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37. NWFS Quality Assurance Policy – Training & Assessment

Scope

NWFS is a training and assessment centre for ABA, Lantra, NPTC City & Guilds and QQI. All training and assessment of our learners will be carried out in accordance with the NWFS Quality Assurance Manual and in accordance with NWFS Quality Assurance policy and procedures outlined by the associated Awarding Bodies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NWFS Safety Statement and the NWFS Quality Assurance manual and NWFS Training and Safeguarding policies.

To ensure quality standards are met and maintained in all training and assessments undertaken by North West Forest Services (NWFS) the following procedures are in place.

Information for Learners / Candidates

NWFS offers certificates of competence and information on all courses can be found on our website, www.nwfs.ie

The Training manager will liaise directly with learners / candidates and employers to ensure:

- Learners / Candidates are issued with registration / training / assessment documentation and course information.
- Advice is given pre-requisite requirements or recognised prior learning (RPL)
- Advise on costs – training and assessment fees.
- Advise on training /assessment schedule and dates

- Results and certification is forwarded to the learner / candidate.
- Liaise with the awarding bodies on quality assurance and follow all policies and procedures set out by the awarding bodies.
- Arrange reasonable adjustments for a candidates training / assessment.

Training / Assessment Planning

All training courses and assessment planned and organised by NWFS shall be coordinated by the Training Manger and Trainer / Assessor, the following arrangements shall be in place prior to any course taking place:

- Quality assure all trainers / assessors through observation, recording of CPD, achievement, monitoring and sampling of paperwork (risk assessments, assessment results and feedback forms) to ensure that quality process is robust and compliance is adhered to.
- Arrange reasonable adjustments for a candidates training / assessment.
- Ensure the training / assessment is properly planned and site is sufficient for training / assessment with suitable tools and equipment.
- Adhering to GDPR when collecting personal information for the purpose of booking training / assessments.
- Ensure Trainers / Assessors have a valid up to date Occupational First Aid certificate and carry a Gang First aid kit.
- The date, time, venue and number of learners/ candidates are acceptable and within the remit of the awarding body.
- Registration has been completed and details on file.
- Sufficient resources and equipment available.
- Tools, equipment and PPE are of required standard and available for training / assessment.
- Candidates have contact information for centre in case they are required to change their arrangements due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Inform Trainers / Assessors of learners / candidates request for any specific arrangements regarding training or assessment.
- All paperwork / course packs that are required are available for learners / candidates.
- All documentation is checked and required paper work for the awarding body is completed and returned to the centre in a timely manner.
- All documentation is returned to the Awarding Body within the specified time frame.
- Site specific risk assessments are documented and briefed to all on site.
- All documentation is held securely as per GDPR.
- All complaints / appeals are dealt with professionally and learner / candidate supported with the relevant contact details and information.

Conducting the Training

The role of the Trainer is to instruct the learner to ensure the course syllabus, assessment criteria or related knowledge is communicated to the learner, so they can competently

demonstrate the requirements of the awarding body to the Assessor. Trainers shall have occupational expertise and competence within the industry. NWFS insist all trainers maintain their skills in recording their continuous professional development activities.

NWFS Trainers are responsible for:

- Briefing learners on the assessment process.
- Checking candidates identification at commencement of training and ensure registration is completed.
- Record a register of all learners who have attended training.
- Following training and assessment guidance from the awarding body.
- Conducting training within the candidates workplace or simulated site.
- Ensuring training is conducted thoroughly, impartially and unobtrusively.
- Ensure the training is properly planned and site is sufficient for training / assessment with suitable tools and equipment.
- Ensure risk assessment is undertaken and all candidates are briefed.
- Ensure the awarding bodies standards and criteria are met.
- Confirming to the learner if the required standard is met or not.
- Recording results and delivering constructive feedback to the learner.
- Being available for internal/external verification from the centre or awarding body.
- Be committed to anti-discriminatory practice and promoting equal opportunities while acting in a professional manner at all times.
- Complying with the NWFS / Awarding Bodies Manuals, Safe Guarding policies and Codes of Conduct.
- Adhering to GDPR when collecting personal information.
- Ensuring they are reasonably fit, physically and mentally to ensure the learners safety at all times.
- Ensure they have a valid up to date Occupational First Aid certificate and carry a Gang First Aid kit.
- Informing NWFS if they are taking prescribed medication which may affect their ability to perform their duties or affect learner / candidate safety.
- Learner feedback sheets will be distributed and learners encouraged to give honest feedback in order for NWFS to seek continuous improvement in delivering training.

Conducting the Assessment

The role of the Assessor is to assess the candidate to ensure the assessment criteria or related knowledge is demonstrated competently to the requirements set out by the awarding body. Assessors shall have occupational expertise and competence within the industry. NWFS insist all Assessors maintain their skills in recording their continuous professional development activities as required by the Awarding Bodies Quality Assurance Manuals.

Assessors for NWFS shall:

- Arrive in good time for the assessment.
- Brief candidates on the assessment process.

- Check candidates identification at commencement of assessment.
- Candidates shall be greeted in a friendly and courteous manner at all times.
- Personal introduction should be made to all candidates and show identification card from awarding body.
- Involve candidate in risk assessment procedure and ask candidate to sign confirming he understands the contents.
- Monitor and update risk assessment as required.
- Explain the process of assessment clearly and the documentation that is required to be completed.
- Confirm with candidate they are happy to take part in the activity.
- Adhere to assessment guidance documents supplied.
- Ask all questions in a clear, direct manner avoiding open questions and do not lead candidate.
- Make sure all candidates understand what is required prior to them commencing on a task.
- Assume an unobtrusive position so that the candidate may be observed completing a task but close enough that control can be taken in case of an emergency.
- Ensure all activities are completed prior to ending assessment.
- Mobile phones should be turned to silent, while engaged in assessment.
- A positive manner should be adopted at all times, even if a candidate is struggling with a task.
- Positive feedback should always be given along with negative feedback even when a candidate has failed to meet the required standard.
- If training discrepancy is suspected this should only be communicated with the Training Centre Manager.
- Conduct assessment within the candidates workplace or simulated site.
- Ensuring assessment is conducted thoroughly, impartially and unobtrusively.
- Ensure the assessment is properly planned and site is sufficient for with suitable tools and equipment.
- Ensure sufficient time and resources to assess all candidates, adhere to the Awarding Body Assessment standards for number of candidates permitted.
- Ensure candidates PPE is sufficient and suitable for task.
- Wear the appropriate PPE, as an Assessor may have to take control of an assessment in the interests of safety.
- Ensure risk assessment is undertaken and all candidates are briefed.
- Ensure the awarding bodies standards and criteria are met.
- Confirming to the candidate if the required standard is met or not.
- Record results and deliver constructive feedback (verbal and written) to the candidate.
- Be available for internal/external verification from the centre or awarding body.
- Be committed to anti-discriminatory practice and promoting equal opportunities while acting in a professional manner at all times.
- Complying with the NWFS / Awarding Bodies Assessor Manuals, Safe Guarding policies and Codes of Conduct.
- Adhere to GDPR when collecting and reording personal information.
- Ensure they are reasonably fit, physically and mentally to ensure the candidates safety at all times.

- Ensure they have a valid up to date Occupational First Aid certificate and carry a Gang First Aid kit.
- Inform NWFS if they are taking prescribed medication which may affect their ability to perform their duties or affect candidate safety.
- Liaise with the awarding bodies on quality assurance and follow all policies and procedures set out by the awarding bodies.
- Arrange reasonable adjustments for a candidates training / assessment.
- Ensure their verification is up to date and are an approved assessor for the units to be assessed.
- Ensure candidates are assessed on a one to one basis, unless assessment criteria states another candidate is permitted to be present to help handle equipment. The maximum number of candidates is two in these instances.
- Allow for reasonable adjustment of assessment times due to inclement weather, facilities or time of year.
- Positive feedback should always be given along with negative feedback even when a candidate or learner has failed to meet the required standard.
- If training discrepancy is suspected this should only be communicated with the Training Centre Manager.
- Ensure no sexist, racist, derogatory or ‘off the cuff’ remarks are made during training or assessments.
- Do not show signs of disapproval if learner or candidate is under performing.
- Do not criticize any prior training the learner / candidate may have under taken.
- Do not ask the learner / candidate to demonstrate any tasks that are not covered within the course syllabus or assessment guidance.
- Terminate the training / assessment if you feel unwell or threatened.

Marking and Collating Learner / Candidate Evidence

Candidates shall be informed if they have met or failed to meet required standards on completion of assessment. The Awarding Bodies paperwork shall be completed fully and returned to NWFS in a timely manner. Feedback shall be given to the candidate verbally and written A positive manner should be adopted at all times, even if a learner / candidate is struggling with a task. Positive feedback should always be given along with negative feedback even when a candidate or learner has failed to meet the required standard. If training discrepancy is suspected this should only be communicated with the Training Centre Manager. Always ask for a candidates comments before ensuring all paperwork is signed by the candidate. It is of critical importance that a candidate that has failed to meet the criteria is given a clear understanding of the areas that require improvement to meet the assessment criteria.

If marking written papers is required after assessment, ensure paperwork is marked and returned to NWFS in a timely manner, so as the NWFS Training manager may pass results on to the candidate. All written paperwork shall be kept securely as per GDPR before being returned to NWFS. If a breach of data occurs NWFS shall be informed immediately or as

soon as reasonably practicable. All assistance shall be given to NWFS in handling the thorough investigation (see NWFS Data Protection Policy)

Assessment Time Frames

The NWFS Training Manager and Assessor shall liaise prior to any assessment to ensure the number of candidates participating can be assessed within the allotted time frames as set out in the Awarding Bodies Quality Assurance standards. Consideration shall be given to the location of assessment, facilities, time of year, tools and equipment available.

Assessors shall be responsible for tracking assessment times are within the Awarding Bodies time frames and may use their discretion for reasonable adjustment.

Written exams shall be supervised at all times and an Assessor shall ensure candidates are seated at an appropriate distance to ensure candidates cannot see each other's work. Exam papers shall be held securely until returned to NWFS Training Manager in a timely manner.

Training / Assessment Malpractice

North West Forest Service understands the critical importance of a strong safety culture and continuous improvement on a sustained basis. In this regard we are fully committed to implementing policies and procedures which meet and surpass regulatory requirements, best practice and customer requirements. We recognise that our key assets are our customers and our people and will continue to strive for excellence in quality, health and safety management across all our training and assessment operations.

In this regard we recognise that when failures occur it is critical to investigate and learn from them and implement actions that seek to mitigate their reoccurrence and ensure all trainers and assessors are capable and competent to carry out their duties to the required standards.

If the requirements set out within NWFS policies and procedures are followed, a complaint from a learner, candidate or employer can be dealt with efficiently.

NWFS Training Manager will deal with any complaint or issue as it may arise, to seek resolution with the trainer / assessor or employer. If it cannot be resolved in this instance it will be raised with the appropriate Awarding Body and all assistance shall be given to deal with the complaint.

Trainers and Assessors shall have included in all course packs a complaint form that the learner / candidate can fill out or alternatively it may be raised directly with the Training Manager.

Complaints and issues shall be dealt with in a respectful and professional manner and the individual or organisation given a firm assurance that the matter will be thoroughly

investigated and a resolution sought. All matters of malpractice will be communicated to the relevant Awarding Body.

If there is repeated instances with the same Trainer / Assessor then Awarding Body approval status may be withdrawn.

Examples of malpractice are:

- Failure to follow the Awarding Bodies guidelines regarding training and assessing own candidate.
- Failing to return paperwork.
- Assessing without current verification.
- Falsifying paperwork.
- Failing to wear PPE during assessment.
- Making sexist, racist or derogatory comments.
- Failing to comply with action plans.
- Failing to respond to Awarding body.
- Not following Training / Assessment Guidance.
- Training / Assessing under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Behaving unprofessionally while representing NWFS or the Awarding Body.

This list is not exhaustive and any trainer / assessor accused of mal practice is likely to be suspended by both NWFS and the Awarding Body during the course of the investigation. This may result in a permanent loss of trainer / assessor status with NWFS and the Awarding Body.

Trainers and Assessors must fully cooperate with all investigations regarding malpractice and any action plans that may be advised. Trainers and Assessors will be informed in writing of the outcome of an investigation and any action plan that is required of the

NWFS New Trainers / Assessors

New Trainers and Assessors shall have occupational expertise and competence within the industry. The awarding bodies insist all assessors maintain their skills in recording their continuous professional development activities. NWFS shall ensure all new trainers / assessors are given time, training, support and mentoring prior to them training / assessing alone.

The recognised route is an experienced individual within the organisation will be approached to enquire if training / assessing would be of interest to them. The individual will shadow an

experienced trainer for a minimum of two training courses before giving a course themselves. The first two courses they deliver they will be supervised by an experienced trainer and their feedback evaluated by the training manager.

This may lead to the new trainer / assessor being given further training or supervision prior to delivering a course.

All trainers and assessors are subject to internal and external verification to ensure Awarding body and NWFS standards are met.

Trainers who wish to become Assessors for ABA, Lantra and NPTC City & Guilds will be required to undergo technical evaluation and verification successfully prior to conducting assessments for the nominated Awarding Body.

Safeguarding of Children, Young people and Vulnerable People

NWFS and all Awarding Bodies have statutory requirements to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation.

These statutory responsibilities for an organisation is to ensure the suitability of all trainers and assessors who have contact with learners / candidates. (See NWFS Safeguarding Policy).

Governance and Management of Quality

NWFS is committed to the governance and management of education, research, training, assessments, course design and programme development. (See NWFS: QCI Quality Assurance, Governance and Management Document).

NWFS Appeals Process

See NWFS: QCI Quality Assurance, Governance & Management Document Section 6.9

NWFS Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct should be read in accordance with NWFS Safety Statement, Policies and procedures.

All individuals representing NWFS and respective Awarding Bodies should familiarise themselves with all NWFS / Awarding Body policies and procedures.

All representatives shall:

- Actively contribute to the companies organisational culture, where inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated.
- Provide an example of good conduct.
- Listen, value and respect everyone as individuals.
- Encourage and praise achievement.
- Involve individuals in decision making.
- Not give out or share personal information, email or mobile numbers with any child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Report all allegations or suspicions of abuse by seeking further support and guidance, including all allegations made against yourself or other staff.
- Ensure any concerns about inappropriate behaviour is reported to NWFS or the relevant Awarding Body.
- Conduct their professional work with due skill, care, attention and diligence in regard to the technical standards or assessment criteria.
- Not knowingly be party to any illegal activity, or engage in in acts that are discreditable to NWFS or the Awarding Body.
- Exhibit a high level of professionalism at all times when engaged in training or assessment activities for NWFS.
- Never be unduly influenced by their own interests or interests of others in forming judgements of assessment outcomes.
- Never participate in any activity or relationship that may impair or be presumed to impair their unbiased assessment.
- Never disclose any information they receive without consent of NWFS or relevant Awarding body or use this information for any personal gain or in any manner that would be contrary to the law or be detrimental to NWFS or the relevant Awarding Body.

Signed: _____ Date; _____
Steven Doherty M.D