

Quality Assurance (Academic) Policy

Sept 2021

Version 1

1. Scope

- This policy applies to all staff at Expanse Learning.
- This Policy presents Expanse Learning policy on the quality assurance of its academic systems, along with details of the procedures, responsibilities, and guidance for implementation.

Quality Nominees: Karl Wane and Richard King

2. Statement

- **Aim** – Through its quality assurance policy and procedures, the Expanse Learning strives to achieve excellence in the quality of all aspects of its academic provision and services.
- **Scope** – The QA policy, its framework, and its procedures relate to any course provided by, or organised by, the Expanse Group, requiring the formal enrolment of participants (learners, staff or organisations with whom the Expanse Group has a contract, etc.)
- **The Approach** – Within the over-arching themes of continuous improvement and self-evaluation, the principle is a three-themed approach to quality, supported by other, specific, key strands.

The three themes are as follows:

- **Theme One** - Having clear, specific standards and procedures for the organisation and delivery of courses;
- **Theme Two** - Reviewing and self-evaluation procedures to improve practice;
- **Theme Three** - Auditing and review of both the delivery and reviewing procedures to improve the systems.

The other key strands are: -

- adopting good relevant practice from external agencies;
- staff development and training;
- defined roles and responsibilities for all involved;
- having reviews and procedures in which the Expanse Group is able to monitor its performance in terms of its Equal Opportunities and inclusiveness obligations, policies, and targets;
- having complaints and appeals procedures.

Details are set out more fully in subsequent sections.

3. Primary Theme of Quality - Assurance of Course Delivery

This theme of quality relates to all aspects of the organisation and delivery of units/courses, where the actions directly affect an actual course outcome, e.g. marks in assessments, learner retention.

Elements in this theme, to be addressed for every element of provision, include:

- Business case for a proposed new award.
- Authorisation to proceed to approval.
- Approval.
- Registration.
- Learning/teaching schedule.
- Assessment.
- Resources.
- Course organisation and staff responsibilities.
- Accreditation of prior learning.
- Student resources: curriculum, induction.
- Entries/ registration/ results.
- Moderation and reviews during the delivery.
- Certification.

When evaluating policies and practices for programme design, approval and delivery it is important to consider whether due consideration is taken of:

- a) external reference points, including any relevant subject benchmarks statements, national frameworks for further education qualifications and, where appropriate, the requirement of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.
- b) the compatibility of programme proposals and developments with the Expanse Group goals and missions.
- c) strategic academic and resource planning.
- d) existing provision within Expanse Learning, including any awards that may be offered jointly with other institutions.
- e) the level of risk involved in each approval and the optimal level of resources necessary to ensure that the required outcomes of the process are achieved.

Proper design and development of a programme is crucial for ensuring that it is relevant and sustainable. It is also important for its successful delivery. If the design processes are well thought through and operate effectively, they can assist in the successful operation of later approval, monitoring and review procedures. There are many principles and reference points

that must be considered when designing and developing a new programme. These include:

- a) Expanse Learning goals and missions.
- b) the intended aims of the programme.
- c) the level of the programme – its intellectual challenge and value.
- d) external reference points.
- e) the concept of progression, so that the curriculum imposes an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course of the programme.
- f) opportunities which might be available to learners on completion of a programme.
- g) the balance of the programme, for example, in relation to academic and practical elements, personal development and academic outcomes, breadth and depth in the curriculum.
- h) the coherence of the programme, to ensure that the overall experience of a learner has a logical and intellectual integrity that are related to clearly defined purposes.
- i) how the intended learning outcomes of the programme will be promoted, demonstrated and assessed.
- j) that the necessary resources are available to support the programme.

With regards to registration and initial assessment, Expanse Learning will:

- ensure individual learners are registered to the current programme within the agreed timescales
- ensure that there is a secure, accurate and accessible audit trail, which allows individuals to be tracked throughout the course
- comply with the Initial Assessment Policy

Expanse Learning procedures must ensure that:

- a) assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not advantage or disadvantage any group of learners or individuals:
 - there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.
 - the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias, and meets any accrediting body's standards.
 - Provide Internal Verification and Moderation Policy, which describes the centre procedures to ensure that:
 - there is an accredited Lead Internal Verifier for each programme subject area
 - internal verification is valid, reliable and covers all assessors and programme activities
 - there is accurate and detailed recording of internal verification decisions
 - the internal verification procedure is open, fair and free from bias, and meets any accrediting body's standards.
- b) Provide and implement a Complaints Policy, which describes the centre procedures that:
 - enables learners to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision.
 - attempts to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity.
 - standardises and records any appeal.
 - facilitates a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the awarding body, where appropriate.
 - protects the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.
 - is open, fair and free from bias, and meets any accrediting body's standards.
- c) Provide and implement a Malpractice Policy, which describes the centre procedures that:
 - identifies and minimises the risk of malpractice by staff or learners.
 - responds to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
 - standardises and records any investigation of malpractice.
 - ensures that malpractice procedure is open, fair and free from bias, and meets any accrediting body's standards.
 - imposes appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.

4. Secondary Theme of Quality – Review and Evaluation

This theme of quality is concerned with reviews and evaluations that improve the quality of provision.

Among the elements to be addressed in this theme are:

- learner/employer/partners/parents/carers and other stakeholder satisfaction surveys.
- surveys of support service delivery.
- quality assurance of data used in reviews.
- unit /course /subject evaluation.

- annual course reviews, performance review programme, etc.
- moderation and standardisation events and sampling.
- self-evaluation by all having responsibility for organisation and delivery.
- Teachers, Assessors, Verifiers, Support services.

The key strands to be achieved in the second theme are:

- making available valid, quality-assured and comprehensive data on what has taken place.
- open and honest self-evaluation.
- establishing a common understanding of the significance of the review conclusions.
- taking action to improve practice where appropriate.
- sharing good practice.
- picking up the development issues as appropriate, though, for example, strategic planning, staff development and review.

Expanse Learning will routinely monitor the effectiveness of their programmes:

- to ensure that programmes remain current and valid considering developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application.
- to evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by learners.
- to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
- to ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings.

Expanse Learning will make use of the Quality Assurance File in order to monitor all courses.

5. Tertiary Theme of Quality – Auditing of the Systems in the Primary and Secondary Themes

This theme is about reviewing and auditing the systems and procedures of the primary and secondary themes.

Elements of this theme to be addressed, include: -

- meeting the relevant bodies' standards for auditing;
- self-evaluation by those responsible for reviewing;
- monitoring moderation;
- auditing course documentation;
- auditing packs;
- auditing meeting documentation;
- surveys among stakeholders of the quality system;
- reporting internally and externally as appropriate.

Leaders will conduct an annual review of the Quality Assurance systems; however, ongoing consideration should be given at all times to policy changes that may need immediate attention.

6. Staff Development and Training

To ensure that all aspects of this policy are effective, appropriate staff development programmes are to be implemented.

Expanse Learning will make use of the Staff Development and Training policy to ensure that all personnel have the necessary skill and ability to achieve excellence in the quality of all aspects of its academic provision and services.

7. Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Action

The Quality Assurance policy is a major instrument helping it to achieve its obligations and targets for ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities for learning.

All systems for delivery of provision within Theme One are to be designed to ensure that no discrimination exists.

In Theme Two, data needed for review and evaluation are to be acquired in terms of equal opportunities monitoring, i.e. analysis by ethnicity, disability, and gender. Reviews and evaluations are to address the issues emerging from the equal opportunities analysis of the relevant measure.

Theme Three level auditing is to ensure that the appropriate data and information inputs took place, that the reviews considered the issues arising therein, and that appropriate action was taken.

8. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff and managers to: -

- be aware of the requirements of this Policy in carrying out their duties;
- keep themselves abreast of changes and revisions to the Policy;
- ensure, when carrying out the formal duties of the Policy's procedures, that they have made themselves fully competent for those duties.

Specific roles and responsibilities are set out in Section 4.

9. Appeals and Complaints

Appeals and complaints are to be subject to the Complaints Procedure.

10. Changes in Externally Required Procedures

Expanse Learning will comply with relevant changes in the requirements of external validating bodies (including any relevant changes in the law) as they occur. Thereafter, the Expanse Group will amend this policy statement, its associated procedures, and its operational guidance as soon as is practicable, notwithstanding any review date contained in this document.

11. Relationship to Other Policies

The Quality Assurance policy is closely connected to other policy areas, notably: -

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Internal Verification Policy

12. The QA Policy – What it does and does not cover

This policy sets out the quality approach for how provision is to be organised and quality is assured, but it does not prescribe curriculum content or how the teaching and learning is to be achieved.

Effective quality is critically dependent on clarity as to whom is responsible for what at every stage.

The scope for confusion is significant, since any one staff member may have more than one role.

Responsibilities are to be defined for every specific aspect of the quality system of every unit of provision, and are to cover:

- teachers for teaching delivery and learning.
- management accountability at both primary and secondary quality themes.
- corporate responsibility for QA is with the Quality Nominees.
- functional roles of assessor, teacher, verifier.
- auditor and reviewer.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months but can be revised as needed. It will be reviewed by the governing board

Impact of non-compliance for:

Staff:	Disciplinary action, Support, Action Plan.
Student:	Not applicable
Legislation/organisational:	Reputational damage, litigation, statutory and non-regulated compliance. Prosecution, staff retention, poor performance
Compliance lead:	Quality
Policy Reference:	ELGR-POL-ORG-007
Version:	1
Agreed policy location:	DatabridgeMIS and Company Website

Does the policy require Governor approval? No

Approval

<p>Prepared by Karl Wane 01/09/2021</p> <p></p> <p>Director of Post 16 Education</p>	<p>Approved by Tony Brown 01/09/2021</p> <p></p> <p>CEO</p>	<p>Counter Signatory Richard King 01/09/2021</p> <p></p> <p>Director of Schools, Pre 16 Education</p>
--	---	---

Version Control

Version	Date	Revision	Review Date
1	01/09/2021	Policy Review	31/08/2021
2			
3			
4			
5			