Skills
Development
Scotland

Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework

Self Assessment Guidance for Foundation Apprenticeship Provision (at SCQF Levels 4-6)
For Cohort 2022

Ahmed Abdou,
Foundation Apprentice,
Microsoft

Context

This guidance has been designed as an aide memoire to support you, as a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) contracted training provider, to engage with the self-assessment process. It sets out questions aligned to the latest version of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework, that will help you complete your self-assessment on the insightQ system and to think about the effectiveness of your approach to planning and delivering your skills provision. It has been tailored for providers of Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) provision.

The guidance will help you focus on the key processes relevant to provision, and to illustrate the practices that a good provider and an excellent provider may adopt. The examples are not exhaustive, and you are encouraged to complete the self-assessment using real examples of work you are currently undertaking.

We have exemplified "good" and "excellent" practice in relation to each of the themes, but we expect any measures you implement will be proportionate to the nature and size of your SDS contract.

This document should be read and used in conjunction with the **Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework** which also explains SDS' formal quality assurance visit arrangements.

SDS has a number of resources which may help you with your self-assessment process including effective practice examples; case studies; and a detailed analysis of all formal quality reviews undertaken in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

In addition, there are a range of e-learning modules which may be helpful for your staff to undertake prior to completing the self-assessment exercise. There are two dedicated modules covering Self-Assessment and Quality Action Planning

These resources are available at the **Improvement Hub** page of the SDS corporate website.

Various hyperlinks are included throughout this guidance and they are collated in a comprehensive list at the end of the document.

Mia Pasquale,
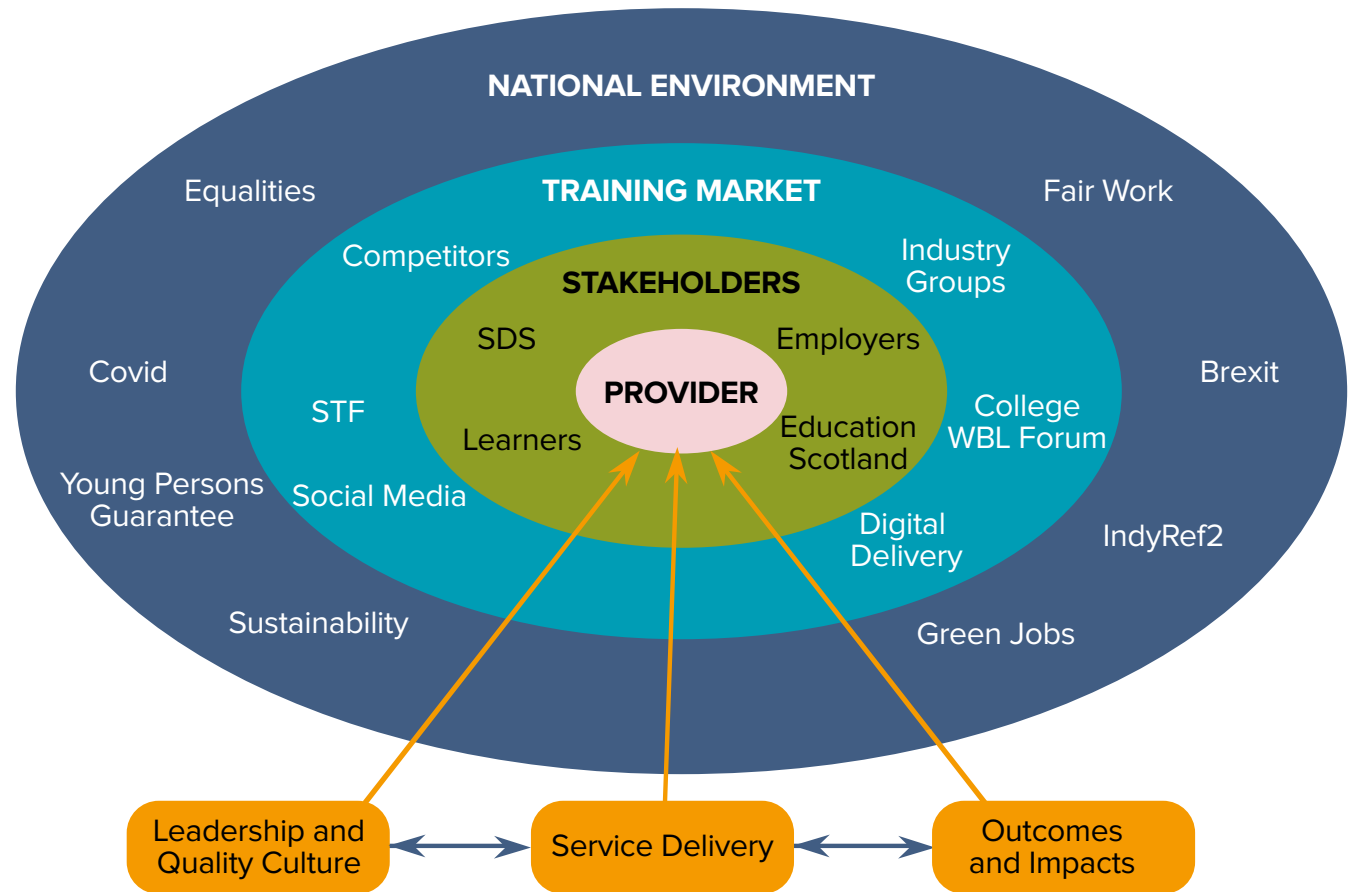Foundation Apprentice,
Coca Cola

Context

Our Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework is built on the principles of the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Framework. At the heart of this is the notion that all businesses operate in an "ecosystem" and the concept that you, as a learning provider, are at the centre of the system. You should think about the needs of your customers and stakeholders primarily, but also consider what is going on in the wider training market, and finally consider all of that in relation to the national environment.

This should assist you in developing a strategy, which could be a simple document or a more complex plan including a SWOT or PESTLE analysis, for example. This could be part of a wider strategy and not necessarily a separate document. This may be particularly relevant for college, employer or local authority providers.

This ecosystem diagram attempts to demonstrate who/what you may need to consider when thinking about your strategy and the trends that may affect you both now and in the future.

Your strategy and delivery approach will be tailored to the nature and size of your business.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Equalities · Fair Work

TRAINING MARKET

Competitors · Industry Groups

STAKEHOLDERS

SDS · Employers

PROVIDER

Covid · Brexit

STF · Education Scotland · College WBL Forum

Learners · Digital Delivery

Young Persons Guarantee · Social Media · IndyRef2

Sustainability · Green Jobs

Leadership and Quality Culture ⟷ Service Delivery ⟷ Outcomes and Impacts

3

Context

In developing your strategy, you should consider:

- **WHY** (you are going to do something?);
- **WHAT** (is it you are going to do?); and
- **HOW** (is it you're going to do it?)

Some questions to consider may be:

- What are our apprentices and employers expectations now and in the future?
- What are implications of Scottish Government policy delivered through SDS? e.g., Equality Duty, Fair Work, Sustainability, Industry 4.0
- What effect might the environment that co-delivery partners and sub-contractors face into have on us?, (e.g., schools, colleges, and employers post-pandemic
- What is the demand now and in the future for our apprenticeship delivery services?
- What do we need to do to make apprentices and employers choose us rather than other providers? What is our unique selling point?
- How will new technologies affect our delivery in the future and how can we prepare for it?

- How will we cater for more diverse apprentices in the future?

Effective self-assessment of planning and delivery of training happens where you have completed the process using evidence from four main lenses or viewpoints:

- That of yourselves; how well do you think you have performed and what hard evidence is provided by data such as achievement rates broken down to consider equality groups and different framework areas for example?
- That of the learner; what are their perceptions of the learning delivered by you?
- That of the employer/stakeholder; what are their perceptions of the learning delivered by you?
- That set out as 'best practice' in work-place learning literature or through other platforms where effective practice is shared.

You should plan to bring together relevant people across your organisation (a self-assessment (SA) team) to contribute to the SA process. Setting aside adequate time for this is very valuable. How much time you spend and who you involve will depend upon the nature and size of your SDS

provision. Remember that this is all about the SDS funded provision and not about how you conduct your wider business, although the two may overlap.

Gather information together including key results, employer and stakeholder feedback, learner feedback and notes of any team meetings. Share this guidance document with your team beforehand and ask them to think about and/or possibly jot down their thoughts against each of the indicators.

4

Context

The SA/QAP modules on the insightQ system ask questions to help you describe and evaluate how you do things, and what you might do to enhance the service you offer. The questions should be thought about in relation to everything you deliver in your SDS contract.

A completed example of a Self-Assessment and Quality Action Plan is available in insightQ for reference.

Here are some top tips:

■ Ensure your team understands the importance of not just describing what you do, but really thinking about how well things work across all of your provision.

■ Use the stimulus questions on each theme in the guidance to lead the discussion at your SA session and complete the SA/QAP in insightQ. Spend more time discussing what works, what doesn't work and coming to a consensus judgement on this rather than simply describing what you do.

■ Don't forget to consider feedback from your Development and Delivery Executive, Contract and Performance Adviser, other quality monitoring visits, formal SDS quality reviews and Education Scotland thematic reviews etc. You should also consider how you have adapted your business practices as a result of Covid-19 including remote delivery and the impact of this.

■ Evaluate each theme and give yourself a RAG rating (Red, Amber, Green) using the definitions in the supporting table. Note that this should be agreed by all those involved. This is your team's judgement of how well you think you are doing - it will not be used by SDS to judge how well you perform against the theme.

Red is an indication that the consensus is that there is a clear need to make improvements in this area, that will lead to improvements in the delivery of your SDS funded provision.

Amber is an indication that the consensus is that, although this is an area for improvement, it is done quite well and meets required standards.

Green is an indication that the consensus is that this is working well for your organisation and you will continue to maintain that high standard.

Context

- Any theme rated as red will result in an area for improvement for your QAP. You must identify clear timelines and ownership of the area for improvement.

- A theme rated as amber will result in an area for improvement for your QAP where you think it will benefit your delivery; or should be prioritised after red areas for improvement.

- In creating areas for improvement for your QAP, you should consider how many tasks you have. Ensure all your actions are **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound). QAP actions are not necessarily always about addressing weakness - you may wish to add a quality improvement action to further enhance something you are already doing well.

- Do you have a lot of areas for improvement that are, realistically, too much to complete over the next 12 months? If so, then prioritise using your RAG system and bearing in mind your contractual requirements.

- When you have completed your SA and QAP review them carefully and get agreement from your SA team before approving the SA on the insightQ system by **30th April 2022**.

Olivia Robertston,
Foundation Apprentice,
Mott MacDonald

Quality Assurance Framework

Standard		Indicator	Theme(s)
Service Delivery	1.1	Providers develop and prepare effective work-based learning provision	■ 1.1.1 Initial assessment and Recruitment ■ 1.1.2 Induction ■ 1.1.3 Learning and assessment planning ■ 1.1.4 Equality groups ■ 1.1.5 Transferable skills ■ 1.1.6 Employer involvement
	1.2	Providers plan resources for effective delivery of work-based learning provision	■ 1.2.1 Resources
	1.3	Providers effectively deliver and manage work-based learning provision and ensure quality of delivery	■ 1.3.1 Learner goal setting and progress ■ 1.3.2 Quality assurance
	1.4	Providers manage partners and stakeholders to deliver outcomes for learners and employers	■ 1.4.1 Effective partnerships ■ 1.4.2 Management of sub-contractors
Leadership and Quality Culture	2.1	The provider's work-based learning strategy is based on the current and future needs and expectations of stakeholders, employers and learners	■ 2.1.1 Diverse recruitment to support youth/employment ■ 2.1.2 Future focussed strategy underpinned by Labour Market Information (LMI)
	2.2	Leaders ensure appropriate staffing resources are in place to deliver the work-based learning strategy	■ 2.2.1 Management and support of staff
	2.3	Leaders ensure staff are appropriately skilled and motivated to deliver work-based learning provision	■ 2.3.1 Staff development
	2.4	Leaders take ownership for the continuous improvement of quality and performance of work-based learning provision	■ 2.4.1 Effective self-assessment and continuous improvement ■ 2.4.2 Innovation and change
Outcomes and Impact	3.1	Providers achieve and maintain high levels of service delivery and outcomes for all work-based learning (WBL) provision, ensuring all regulatory, statutory, equality and funding body requirements are met	■ 3.1.1 Achievement and analysis of SDS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) ■ 3.1.2 SDS diverse recruitment ■ 3.1.3 Awarding body and industry body requirements
	3.2	Work-based learning provision meets the needs of learners, employers and stakeholders	■ 3.2.1 Systematic gathering, analysis and use of employer and stakeholder perception data ■ 3.2.2 Systematic gathering, analysis and use of learner perception data

Service Delivery

This section is about the delivery of work-based learning. Within this you need to consider not only how you do this but how effective it is and why.

Leadership and Quality Culture

This section is about how your leadership team manage and plan your delivery. It often (but not always) relates to the wider leadership and management of an organisation where work-based learning is not the only thing that happens in that organisation. The important point is that you consider **how leadership and management is applied to SDS funded work-based learning provision.**

Outcomes and Impacts

This section is all about your results – how you gather them and how you analyse them. What you do to achieve these results should have been covered in the previous two sections.

Service Delivery

1.1 – Providers develop and prepare effective work-based learning provision

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may…	👍✨ An excellent provider may also…
Initial Assessment and Recruitment: school-delivery partner communication **1.1.1:** **How effective are our processes for initial assessment and recruitment of learners and our communication with delivery partners?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	How effective is the recruitment process in profiling the FA programme and attracting suitable learners? How effective is the employer voice to understand the skills/attributes they are looking for and support their engagement in the process? How well do school partners communicate with delivery partners to ensure there is a good match of learners to the right programme? How well are the needs of individual learners shared with delivery partners to ensure: ■ plan for their individual needs; ■ delivery partners understand the motivations for learners being on the programme; ■ delivery partners understand learners' ability to achieve; ■ delivery partners understand any additional support needs (ASN) they may have; ■ delivery partners understand and recognise prior learning and information that needs to be shared with colleagues / employers is passed on (e.g., requirement for a dedicated room for religious observance)? ■ their meta-skills development is supported (where applicable)? How effective are these processes?	Have in place appropriate initial assessment and recruitment processes and be able to provide examples of how effective these processes and their communication to delivery partners are for learners. Have equality monitoring of applications in place and examples of how they use or promote inclusive recruitment practices and the business case for a diverse workforce.	Demonstrate how the implementation of initial assessment and recruitment processes ensures that learning is tailored for every learner through well-structured processes and strong communication with delivery partners. They will measure and review the impact of their initial assessment and recruitment processes for all learners. Use their equality monitoring data and sector figures to identify under representation or other areas for improvement which they then have plans to address.

| Induction

1.1.2:

How effective are our processes for each learner's induction?

(See note 1 for sub-contracted provision) | Have you developed and prepared induction to give learners the best introduction into the programme? This might include:

■ familiarisation with the qualification and expectations for vocational and meta-skills requirements e.g., introduction to the training hub, workplace/ other realistic workplace environment as learning spaces, the nature of portfolio building and the assessment process for work-based learning;
■ expectations for the workplace /other realistic workplace environments, delivery and assessment and health and safety;
■ confidence building activities
■ familiarisation with key contacts such as tutors, workplace and training hub-based mentors, fellow learners, employers and methods of communication that will be used

Do employers understand what is expected of them for work experience elements? (see also employer involvement)

How much do learners value the induction activities and what impact have they made in relation to early retention and preparation for learning?

Is induction happening in a timeous fashion meaning a seamless progression onto the delivery phase? | Implement/have in place induction activities that clearly benefit all learners, and which give each learner the best chance of success. (They are likely to cover all the areas in the guidance prompts and be timetabled/have time specifically allocated).

Have in place an induction that clearly explains the programme/training to be undertaken and answers questions about the expectations of learners and employers. | Provide a thorough introduction for learners and employers or workplace partners.

Provide support to the supervisor in relation to coaching the learners when in the workplace and while undertaking other work-related learning.

Make sure that employers fulfil obligations in relation to induction to the workplace/ other realistic workplace environments. Employers may also co-design and deliver learner induction programmes.

Use their knowledge of under-represented groups to ensure the induction is inclusive of all learners. |

| **Learning and assessment planning** **1.1.3:** **How effective is our learning and assessment planning- logistically and for each individual?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision and employer providers) | Consider how well you have developed and prepared delivery and assessment processes for learners. Has there been effective communication between schools and delivery partners about creating a manageable timeslot to allow good quality learning to take place? Have effective transportation plans for learners been prepared that allow the learning experience to run smoothly, giving adequate time for a good learning experience? Has there been effective communication between training hub tutors and workplace assessors about plans for learning and assessment? Has there been effective planning for the work experience element for each individual learner, including statutory elements such as Protecting Vulnerable Groups checks, safety, provision of personal protective equipment etc.? Does the work experience element reflect the individual's aspirations and match qualification requirements? Is there an effective timetable and approach to monitoring the delivery of work experience? Are there timetabled support sessions to give each learner the best chance to progress? Is there agreed clear individualised learning plans for each learner that reflects the individual's needs? For individuals with additional support needs (ASN), does this plan include the support/ personal goals for each person (e.g., a personal learning support plan)? | Effectively develop, prepare and schedule where and how learning, teaching and assessment will take place for each area/programme of delivery in line with the FA requirements. Have a good relationship with the delivery partners and the employers they work with and an understanding that all parties are clear what their expectations are in relation to logistical planning, learning, teaching and assessment. Have given consideration to the practicalities of delivery for the learners. Have a partnership agreement or equivalent with all their delivery partners and employers and have in place clear mechanisms for communication and monitoring which ensures that all partners are delivering to the expected standard and communicating well. | Clearly tailor and adapt their planned arrangements for programme logistics, learning, teaching and assessment for each individual. Fully engage all delivery partners, learners and employers in this planning process. Provide each learner with a tailored individual learning and personal support plan which the learner 'owns' and understands, and which adds value to their learning experience. Ensure the individual learning plan is used as a living document which supports progress and adds value to the learner journey. |

Equality groups **1.1.4:** **How good is the design and preparation of our provision specifically to meet the needs of different equality groups?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	When developing your provision have you considered how your processes and approaches will impact on learners with protected characteristics and/or are care experienced to ensure that they work well and achieve the desired outcomes? To enable you to identify potential issues you might consider the following: ■ have you ensured your recruitment practices are inclusive? ■ developing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy which can be shared with learners at induction and provide clarity on how they raise concerns ■ do you make reasonable adjustments to assessments or provide support for learning for learners self-declaring a disability?	Make clear and reasonable adjustments to their planning for delivery and assessment processes to meet the needs of individuals from specific equality groups to optimise their chances of success. Be able to exemplify/demonstrate/produce evidence of, instances where they have actively planned this.	Demonstrate a clear and visible commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Show a detailed understanding of those with protected characteristics and/or equality considerations in contract areas/sectors and have plans in place to support learners from diverse backgrounds.
Transferable skills (core, meta, and career management skills) **1.1.5:** **How well have we designed and prepared to deliver transferable skills?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	Does the design of your FA provision prepare the learner effectively for the workplace and the next phase of their learner journey, e.g., a Modern Apprenticeship (MA), Further Education (FE) or Higher Education (HE)? Does the learning programme build in the important skills, attributes, and behaviours that employers are seeking and that support progression of the learner? Is there effective workplace experience preparation through developing employability skills, required behaviours etc?	Design and prepare to deliver transferable skills to be in the context of each apprenticeship. Their delivery will ensure that learners value the development of transferable skills and do not just see it as requirement. Ensure that meta-skills development is underpinned by frequent dialogue and reflective practice.	Design methods for delivery of transferable skills that clearly add value and contribute to the career progression and personal development of learners. They will have gone beyond the minimum requirements of a qualification in order to support this.

Have you considered how you can raise awareness of **meta-skills** and embed development of these into your delivery? These will be introduced as part of a Work-based Challenge Unit (WBCU), **a mandatory element** for new starts in specific frameworks from 2020-21 and will be phased in for the remaining frameworks from 2021-22 onwards. The WBCU places emphasis on meta-skills development through a practical, work-based approach and encourages the acquisition of new skills through collaborative group working, problem solving activities and reflective practice.

Do you plan in effective activity to support learners near the end of their FA to consider their next phase of the journey e.g. MA, FE or HE progression using Careers Information, Advice and Guidance tools/resources, e.g. MyWoW, apprenticeships.scot?

Do you build relationships with potential employers and training providers to support progression to work?

Has there been effective embedding of career management skills to help your learners understand how the labour market works, develop self-awareness, knowledge and the skills to make better career decisions and transitions into work?

Prepare workplace challenge activity led by employers to support learners to plan, do and review their own contributions to project-based learning.

Prepare and evaluate workplace challenge activity led by employers to support learners to plan, do and review their own contributions to project-based learning.

Employer involvement **1.1.6:** **How effectively have we utilised the employer voice to inform the design and preparation of delivery?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	Is there an effective communication approach to listening to employers to identify what skills/attributes, certification and behaviours they are seeking to ensure the best chance of the learner progressing into employment? Is provision designed around this? Are employers effectively engaged with to ensure they are fully prepared for the learners and fully understand their role in providing a good quality work experience and leading WBCU projects? Have we involved employers in the delivery of the taught elements of the qualification to fully prepare for the work experience activity?	Demonstrate that they have involved employers and the employer voice in the design and delivery of their work-based learning provision. Be able to demonstrate the development of acceptable work-based behaviours, e.g., employability skills for learners.	Have clear evidence that the employer voice is integral to the design, delivery and evaluation of all provision and clearly adds value to the delivery.

1.2 – Providers plan resources for effective delivery of work-based learning provision

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may…	👍 An excellent provider may also…
Resources (delivery environment/ learning materials and technology) **1.2.1:** **How well do we plan resources to support effective delivery of work-based learning?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	Have you made appropriate provision to ensure that training hub, work placement and realistic workplace environments (in context of what learners will undertake, health and safety etc) are suitable for every learner? For example, is equipment up to date, are there appropriate supervisors/mentors in the workplace/ realistic workplace environments, is there appropriate facility for gathering evidence/portfolio building and are any ASN appropriately planned for (working with other ASN experts if required)? How well do our learning materials reflect the needs of a range of learners - e.g., different learning styles, ASN requirements? How effective is our use of technology? For example; social media channels and groups/messaging/online forums to provide ongoing support.	Demonstrate that they have tailored their resources in the design of their work-based learning provision. Be able to provide examples and/or evidence of where tailoring and responding to individuals' needs is making a difference. Ensure there are dedicated off-the-job study spaces available for learners where required.	Have clear evidence that tailoring of provision includes a wide range of high-quality learning and assessment materials/ approaches that are integral to the design of provision. Demonstrate that tailoring of resources reflects feedback from staff, learners and employers, is innovative and addresses industry developments and future requirements.

1.3 – Providers effectively deliver and manage work-based learning provision and ensure quality of delivery

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may…	👍✨ An excellent provider may also…
Learner goal setting and progress **1.3.1:** **How effective are our approaches to setting learner goals and monitoring learner progress?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	Do you effectively monitor and review each learner's learning plan according to their pace of learning? Do you work with learners, delivery partners and employers to set clear timebound goals that help the learner to progress? e.g. consider upcoming tasks and when they must be achieved/ completed. Do progress review discussions add value to the learner's journey with input from delivery partners and employers (where relevant), giving constructive feedback on skills development (including meta-skills) and completed tasks, while setting out clear expectations for forthcoming activity? Do progress review discussions happen at an appropriate frequency to keep the learner motivated and on track?	Have clear learning and assessment progress reviews with timeframes for specific learning tasks for all learners. Have approaches that clearly support tailored learner progression. They will demonstrate that, for almost all: ■ learners and employers value the process; and ■ learner review is contributing to progression and achievement of the learners. .	Demonstrate they have effective/innovative approaches for meeting individuals' goals and monitoring and reviewing progress that go beyond SDS 'compliance' requirements. These approaches will ensure full involvement of the employer and the learner.

| Quality assurance of practice leading to improvement and enhancement of services

1.3.2:
How well do we review our delivery to ensure its standard and quality?

(See note 4 for sub-contracted provision) | Do delivery staff reflect on each individual learning intervention to inform improvements to delivery?

Do staff/delivery partners meet regularly to standardise assessment approaches and share practice in approaches to deliver effective FAs, e.g. participating in communities of practice?

Do staff/delivery partners effectively use Awarding Body, SDS, and other quality body feedback to inform improvements in service delivery?

Do you have an effective way of ensuring that all your tutors, assessors and/or delivery partners are delivering/assessing to an acceptable standard? For example, do you undertake live observations of their practice, have peer delivery approaches or, in larger providers, a performance management approach? | Demonstrate that their staff use reflection to inform improvements in their delivery.

Be able to evidence this with a few examples of changes which have been implemented because of reflective practice.

Have a process of ensuring the standards of delivery of all their staff. This may be formal or informal and should demonstrate that this has led to improvements in delivery. | Demonstrate that reflection and sharing practice is integral to improving delivery. All staff will be able to provide examples of this.

The provider may, depending upon its size, have clear processes in place to facilitate this and benchmark themselves against other similar providers/ organisations.

Clearly demonstrate that review of the standard and quality of delivery is integral to their service and has had an impact on improving delivery of training. This may include formally implemented policies for peer review, observation of practice or performance management. |

1.4 – Providers manage partners and stakeholders to deliver outcomes for learners and employers

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may…	👍 An excellent provider may also…
Effectiveness of partnerships to support transitions and/or progression **1.4.1:** **How well do we work with partners to support transition and/or progression of learners?** (see note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	How well do you work with individual learners and through partners (schools, employers, other training institutions/ colleges) to plan the steps required to support progression of learners? For example, do you have access to information and/or contacts which enables you to signpost and support learners to progress on from your provision? How do you identify partners that will help to inform your provision? Do you use the **SDS Equality Guides and Resources** to access information and advice on who could help to support you in improving your provision for apprentices from under-represented groups or who face barriers to employment? Do you use partners to provide specialist support for apprentices who face potential barriers to progressing, to improve their chances of success?	Use partners effectively to support apprentices who need extra/ specialist support and can evidence instances where this has happened. Support the transition of school pupils e.g., Foundation Apprentice to MA (where this is relevant),. Be able to evidence instances where this has happened. Use partners effectively to support the progression of their apprentices into the next stages of learning and/or new employment. Staff will be able to provide evidence that this has happened on a few occasions.	Pro-actively seek out partnerships and expect their staff to routinely support progression for their apprentices into, through and out of their provision. They will support all their apprentices in this way. Monitor and review the effectiveness of these relationships and the impact on progression and success for their apprentices.

| Management of sub-contractors

1.4.2:
How effective are we at managing our sub-contracted delivery?

(See note 2 for sub-contracted provision) | If you work with sub-contractors we expect them to meet all of the standards outlined in our Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework. It is your responsibility to effectively manage and monitor your sub-contractors and demonstrate this as the main contractor:

■ how clearly do you set out service standards, define roles and responsibilities, and set clear performance indicators for your subcontractors?
■ how often do you meet them to review performance?
■ how good is your record keeping of quality monitoring and the performance of the subcontractors that you work with?
■ how good is your data for managing the performance of each subcontractor separately?
■ do you review external verification reports from awarding bodies and/or other quality reports for your sub-contractors?
■ do you share training opportunities, staff expertise and resources to improve the quality of subcontracted provision? | Have in place and effectively implement, appropriate mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the quality of delivery of sub-contracted provision. | Be able to demonstrate that their sub-contractors:

■ comprehensively review provision in accordance with SDS quality standards; and
■ apprentices and employers value the process; and?
■ implement improvements as required by the primary contractor

Demonstrate (as the primary contractor) that they are effectively reviewing and monitoring the quality of sub-contracted provision. |

Leadership & Quality Culture

2.1 – The provider's work-based learning strategy is based on the needs and expectations of stakeholders, employers and learners

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may...	👍 An excellent provider may also...
Diverse recruitment to support youth / employment **2.1.1:** **How well does our SDS contracted provision support the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee Initiative?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	What is your approach to, and effectiveness in recruiting, or supporting recruitment of, young disabled people, those who are care experienced, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and addressing gender segregation in apprenticeship frameworks where this exists? Do you use targeted marketing to promote opportunities to under-represented groups or proactively ask your employers to consider recruiting a more diverse selection of young people onto apprenticeships? How effectively do you market and communicate with employers, potential learners and industry partners to make choices about the programmes you are going to run and their content? e.g. reviewing your networks and having formal meetings and/or using other channels (email/newsletter/discussion forums) to communicate with employers and learners.	Have demonstrated success in recruiting school pupils into the FA route as a result of proactive measures. Consider their performance in relation to results for under-represented groups and put in place at least one or two measures to improve equality outcomes (starts/achievement rates etc)	Proactively design their business model to improve recruitment and achievement for Foundation Apprentices from under-represented groups.

Management and Future focussed strategy underpinned by LMI			
Management and Future focussed strategy underpinned by LMI **2.1.2:** **How well do we consider our own ecosystem in developing and delivering our work-based learning strategy?** (See note 1 for apprenticeship employer contracts)	How do you gather and use information on wider industry needs to inform your delivery of FAs and understand what provision employers are looking for? e.g. through own knowledge, local partner knowledge, Labour Market Information (LMI). How do you consider your position in the training/ skills market now and in the future (e.g., what are your unique selling points compared to your competitors)?	Provide some examples of how they are adapting to the needs of their customers, the skills market and giving consideration to trends that affect skills delivery. Reference to trusted sources such as: ■ **RSA suite** (Infographic; Summary Report; and Data Matrix); ■ **Skills Investment Plans**; and ■ Industry research reports.	Have a clear WBL strategy that consider changing needs of their customers, the market and trends that affect them. Be able to demonstrate how they challenge traditional approaches. (e.g., embracing digitalisation, addressing global warming/sustainability challenges in their delivery model)

2.2 – Leaders ensure appropriate staffing resources are in place to deliver the work-based learning strategy

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may...	✨👍 An excellent provider may also...
Management and support of staff **2.2.1:** **How effective are we at managing our staff to deliver SDS funded provision?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	How do you ensure you have the right staff, in the right place with the relevant skills and experience to deliver SDS funded provision? Do you plan the workload of your staff and monitor it effectively to ensure SDS provision is delivered well? Do you have robust processes to ensure that staff understand the requirements of SDS contract delivery and the aims and objectives of the programmes they are responsible for? Do you have a contingency plan to ensure continuity of delivery of SDS funded programmes?: ■ what would you do if staff were unavailable for any reason? ■ how would you ensure you continue to deliver training to apprentices and continue to administer the programmes effectively?	Have sufficient staff with the required skill set available to deliver, proportionate to the size of their SDS contract, geographical spread etc. Be able to react to challenges such as staff illness, staff leaving or premises issues to ensure learners are not disadvantaged. Have an appropriate and well-planned workload for each staff member to allow them to deliver good quality work-based learning and an effective way of monitoring staff.	Have a clear contingency strategy and plans in place for challenges such as loss of staff or a centre being out of operation, that can be implemented quickly and effectively. Demonstrate proactive and innovative measures in staff induction to showcase good practice in delivery of work- based learning including; preparing delivery, delivering to a high standard and embedding equality outcomes. Ensure that staff are empowered, and time set aside for them to inform future innovation in delivery.

2.3 – Leaders ensure staff are appropriately skilled and motivated to deliver work-based learning provision

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may…	👍✨ An excellent provider may also…
Staff development **2.3.1:** **How effective is our staff development to support successful delivery of SDS funded provision?** (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision)	Do you have planned programmes of training/ Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff that match their own development needs? How have you ensured your staff have the required digital skills to be able to support learners remotely? Do staff undertake regular and relevant training to better understand the issues for those with protected characteristics and care experienced young people How empowered are your staff to make improvements to support learners and employers?	Ensure that all staff undertake CPD, as required, according to the assessment strategy for the apprenticeship(s) they are delivering; and develop their staff in accordance with each individual's development needs. Be able to provide examples of how staff CPD has improved their work-based learning provision.	Have a methodical and proportionate approach to identifying staff CPD needs, and to cascading and measuring the impact of staff CPD.

2.4 – Leaders take ownership for the continuous improvement of quality and performance of work-based learning provision

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may…	👍 An excellent provider may also…
Effective self-assessment and continuous improvement **2.4.1:** **How effective are our approaches towards self-assessment and continuous improvement?** (See note 3 for sub-contracted provision)	Do you have a planned approach to self-assessment that allows evidence to be reviewed and evaluated using the lenses (using feedback and considering the views) of your own organisation, your learners, partners and employers Do you also reflect on wider good or effective practice? Are you giving staff regular opportunities to talk about the progress of your quality action plan? Can you identify what difference has been made to your service delivery based on implementing improvements reached through undertaking self-assessment and quality action planning?	Ensure that the views of all interested parties (staff, learners, partners, employers) that are involved in the SDS contract contribute to the self-assessment process. Ensure their approach to self-assessment captures the views of all those with a vested interest in the delivery. Will proactively use the feedback received from learners and employers to improve their delivery.	Dedicate time to self-assessment on a regular and routine basis. Clearly identify the additional value of undertaking self-assessment and show how it contributes to improvement of their provision. Demonstrate the value of all staff being involved in regular self-assessment activity. Will not only act on stakeholder feedback but make it clear to learners and employers what remedial action they have taken, or improvements implemented as a result of their input and views.

| Innovation and change 2.4.2: How well do we seek innovation and ideas to enhance our provision? (See note 1 for sub-contracted provision) | How do you find out about new innovations/ideas in your sector(s) and seek to embed this in your provision? Do you attend Community of Practice events for example, awarding body; SDS; Education Scotland; College Development Network; SDS; Scottish Training Federation sharing practice events; local employability forums, or utilise SDS shared resources? How have you used new innovations to support your delivery? e.g., investment in digital technology How do you ensure resources are used in a sustainable way to minimise adverse effects on the environment? | Provide examples of how they seek out innovation and ideas and how these have been incorporated into provision. | Have a policy of actively seeking out best practice, innovation and new ideas and incorporating them into their provision. Be able to demonstrate a culture of dedication to continuous improvement with several examples to evidence this. |

Outcomes and Impact

3.1 – Providers achieve and maintain high levels of service delivery and outcomes for all work-based learning (WBL) provision, ensuring all regulatory, statutory, equality and funding body requirements are met

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may...	👍 An excellent provider may also...
Achievement and analysis of SDS Key Performance Indicators **3.1.1:** **How well are we performing and analysing our performance in relation to SDS key requirements?**	Within insightQ SDS have provided your results for three cohorts (or results to date if three cohorts have not been achieved) including overall achievement and a breakdown by framework. What are your results telling you about your strengths and areas for enhancement according to your analysis, comparison of previous results and against targets you may have set? Consider: ■ how does your performance for each apprenticeship framework compare to the achievement rate benchmark, taking account of previous performance? ■ is there a positive or negative trend? ■ how do you use the results to address declining or poor performance? ■ how do your achievement rates for apprentices from equality groups compare to your own overall performance? Are they better or worse? How do they compare to framework averages? The Covid-19 pandemic (hereafter referred to as "pandemic") has fundamentally changed the context in which FAs are delivered and the statistics must be considered in this context. Comparisons with previous years should be treated with caution.	Meet the benchmark level of SDS KPIs in almost all their SDS funded provision for: ■ Overall national FA achievement ■ National achievement rate for the framework(s) that you offer (available in the FA Progress Report published annually)	Exceed the benchmark level of SDS KPIs for: ■ Overall national FA achievement ■ National achievement rate for the framework(s) that you offer (available in the FA Progress Report published annually) Have clearly demonstrated that they analyse and utilise the data to inform continuous improvement

	What are your results for any sub-contracted provision and how do sub-contractors compare to your overall provision or to other sub-contracted provision? National FA performance statistics for comparison can be accessed **here**. However, you should not rely solely on SDS information but aim to find relevant data for analysis and comarison suitable to the subject area(s) you deliver.		Monitor performance of those from protected groups and take action to address any issues identified.
SDS Diverse recruitment 3.1.2: **How well are we improving the representation of specific equality groups in our SDS funded provision?** (See note 5 for sub-contracted provision)	Within insightQ, SDS have provided details of your FA start rates for three cohorts (or results to date if three cohorts have not yet been delivered) relating to ethnicity, disability, care experience and gender. Consider: ■ how your participation rates compare to the national average for the different equality groups as detailed in our **2021 Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan**. ■ how does your gender ratio compare to national averages and is it improving for frameworks which are traditionally gender segregated? ■ your participation trends over three years (or results to date if three years data is not available)?	Demonstrate that they have reviewed their performance relating to key equality groups and can demonstrate some improvement for at least one equality group as a result of action that they have taken. Analyse their performance in relation to equality groups and use that intelligence to inform improvements for the future.	Set appropriate equality recruitment targets and demonstrate a clear commitment to recruiting a more diverse range of learners. Demonstrate clear improvements in representation of equality groups through targeted action. Demonstrate improvements in success rates for these groups on their programmes.

		Be able to identify examples of improvement actions that they take to support positive action in recruiting from under-represented groups as well as actions that they take to support the success of these groups.	Be able to demonstrate their strategic commitment to the consideration of addressing the challenges for under-represented groups in their SDS provision. It will be clear that equality outcomes are at the forefront of their service and embedded fully in all their processes and activity.
Awarding Body and Industry Body Requirements **3.1.3:** **How well are we meeting the requirements of Awarding Bodies and Industry Bodies?** (See note 6 for sub-contracted provision)	Detail results from your awarding body/ies and external verifiers over the last three years. You may wish to highlight good practice and the number of actions or recommendations. What performance measures from industry bodies demonstrate that you are meeting their requirements, where relevant?	Have few or only minor awarding body compliance breaches requiring action. Demonstrate that they are considering external verification visit reports and their required actions/recommendations to inform improvements in their provision.	Be able to demonstrate that EV recommendations inform enhancements to practice. Have areas where good practice has been identified.

3.2 – Work-based learning provision meets the needs of learners, employers, and stakeholders

	Points for consideration	👍 A good provider may...	👍 An excellent provider may also...
Systematic gathering, analysis, and use of employer and stakeholder perception data **3.2.1:** **How satisfied are employers and stakeholders with our service and relationship?** (See note 4 for sub-contracted provision)	What are your results external recognition (for example quality or diversity awards) telling you about your strengths and areas for enhancement according to your analysis, comparison of previous results, or against targets you may have set? Within insightQ, you can upload evidence of your analysis of employer and stakeholder satisfaction levels for three cohorts (or results to date if three cohorts have not been delivered). For example, a stakeholder could be a charity; college; local authority group or business that you work with to support your learners.	Demonstrate regular gathering, and use of, evidence of how satisfied employers and stakeholders are with their training provision. Source feedback which may be explicitly sought through the provider's own formal processes, or it may come from SDS monitoring or other sources, but it has been gathered, quantified and analysed. Have feedback which demonstrates employers and stakeholders are largely satisfied with their relationship with, and delivery of training/ assessment by, the provider and that they see additional value for their business in the provider's activity.	Take proactive steps to systematically gather and analyse feedback on satisfaction of provision to inform improvements. Have feedback from employer(s) and stakeholders which demonstrates that all or almost all are satisfied with the delivery of training and assessment by the provider and employers see additional value for their business in the provider's activity. Have feedback which demonstrates that employers' views contribute to training improvement.

| Systematic gathering, analysis, and use of learner perception data

3.2.2:
How satisfied are learners with our provision?

(See note 4 for sub-contracted provision) | Depending upon the nature of your business you may e.g. undertake an electronic survey of learners, seek feedback after learning activities etc. Very small providers may rely upon SDS monitoring of learners and analyse this feedback.

Within insightQ you will upload evidence of learner satisfaction rates for three cohorts (or results to date if three cohorts have not been delivered).

You should:

■ clearly analyse these results, highlighting strengths and AFIs.

■ compare to any previous results or a baseline of satisfaction.

■ consider how you set targets to increase both the volume of respondents and overall satisfaction levels.

■ Satisfaction rates should measure how much value you add to learners' development and how well you respond to their specific needs.

When you survey learners do you ask the right questions to get information relating to the services you provide? | Be able to demonstrate regular gathering of evidence of learner satisfaction in their training provision.

Measures taken will be proportionate to the size and nature of their SDS contract.

Source feedback which may be explicitly sought through the provider's own formal processes, or it may come from SDS monitoring or other sources, but it has been gathered, quantified and analysed.

Have feedback which demonstrates learners are largely satisfied with their relationship with, and delivery of training/assessment and support from, the provider. Learners believe this has contributed to their skills development beyond the qualification and workplace role (i.e., that the provider has added value). | Take proactive steps to systematically gather and analyse feedback on satisfaction in provision to inform improvements.

Set themselves appropriate targets which are proportionate to the size and nature of their SDS contract.

Have feedback from learners which demonstrates that all or almost all are satisfied with the provider's service and they recognise that the provider has added value to their skills development in the workplace/ realistic workplace environments.

Have feedback which demonstrates that learners are listened to and their input contributes to the continuous improvement of the provider's service. |

Equality

SDS aims to support the development of fairer and more diverse workplaces that deliver the very best outcomes for every individual. We are committed to equality of opportunity within Apprenticeships; a commitment that is driven by our firm organisational belief in the values of inclusion and improving equality and diversity outcomes for people in Scotland.

We are focussing activity in support of the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee (published November 2020).

The ambition of the Young Person's Guarantee is that within two years, every person aged between 16 and 24 will have the opportunity, depending on their circumstances, to study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience; or participate in formal volunteering.

The Guarantee is crucial, considering the immediate impacts of the pandemic on young people's prospects, but it must be enduring and sustainable. The long-term aim is to ensure that young people in Scotland are supported to make that connection to work and access valuable opportunities for years to come.

In your self-assessment you should evaluate the activities you undertake to support increased participation from these specific equality groups and the impact of these activities in terms of results / statistics. You should then give yourself a RAG rating using the definitions on page five.

Early evidence suggests that people in identified equality groups are being disproportionately affected by the pandemic and we encourage you to consider this within your self-assessment and identify relevant, suitable actions where appropriate in your quality action plan.

All providers should have at least one equality action in their quality action plan.

Notes

Note 1:
In the case where a provider sub-contracts provision they should have clear sight/ understanding of the mechanisms that their sub-contractor(s) use(s) for these activities and have clear sight and evaluation of the effectiveness of those mechanisms.

Note 2:
Sub-contracted delivery means any part of delivery that you sub-contract out or pay other providers to deliver. As primary contractor, you are fully responsible for ensuring that sub-contracted provision meets the SDS quality standards.

Note 3:
Your self-assessment/evaluation should include review of all of your sub-contractors' performance and approaches.

Note 4:
Where the provider sub-contracts provision, they should ensure sub-contractors have processes in place to gather feedback. Providers should request and analyse feedback from their sub-contractors in relation to employer and learner satisfaction.

Note 5:
Ensure that you separate out sub-contracted provision and analyse accordingly, setting similar targets for sub-contractors where they are responsible for supporting recruitment.

Note 6:
You should require a report on awarding body external verification from any sub-contracted provision.

Links to Useful Resources

Link	Description
SDS Quality Assurance Improvement Hub	This section of the SDS website is our Hub which contains information and resources to enhance quality in the delivery of Apprenticeship programmes.
Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework	Main document which sets out SDS quality assurance and improvement arrangements to enhance delivery of apprenticeships.
SDS Equality Support Guide	Guidance on supporting a wide range of customer groups on to apprenticeships, including information about relevant funding and tools which will help you do this.
RSA suite	The Regional Skills Assessment suite contains RSA's which provide a coherent evidence base to inform future investment in skills, built up from existing data sets and forecasts. The Suite also contains the Data Matrix which is an interactive tool offering data from a variety of sources in a visually engaging format. It covers three themes – Skills Supply / Skills Demand / Skills Mismatches.
Skills Investment Plans	Skills Investment Plans describe the skills challenges and opportunities across Scotland's key sectors.
The Equality Act	UK government legislation which protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.
National Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report 2021	Published annually, the Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report provides detailed information on frameworks; opportunities and uptake; equality and diversity; and achievement, which can be used for analysis and comparison.
2021 Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan	Outlines priorities for improving diversity and equality of opportunity in Scottish Apprenticeships and reports progress since 2015.