IQA may possess, and has an awareness of where their strengths and weaknesses are, the qualities can be considered within the training and resources for the IQA role. For example:

*Qualities:* positive attitude, enthusiasm, motivated, confident, dedicated, patient, honest, empathetic.

It would be prudent to avoid being prescriptive in this aspect of the functional overview as we are dealing with people who have varying behaviours, personalities and experiences however, a common understanding of the qualities deemed appropriate for the role should be established – a little like the Code of Practice for coaching – common principles.

**Skills**

Again, the list of skills could be very long. It is recommended to avoid having a long list of ‘skills’ requirements as an overt publication. There are examples in industry where the list of skills requirements can be over-burdening and they are not used in practice and not reflected on during review (linked to appraisal processes). The types of skills that we want the IQA training and resources to develop may include:

*Skills:* e.g. communication (written, verbal, listening); interpersonal; management; problem-solving; organisational; planning; leadership; teamwork; independent work; initiative; innovation; creative.

The qualified IQA will be able to do the following:

- Address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well defined
- Identify, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills
- Initiate and use appropriate investigation to inform actions
- Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

*Source:* QCF Regulatory Criteria
Knowledge

Vocational education and training has, for some time, ‘lost’ the meaning of knowledge as the focus has been about the ability to perform a task/function. Particularly within competence-based qualifications, knowledge is essentially inferred rather than formally assessed with any rigour. This has been a real weakness of vocational qualifications in the last 10 years (accentuated by Apprenticeship frameworks) and thus, this inclusion is to emphasise that this review should ensure that future IQAs have appropriate knowledge and understanding that supports their role.

For the IQA role, it is recommended that the NOS for Learning and Development be used for guidance – specifically Standard 11:

**NOS for Learning and Development**

*Examples of knowledge requirements:* principles of quality assurance; assessment methods and practice; feedback methods and practice; teaching and learning practice (pedagogy); mentoring/coaching practice; support strategies; advice and guidance.

Occupational expertise

As stated in the NVQ Code, there may be an occupational expertise required to fulfil the IQA role. This is determined by the SSC (SkillsActive) in partnership with industry lead organisations (e.g. sports coach UK).

To be an IQA within coach education, it is recommended that the individual needs to be a qualified and/or experienced assessor to be able to fulfil the role (specifically within the sports coaching context).

If the decision is to broaden the IQA role to ‘cover’ teaching and learning as well as the assessment process, this adds further detail the occupational expertise required, for example in teaching and learning practice.

**Key Functions**

(The act[s] for which a person is employed, specific occupational role based assigned duties or activities)

The key functions of the IQA, within the NOS for Learning and Development, are quite well defined (one standard for the internal role). Standard 11 of the NOS relates specifically to the internal quality assurance process. Standard 11 is about:

‘... monitoring assessment processes and decisions within an organisation, and helping to maintain and improve the quality of assessment.’

The standards provide a starting point for key functions of the IQA role; the following is proposed (using the NOS):

- To plan and prepare monitoring activities according to the requirements of the quality assurance role
- To determine whether assessment processes and systems meet and operate according to quality requirements
• To check that assessors meet the requirements for their role
• To check that assessments are planned, prepared for and carried out according to agreed procedures
• To check that assessment methods are safe, fair, valid and reliable
• To check that assessment decisions are made using specified criteria
• To compare assessor decisions to ensure they are consistent
• To provide assessors with feedback, advice and support to help them maintain and improve their assessment practice
• To work with others to ensure the standardisation of assessment practice and outcomes
• To follow agreed procedures when there are significant concerns about the quality of assessment
• To follow agreed procedures for the recording, storing, reporting and confidentiality of information.

There is an additional element to the new standards and qualifications – that of the 'lead verifier'. Recognition of the centre coordinator or manager of assessors / IQAs was a key finding of the standards review and this has been reflected in an additional component to the new qualifications.

Drivers for change
(Sector driven need for change)

Internal verification (IV) was implemented as a quality assurance mechanism for S/NVQs. As a requirement of the NVQ Code of Practice, centres were required to have resources to fulfil this function and awarding organisations verified this through their external verification (EV) process. Although NVQs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are evolving to meet the needs of the QCF, the current Code of Practice relates to the internal quality assurance function (described as IV):


Good practice promotes the need to review, monitor and improve products throughout their lifespan. The current ‘verifier’ training and resources have been in the market for 2-3 years following there initial development to meet UKCC requirements. The current products have not undergone any formal review and given their relevance to the current review of the educator and assessor products, the time is appropriate to consider the quality assurance aspect simultaneously.

NOS revisions – the NOS for Learning and Development were revised during 09-10 and were approved in March 2010. The quality assurance functions that were integral to the previous NOS were
revised and therefore have an impact on existing products. The NOS are linked to the VQ reform programme below.

**Vocational qualification reform** – vocational qualification (VQ) reform has been a UK-wide programme of work linked to skills policy across the UK. The major impact of this reform bill is the introduction of the QCF in England, Wales and NI (Scotland retains its existing framework and is different to the QCF). The IVPS qualification is accredited on the current NQF (to be phased out) however, to remain accredited on the new QCF, qualifications do need to go through some reform requiring technical changes to structure and content (dependent on the standards).

Furthermore, the previous qualification (V1) will be replaced by new qualifications developed by LLUK in partnership with awarding organisations and industry bodies – see note from LLUK.


**Coaching industry changes** – the UKCC is a key driver of change for governing bodies of sport and the endorsement criteria require sports to demonstrate they have a quality assurance system in place. Sports only need to demonstrate that a programme of training for quality assurance personnel is in place; recommendations to appropriate qualifications are made but this is not a specific requirement for the UKCC endorsement process.

**Clarification:** It needs to be clarified if the SSC (SkillsActive) has introduced any requirements for personnel being qualified.

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**Emerging and Changing role (IVPS to ?)**

The role of the IQA is evolving and specifically in this review, consideration of the ‘lead’ IQA role needs further exploration. What is encouraging is that quality assurance is being advocated and the role previously of the internal verifier is to remain.

1st4sport Qualifications have confirmed that they intend to change from IVPS to the new Award at Level 4:

This is a key strategic decision and impacts on those sports that encourage practitioners to achieve the relevant IQA qualification.

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**Regulations of Sector (Legislation etc)**

Ofqual produced an addendum to the NVQ Code in September 2010:

http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/component/search/NVQ%2BCode/%252Fordering=&searchphrase=all
**Routes into Sector**  
(Pathways etc)

The new IQA qualifications (available from September 2010) will replace the current V1 qualification and any other VRQ qualifications that addressed quality assurance. The new qualifications have also introduced a ‘lead’ IQA qualification in recognition of the role identified in the research conducted 2009-10.

**Work-based learning (WBL)** – As with the coach educator and assessor reviews, it is proposed that the review of the coach verifier training and resources considers how the qualification / training can be delivered via a WBL mode.

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<tr>
<th>Summary of Know, Do and Understand information in relation to role (i.e. Role related Qualification and Associated National Occupational Standards)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The internal quality assurance role, as defined in the NOS, is confined and is well understood in many sectors. The need for robust quality assurance systems and processes is viewed by sports organisations as the mechanism to ensure quality of outputs from existing coaching qualifications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The challenge for the sector is whether the practitioner is qualified or not. Furthermore, whether the practitioner is practising in accordance with the standards (the NOS).</td>
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<td>The new IQA qualification will provide an appropriate replacement for the VRQ (IVPS) and the omission of ‘V1.4’ is viewed as a welcome revision to the previous internal verifier qualification.</td>
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<td>It is recommended that this review considers how the revised training and resources can meet the needs of the new qualifications but, as a minimum, provide the appropriate training to satisfy the UKCC endorsement criteria. The qualification is applicable to other roles outwith coaching and therefore this review should consider what other markets within the sports industry could benefit.</td>
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