



INTRODUCTION

All IMI approved centres will be monitored by an IMI External Quality Assurer (EQA). The frequency and type of monitoring will be based upon a number of factors such as the type of centre, the nature and number of qualifications and/or accreditations/Quality Assured Programmes offered and how many candidates are currently registered. Larger centres (i.e. those with a high number of qualifications and/or accreditations/Quality Assured Programmes offered and/or candidates registered) will be monitored more often, while some centres (e.g. those offering a small number of qualifications and/or accreditations/Quality Assured Programmes) are likely to be monitored less often.

Note: EQA monitoring usually consists of a centre visit however in some cases the IMI will also carry out 'remote' engagement visits. In instances such as these the visit planning processes, as detailed in the sections below, will still apply.

TYPES OF APPROVED CENTRE

Approved centre assessment delivery for IMI qualifications, accreditations and Quality Approved Programmes can be through a combination of site types and this forms an integral part of the quality management structure. The combination and number of sites can vary and will commonly fall into three main categories - the lead site, centre run (satellite) and/or sub-contracted delivery site.

The majority of IMI approved centres are defined and operate as a lead site, which is the site from which the quality management of all provision operates.

Some larger approved centres operate as multi-site centres and in addition to the lead site could operate centre run delivery sites which are under the full control of the lead site for quality assurance / management and should have the same quality management systems as the lead site. EQA monitoring would therefore concentrate on resources, assessment and internal quality assurance.

A training and assessment facility that runs IMI qualifications or accreditations on a regular basis in its own right which is not the main approved centre site, is most commonly referred to as a 'satellite' or centre run delivery site.

Sub-contracted delivery sites are contracted by the lead site to internally quality assure and assess on their behalf. Quality assurance / management is through the sub-contracted delivery sites own system(s) and therefore the approach to quality assurance should mirror the centre's activity for its own candidates.

FREQUENCY OF MONITORING VISITS

The frequency and nature of monitoring will be based upon a risk assessment of the centre and their current levels of activity.

Note: The risk assessment will take into account the size and nature of the centre and the type and range of qualifications/accreditations/Quality Assured Programmes offered.

Additional monitoring may be carried out if requested by the centre or in response to issues that may have emerged during a visit, from an investigation into a complaint or appeal or if malpractice/maladministration is suspected at the centre.

Note: Such issues include suspected or actual adverse effects notified to us by another awarding organisation or a regulatory authority.

In addition to regular EQA monitoring, the IMI reserves the right to carry out other pre-arranged or unannounced visits in the interests of ensuring maintenance of quality standards. Such visits may be undertaken by the EQA or other representative(s) from the IMI awarding organisation.

Note: A charge will be made for additional visits requested by the centre or deemed to be necessary by the IMI. The centre will be advised of these costs in advance of the visit being arranged. Centres that cancel visits at short notice and do not give at least 10 working days' notice will be charged for the rearranged visit.

ARRANGING MONITORING VISITS

Dates and times of monitoring visits will be agreed between the IMI EQA and the Centre Coordinator.

Note: Centres who do not allow monitoring visits to take place within the timescales required could face sanctions (see section 1.11 Sanctions Policy).

Approximately 6 weeks before a visit is due, the EQA will contact the Centre Coordinator to agree a convenient time for the visit, to explain the nature and type of visit and outline the requirements for the day.

A maximum of 15 days before the visit is due, the EQA will confirm details of the arrangements made by submitting a written visit and sampling plan to the Centre Coordinator via email and through the IMI Centres Hub.

Note: There may be instances where the EQA is unable to provide such notice or written confirmation (e.g. additional visits at the centre's request, short notice visits due to concerns about quality assurance at the centre, increased risk rating etc.)

CARRYING OUT MONITORING VISITS

The purpose of a monitoring visit is for the EQA to ensure that the centre is continuing to meet the criteria against which it was approved (see section 2.1 Approved Centre Criteria), to support the centre in mitigating risks and to provide ongoing advice and guidance.

During the visit, the EQA will carry out a range of activities in accordance with the outlined visit plan, such as:

- sampling internal quality assurance processes and systems
- sampling candidates' work/evidence
- observing assessments



Note: Internal quality assurance will be checked at every monitoring visit due to the importance of this activity within the centre's quality system.

The EQA's monitoring activities will vary from visit to visit depending upon the nature of the centre, qualifications/accreditations/Quality Assured Programmes offered and the level of activity. However, as part of the overall monitoring approach, the EQA will:

- confirm that previously identified actions have been met
- check that the centre has a suitable internal quality assurance strategy in place which meets awarding organisation, IMI qualification/accreditation and, where appropriate, regulatory requirements
- confirm that effective internal quality assurance is taking place in accordance with the centre's strategy
- ensure, through appropriate sampling, that assessment arrangements are fit for purpose and the criteria against which candidates' performance is differentiated are being applied consistently by assessors within and across centres and in accordance with requirements specified for each qualification/accreditation
- confirm that assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally competent assessors

The EQA will also ensure that the centre is complying with the requirements as determined by the qualifications and/or accreditations offered, which is stated within the relevant qualification specification and accompanying guidance.

It is essential that the requirements of the qualification are scrutinised as part of external quality assurance activities, as certain qualifications could require the approved centre to:

- limit the number of assessments undertaken by candidates
- ensure units are undertaken in a specific order
- conduct open book online assessments
- gather destination data, or
- source, arrange and record meaningful employer involvement for candidates.

In any instance, the EQA will request and scrutinise evidence in accordance with the stated criteria. Should an approved centre be found to have not complied with the specified requirements, sanctions may be applied (*see section 1.11 Sanctions Policy*).

Note: Full details of EQA sampling activities are contained in section 7.2 'External Quality Assurance – Sampling'

MONITORING VISIT REPORTS

The EQA will complete a monitoring report, risk assessment and any associated forms (e.g. sampling reports,) using Centres Hub (the IMI's online centre management system) during the monitoring visit. Where this is not possible, the EQA will ensure that the Centres Hub monitoring report is completed within five working days from the date of the visit.

The EQA will discuss his findings with the Centre Coordinator who will be invited to add his/her comments to the report. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the Centre Coordinator via Centres Hub and can be accessed by centre personnel who have the appropriate level of access.

Where the EQA identifies any areas of non-compliance, an action will be issued which will clearly specify the action required and a completion date.

Note: Any recommendations EQAs make to encourage or strengthen best practice will be documented within the report but only included as an action if the requirement must be carried out.

Depending upon the severity of a non-compliance, the EQA may issue a sanction against the centre or against the delivery of a specific qualification, accreditation and/or Quality Assured Programme in accordance with the tariff specified in section 1.11 Sanctions Policy.

The EQA will track the progress of any actions raised and sanctions imposed on the centre using Centres Hub. It is the Centre Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that all actions raised are completed by the required date and signed off by the EQA.

Note: Failure to complete actions by the date due may result in sanctions being raised against the centre.

If a centre is not happy with the EQA's decision(s), then the Centre Coordinator (or other authorised centre personnel) may appeal against these findings in accordance with the IMI Appeals Policy (see section 1.8).

OTHER FORMS OF CENTRE MONITORING

In addition to the regular monitoring visits carried out by the EQA, they also carry out 'remote' activities such as sampling, tracking outstanding actions etc.

Other members of IMI quality assurance team also monitor centre activities. These include:

- monitoring the IMI online assessment system to identify anomalies and analysing trends. Any discrepancies or irregularities identified are investigated thoroughly.
- reviewing documentation and electronic submissions made by centres, particularly those relating to candidate registration and claims for certificates. Any problems identified will be referred back to the centre, with details of the correct procedure/requirements attached.

Note: Failure to comply with all IMI registration and/or certificate claim requirements may result in registrations and/or applications for certification being delayed or rejected.

- monitoring centres' websites, publicity material etc. to ensure that the IMI awarding organisation is not being misrepresented and that information provided relating to IMI qualifications, accreditations is not misleading.

Note: Incorrect marketing of IMI products and services may result in sanctions being raised against the centre.



Issue Number	Effective Date	Amendments	Reason for Amendments
7	29 Jan 2019	Rebranding of the header and footer.	Companywide rebranding on all IMI material.