



Audit Report

Safety Training Awards

17 September 2019

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1 Background

This was the seventh audit of Safety Training Awards (STA) since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation in June 2009.

STA is a nationally recognised awarding body offering qualifications in the following areas: teaching swimming, pool life-guarding, aquatic teaching and emergency first aid at work.

STA was formed in 1932 and is a company limited by guarantee. The awarding body is a registered charity in England and Scotland. STA's headquarters are situated in Walsall. The Audit Team were provided with full access to the awarding body's Walsall premises, staff and documentation.

1.1 Scope

SQA Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy*. This states the type and frequency of our quality assurance activities, describes our reporting procedures and indicates how the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated.

As this was a full audit of STA, all regulatory requirements were included within the scope of the audit. Our quality assurance activities are conducted on a sampling basis and, consequently, not all aspects of the awarding body's systems, procedures and performance have been considered in this report to the same depth.

SQA Accreditation audit reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended. Consequently, this approach to audit reporting does not detail areas where compliance or good practice was found.

The audit was designed to ensure STA complies with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements namely:

- ◆ SQA Accreditation's *Regulatory Principles* (2014)
- ◆ all *Regulatory Principles Directives*
- ◆ the awarding body's Accreditation Licence

Awarding body documentation considered for review by the Audit Team includes all documents banked on STA's SharePoint site at the time of audit and information supplied to support audit activity. Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence.

1.2 Audit Report and Action Plan Timescales

STA audit date: 17 September 2019

Audit Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 16 October 2019

Audit Report to be signed by STA: 27 November 2019

Action Plan to be emailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by STA: 27 November 2019

The process will apply in relation to the timescales specified above:

- ◆ The awarding body will be sent two signed copies of the Audit Report by post.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign both copies of the Audit Report and return one by post to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.
- ◆ The awarding body will also be emailed a copy of the Audit Report (for information only) and an electronic copy of the Action Plan.
- ◆ The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and email this in Microsoft Word format to regulation@sqa.org.uk.
- ◆ SQA Accreditation will confirm when the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Issues and present it to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for approval.
- ◆ Following approval by ACG, the awarding body will be sent two signed copies of the approved Action Plan by post.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign both copies of the Action Plan and return one by post to SQA Accreditation.

The findings of this Audit Report and the associated Action Plan will be published on SQA Accreditation's website following signed agreement.

SQA Accreditation will continually monitor progress towards completion of the proposed actions identified in the Action Plan and update the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating as appropriate.

1.3 Summary of Audit Issues and Recommendations

An Issue has been recorded where evidence shows that the awarding body is not compliant with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements. The awarding body must address the Issues and specify corrective and preventative measures to address them through its Action Plan.

The Action Plan is emailed to STA as a separate document to the Audit Report, and must be submitted to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2.

As a result of the audit and post-audit activities, one Issue has been recorded and two Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 10	The awarding body has a substantial number of outstanding approved training centre (ATC) actions which are beyond the target dates shown on Synergy.	Low

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for enhancement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations in order to reinforce ongoing continuous improvement. However, measures to correct or prevent these are not mandatory and therefore do not form part of the Action Plan.

Recommendation	Detail of Recommendation noted
1. Principles 5 and 7	The awarding body may wish to consider a list of policies, documents and personnel records that it would expect to be banked on Synergy, and dates by when it recommends ATCs should achieve this.
2. Principle 9	The awarding body should consider populating its systems to include the key dates by when it intends to have new qualifications credit rated and accredited with SQA Accreditation in 2020.

1.4 Risk Rating of Issues

SQA Accreditation assigns a rating to each Issue recorded, depending on the impact on or risk to the awarding body's operations, its SQA accredited qualifications and/or the learner. Issues recorded during the audit will count towards STA's Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards future quality assurance activity. Further detail on how the Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated can be found on the [SQA Accreditation website](#).

2 Detail of Audit Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail Issues recorded and Recommendations noted against SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements.

2.1 Issues

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

The Audit Team were provided with a walkthrough of the STA's Synergy system which enables the awarding body to record and monitor actions raised by external quality assurers (EQAs) during ATC visits. It was noted against several ATCs that actions raised had not been closed by their due date and were still outstanding.

The Audit Team were shown a report used by EQAs to monitor overdue actions. The report showed a substantial number of outstanding ATC actions which were beyond the target dates showing on Synergy.

The awarding body had already identified this issue and indicated that their target was to substantially reduce the number of overdue actions by the end of 2019 and in doing so address some of the actions which were common across all ATCs. This has been recorded as **Issue 1**.

2.2 Recommendations

Regulatory Principle 5. The awarding body and its providers shall maintain accurate documents, records and data.

and

Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body shall have effective arrangements for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

The awarding body's system Synergy is still a relatively new platform to both STA and its ATCs. Not all ATCs have engaged with it as the awarding body would have hoped for and it was evident from reviewing ATC records that some had chosen to upload all records which the awarding body would expect to see, whereas some had not. For instance, those providers utilising it effectively had uploaded all required policies, assessor and internal quality assurance certificates, and records of continual professional development, whereas other ATCs had barely used the system to its full potential.

The Audit Team noted that in order to support ATCs, the awarding body may wish to consider a list of policies, documents and personnel records that it would expect to be banked on Synergy and dates by when it recommends ATCs should achieve this.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 1**.

Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body shall ensure that it has robust systems and processes for the identification, design, development, implementation and review of qualifications, which meet the needs of users.

The Audit Team were keen to establish if the awarding body had robust systems in place for the design, development, implementation and review of accredited qualifications. They spent time with qualifications development staff discussing the management of current STA qualifications and the progress of future accreditations. STA is expected to have its Pool Lifeguard qualification accredited with SQA Accreditation by March 2020. The previous version of this qualification lapsed in June 2019.

It was evident that the awarding body had defined internal timescales for the future accreditation of the Pool Lifeguard qualification. The Audit Team were shown the system used to manage qualification developments, however it had not yet been populated with key dates and events such as credit rating, submission and review dates leading up to and beyond March 2020. The Lead Auditor was keen that these be added to the system as soon as possible to avoid slippage, ensure the capture of key robust qualification management information, and maximise project planning.

The awarding body should consider populating its systems to include the key dates by when it intends to have new qualifications credit rated and accredited with SQA Accreditation in 2020. This has been noted as **Recommendation 2**.

3 Acceptance of Audit Findings

For and on behalf of STA:

For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

Print name

Print name

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Signature

Signature

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Designation

Designation

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Date

Date

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