

Fair Assessment Policy

Reviewed September 2007

Fair Assessment Policy

Introduction

Safety Net Associates Limited (SNA) aims to provide fair access to assessment for all learners on qualification-based programmes. Assessment practice will be open and consistent within the codes of practice and regulations laid down by the relevant awarding and validation bodies.

The policy applies to all qualification-based programmes offered by the Company and its partners wherever delivered.

Principles of fair assessment

All assessment must be conducted rigorously and accurately and, where appropriate, in accordance with the awarding body's published criteria and standards. Formative assessment/coursework designed by Company staff must be conducted by reference to open and defined standards/marketing/assessment schemes, covering the required skills, knowledge and understanding.

Assessment evidence will be judged according to the principles of:

- Sufficiency – consistent performance to the required level over a period of time
- Currency – evidence should prove that the student is competent now
- Validity – evidence should be appropriate and relevant to the syllabus/standards it is addressing
- Authenticity – evidence must reflect the knowledge/skills/understanding of the candidate. The work of another person must not be submitted as that of the candidate. Other sources can be used in certain circumstances as long as the student references these.

The chosen format and method of assessment must be appropriate to the qualification and any conditions specified by an awarding body. Assessment materials must be presented in clear and unambiguous language and must differentiate only on the basis

of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding. Such materials must be free from any overt or covert discrimination against an individual, either in wording or content.

The Company will appoint assessment staff whose knowledge, skills and understanding are appropriate for the programme(s) they assess. Staff will maintain their competence by regular staff development organised internally or externally.

Initial Assessment

As part of the induction process all new candidates will undertake an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills. This will be used to assess Basic and Key Skill levels and to inform decisions about any additional learning support offered to students in the early stages of their course.

Initial assessment will be available to all candidates' students on an optional basis. Candidates should apply via the Training Team or through their tutor/lecturer.

Internal Assessment

Internal assessment must be conducted in line with the principles outlined in section 3. Assessment will be internally verified or moderated according to the Companies Internal Verification/Modification Procedure. Where assessment has been externally verified or moderated by an awarding body, an original copy of the verification/moderation report must be sent to the CEO as soon as received.

Written and oral feedback must be given to candidates as soon as possible after assessment. In the case of written or other product work submitted the feedback must be given within 3 working weeks of the official submission date. Feedback should be as helpful as possible to the candidate, i.e. confirming what has gone well and giving clear guidance on what the candidate needs to do in order to improve on their performance.

External Assessment

External assessment will be administered strictly in accordance with instructions issued by the relevant awarding bodies.

Internal management is delegated to the Companies training team. In the case of queries, the Companies CEO should be consulted. For coursework assessment (whether internally or externally assessed) the Companies Quality Manager (CEO) is the official management link with all awarding bodies.

Arrangements for candidates with Special Assessment Requirements

Assessment must be available to all those who have the potential to achieve the standards required for a particular qualification. However, some candidates may need access to alternative means of providing evidence and/or additional support. Care needs to be taken that any proposed assessment methods are of equal quality and rigour to those for mainstream candidates in order to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved the national standard.

Candidates may be identified as having particular assessment requirements in relation to, for example, learning difficulties, a visual or hearing impairment, a mental illness, or English as an additional language. This means that they will need appropriate support in their development to help them meet the required standards such as:

- help with communication and number skills;
- adapted equipment and physical environment;
- special information technology;
- confidence building.

Assessment Appeals

All candidates must be informed of the Companies Assessment Appeals Procedure at the start of their programme.

The Companies Assessment Appeals Procedure must be followed in all cases where a candidate disagrees with an assessment decision. If a candidate wishes to appeal over the result of an external examination, advice must be obtained from the Companies Lead Associate, who will appeal on a student's behalf.

Each awarding body has a formal appeals procedure, which must be invoked within 14 days of receipt of the result of an informal enquiry. Awarding body appeals are in 2 stages. If a candidate is still dissatisfied after the 2nd stage, then an appeal can be sent to the Examinations Appeals Board (EAB) – see www.theeab.org.uk for details.