

## **1.0 Policy**

To deliver its strategic policy aims of excellence in: Quality of Practice, the Learner Experience, Stakeholder Relationships, Innovation and Cost Management; Advance Assessments has a policy of complying with the Ofqual Conditions for Recognition and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

This requires a clear description of how independent governance of Advance Assessments is achieved in order to protect the integrity of Ofqual regulated qualifications and Advance Assessments.

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition are set out in the Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition, which is used to inform this policy and procedure and all other policies and procedures operated by Advance Assessments. In particular this policy and procedure is informed by the Ofqual conditions for Governance:

**A1: Suitability for continuing recognition**

**A2: Establishment in the UK, Gibraltar, the EU or the EFTA**

**A3: Safeguards on Change of Control**

**A4: Conflicts of Interest**

**A5: Availability of adequate resources and arrangements**

**A6: Identification and management of risks**

**A7: Management of incidents**

**A8: Malpractice and maladministration**

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is described in the document: The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Expectations for standards and quality from this code are published within the applicable Advance Assessments policies and procedures.

## **2.0 Procedure**

2.1 The Managing Director is responsible for implementation of this procedure.

2.2 Advance Assessments will employ one or more Independent Governor(s), in accordance with its published person specification. Independent Governors will take on the responsibilities and actions described in the document: Advance Assessments: Independent Governance and Advisory Committee Code and Terms of Reference. The position will be reviewed annually, in accordance with the code and terms of reference, published within the document: Advance Assessments: Independent Governance and Advisory Committee Code and Terms of Reference.

2.3 Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meetings will ordinarily be held annually. In the event of incidents that may impact on the governance of Advance Assessments, Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meetings may be held on an extraordinary basis.

2.4 To inform the Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting, Advance Assessments will operate a programme of regular General Practice Review Meetings, as described in document AA\_OP\_20: General Practice Review Meetings. Extraordinary General Practice Review Meetings may also be held on an ad-hoc basis, as appropriate.

to manage events and incidents impacting on Advance Assessments and the learners it serves. Reports from these meetings will be presented at Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meetings as evidence of compliance with the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition.

2.5 A report comprising of the Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting agenda items, minutes and action plans will be compiled and confirmed as true and accurate by an Independent Governor.

2.6 **Independent Governance and Advisory Committee Meeting Quorum.** A quorum of a minimum of one director of Advance Assessments and one Independent Governor is required for this meeting.

2.7 The directors of Advance Assessments will review the report from the Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting, and have final decision-making power, exercised through a subsequent company AGM, to implement, or otherwise, actions described in the report. A progress report will be provided at the next Independent Governance and Advisory Committee Meeting, see item 3.1. Should an Independent Governor propose actions within a shorter time interval, this may be specified, see item 3.35.

### **3.0 Independent Governance and Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda Items**

#### **The following will be reviewed in order to assure Advance Assessments compliance with the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition**

3.1 Review of the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting report, as described in item 2.5.

3.2 Suitability for continuing recognition; evidenced by:

3.2.1 A review of any Advance Assessments acts and omissions which have, or are likely to have an Adverse Effect. Such acts and omissions may include-  
being convicted of a criminal offence,  
being held by a court or any professional, regulatory, or government body to have breached a provision of any legislation or regulatory obligation to which it is subject, or  
becoming insolvent or subject to corporate financial restructuring

3.3 Becoming an inactive awarding organisation; evidenced by:

3.3.1 No qualifications being awarded within a two-year period.

3.4 Suitability of Senior Officers; evidenced by:

3.4.1 Senior officers being unsuitable for a role by virtue of –  
any criminal convictions,  
any finding by a court or any professional, regulatory, or government body that an officer has breached a provision of any legislation or any regulatory obligation to which he or she is subject,  
any proceedings in bankruptcy or any individual financial arrangement to which he or she is or has been subject

any disqualification from holding the directorship of a company or from public office, or  
any finding of malpractice or maladministration, in relation to a qualification (whether a regulated qualification or a qualification which is not regulated), to which he or she is or has been subject.

- 3.4.2 Details of Senior officers' background, including a Register of Interests are available on the Advance Assessments online assessment system, within the Continuing Professional Development area.

3.5 Awarding organisation established in the UK, Gibraltar, the EU or the EFTA; evidenced by:

- 3.5.1 Companies House check.

3.6 Safeguards on Change of Control; evidenced by:

- 3.6.1 Companies House check and, where there has been a change of control, evidence of Advance Assessments taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the Change of Control does not have an Adverse Effect, procuring that every other relevant person takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the Change of Control does not have an Adverse Effect, and putting in place a plan designed to ensure that the interests of Learners will be protected where there is a change of control.

3.7 Identifying Conflicts of Interest; evidenced by:

- 3.7.1 The use of a Conflicts of Interest procedure to formally record any Conflict of Interest or potential Conflict of Interest that relates to an apprentice or student that will be assessed by Advance Assessments.
- 3.7.2 The maintenance of a Register of Interests section within the online Continuing Professional Development area for each staff member or contractor for Advance Assessments, completed by the staff member/contractor and listing all relevant outside interests.

3.8 Managing Conflicts of Interest; evidenced by:

- 3.8.1 Adherence to the Advance Assessments written Conflict of Interest policy and procedure (AA\_OP\_05), including records of actions that take all reasonable steps to mitigate any Adverse Effects as far as possible and correct them using actions described in Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure AA\_OP\_07 for the relevant standard/qualification and recorded on form AA\_OF\_07.
- 3.8.2 The agreement of each staff member or contractor to Advance Assessments' confidentiality agreement, held within their online Continuing Professional Development area.
- 3.8.3 Review of log of Conflict of Interest forms and incident reports, held in the dedicated area on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.8.4 Putting in place actions to mitigate against Adverse Effects, or potential Adverse Effects, described in the Qualification and Assessment Review Improvement and Standardisation plan for each qualification (Ref: AA\_OF\_07) and/or reports from General Practice Review Meetings (Ref: AA\_OP\_20).

3.9 Interests in assessment; evidenced by:

- 3.9.1 Taking all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a Learner (including by way of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the

result of the assessment, demonstrated by adherence to the Advance Assessments Conflict of Interests policy and completion of the Advance Assessments Conflict of Interests Form, prior to accepting a learner for assessment. (Not applicable to Advance Assessments at 03-01-2022).

- 3.9.2 Where, having taken all reasonable steps to avoid assessment by a person with a personal interest in the assessment, such an assessment cannot be avoided, having all relevant parts of that assessment subjected to scrutiny by another person, such as an Independent Governor, as indicated in the log of Conflict of Interest forms and incident reports.
- 3.10 The written conflict of interest policy; evidenced by:
  - 3.10.1 Review of the written conflict of interest policy maintained and complied with by Advance Assessments, which must include procedures on how Advance Assessments complies with Ofqual's Conflict of Interest requirements.
- 3.11 Submitting to Ofqual, when requested, the Advance Assessments Conflict of Interest Policy and ensuring that the policy complies with any requirements which Ofqual has communicated in writing to Advance Assessments; evidenced by:
  - 3.11.1 Review of written communication between Ofqual and Advance Assessments and review of the Advance Assessments Conflict of Interest policy and procedure.
- 3.12 Ensuring the ability to develop, deliver and award qualifications, evidenced by:
  - 3.12.1 Minutes and action plans emanating from Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Meetings (AA\_OP\_07).
- 3.13 Ensuring financial viability, evidenced by:
  - 3.13.1 A review of the current business plan, financial forecasts and financial position of Advance Assessments Limited.
- 3.14 Identifying business risks, evidenced by:
  - 3.14.1 Minutes and action plans produced at General Practice Review Meetings (AA\_OP\_20), with investigation into actions taken, where appropriate.
  - 3.14.2 Minutes and action plans produced at Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Meetings (AA\_OP\_07), with investigation into actions taken, where appropriate.
  - 3.14.3 Review of the Advance Assessments risk assessment, held online.
- 3.15 Preventing incidents or mitigating their effect, evidenced by:
  - 3.15.1 Minutes and action plans produced at General Practice Review Meetings (AA\_OP\_20), including Extraordinary General Practice Review Meetings, with investigation into actions taken, where appropriate.
  - 3.15.2 Minutes and action plans produced at Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Meetings (AA\_OP\_07), with investigation into actions taken, where appropriate.
- 3.16 Contingency planning, evidenced by:
  - 3.16.1 Review of the Advance Assessments Business Continuity Policy and Procedure (AA\_OP\_15).

- 3.16.2 Review of Business Continuity Incident reports held in the dedicated area online and any related action plans from General Practice Review Meetings.
- 3.17 Management of incidents, evidenced by:
  - 3.17.1 Minutes and action plans produced at General Practice Review Meetings (AA\_OP\_20), including Extraordinary General Practice Review Meetings, with investigation into actions taken, where appropriate. Action plans are held online in the dedicated area in the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
  - 3.17.2 Minutes and action plans produced at Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Meetings (AA\_OP\_07), with investigation into actions taken, where appropriate. Action plans are held online in the dedicated area for each assessment or qualification in the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.18 Preventing malpractice and maladministration, evidenced by:
  - 3.18.1 Review of policies and procedures operated by Advance Assessments', in particular the Malpractice and Maladministration policy and procedure (AA\_OP\_19) and the distribution of policies and procedures to all staff including Independent End Point Assessors.
- 3.19 Investigation and managing the effect of malpractice or maladministration, evidenced by:
  - 3.19.1 A review of all complaints and all reports of malpractice or maladministration incidents received by Advance Assessments since the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting. Reports of complaints or malpractice/maladministration and mitigating actions taken are held in dedicated areas on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
  - 3.19.2 Review of all investigations into malpractice and maladministration since the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting and confirmation that such investigations were conducted by an Independent Governor of Advance Assessments.
  - 3.19.3 Review of actions taken by Advance Assessments in order to prevent any Adverse Effect that may arise and, where any such Adverse Effect occurs, mitigate it as far as possible.
- 3.20 Procedures relating to malpractice and maladministration, evidenced by:
  - 3.20.1 Review of the written procedures for the investigation of suspected or alleged malpractice or maladministration.
  - 3.20.2 Review of any investigations carried out since the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting to ensure they are carried out rigorously, effectively, and by persons of appropriate competence who have no personal interest in their outcome. Reports of investigations of incidents of malpractice or maladministration and mitigating actions taken are held in the dedicated area on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.21 Ensuring that where a Centre undertakes any part of the delivery of a qualification which Advance Assessments makes available, Advance Assessments takes all reasonable steps to keep under review the arrangements put in place by that Centre for preventing and investigating malpractice and maladministration, evidenced by:

- 3.21.1 Review of Advance Assessments' arrangements to review and record each Centre's policies and operating procedures, with particular reference to malpractice and maladministration policies and procedures. (Not applicable to Advance Assessments at 03-01-2022).
- 3.22 Ensuring that where a Centre undertakes any part of the delivery of a qualification which Advance Assessments makes available and requests guidance on how best to prevent, investigate, and deal with malpractice and maladministration, appropriate guidance is supplied, evidenced by:
  - 3.22.1 Review of Advance Assessments arrangements to receive requests for guidance. (Not applicable to Advance Assessments at 03-01-2022)
  - 3.22.2 Review of such guidance provided by Advance Assessments in instances where it has been requested. (Not applicable to Advance Assessments at 03-01-2022).
- 3.23 Promptly taking all reasonable steps to prevent instances of malpractice or maladministration recurring and taking action against those responsible which is proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence, or seeking the cooperation of third parties in taking such action, evidenced by:
  - 3.23.1 Review of malpractice or maladministration reports and mitigating actions generated by Advance Assessments in accordance with policy and procedure AA\_OP\_19. Reports of investigations of incidents of malpractice or maladministration and mitigating actions taken are held in the dedicated area on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.24 Where Advance Assessments has cause to believe an issue of malpractice or maladministration may affect a Centre undertaking any part of the delivery of a qualification Advance Assessments makes available, or may affect another awarding organisation the affected Centre and/or organisation is promptly informed, evidenced by:
  - 3.24.1 Review of communications between Advance Assessments and Centres undertaking any part of the delivery of a qualification that Advance Assessments makes available (Not applicable to Advance Assessments at 03-01-2022)
  - 3.24.2 Review of communications between Advance Assessments and other awarding organisations that may be affected by an occurrence of malpractice or maladministration (Not applicable to Advance Assessments at 03-01-2022).
- 3.25 Quality and accessibility of information provided to Training Providers, Employers and Apprentices, evidenced by:
  - 3.25.1 Maintenance and operation of a Fee and Invoicing Policy and Procedure (AA\_OP\_21)
  - 3.25.2 Display of full fee structure, accessible to all visitors at <https://www.advanceassessments.co.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=38>
  - 3.25.3 Review of information provided to users of the website in the roles of Apprentice, Training Provider, Employer or Assessor
  - 3.25.4 Review of any promotional materials in use.
- 3.26 Promotion of equality and diversity throughout the organisation, including compliance with Equality legislation, evidenced by:
  - 3.26.1 Review of information provided to users of the website
  - 3.26.2 Review of information included in qualification and assessment materials.

- 3.26.3 Review of access of Equality legislation by assessors, internal verifiers and other contractors/staff registered on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.27 Consistent and fair application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations, evidenced by:
  - 3.27.1 The operation and maintenance of a reasonable adjustment and special considerations policy and procedure.
  - 3.27.2 A review of reasonable adjustments and special considerations applied to learners since the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting.
  - 3.27.3 Review of records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations applied for, held in dedicated areas on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.28 Maintain confidentiality of materials used in assessments, evidenced by:
  - 3.28.1 The maintenance and operation of a Confidentiality policy and procedure that meets the expectations of Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition.
  - 3.28.2 Compliance with the Advance Assessments confidentiality agreement by assessors, verifiers and others working with the company, recorded online in individual Continuing Professional Development areas.
  - 3.28.3 Review of records confidentiality incidents, held on the Advance Assessments online assessment system.
- 3.29 Safeguarding and Protect issues arising since the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting.
- 3.30 Health and Safety issues arising since the previous Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting.
- 3.31 Review of the Advance Assessments three-year strategic plan, held online.
- 3.32 Appointment of Independent Governors for the forthcoming year.
- 3.33 Independent Governors may also request to review any part of Advance Assessments management system or records (including financial) at their discretion.
- 3.34 Where specified by an Independent Governor, Advance Assessments directors will be required to report on progress made against planned actions prior to the next Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting.

#### **4.0 Documents associated with this procedure**

- 4.1 Person Specification – Advance Assessments Independent Governor
- 4.2 Advance Assessments: Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meetings Terms of Reference
- 4.3 AA\_OP\_07 Qualification and Assessment Review, Improvement and Standardisation Policy and Procedure
- 4.4 AA\_OP\_15 Business Continuity Policy and Procedure
- 4.5 AA\_OP\_19: Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure
- 4.6 AA\_OP\_20: General Practice Review Meetings Policy and Procedure
- 4.7 Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition Handbook. Available at: [Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 4.8 UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Available at: [Quality Code \(qaa.ac.uk\)](#)

AA\_OP\_18  
Advance Assessments Governance Policy and Procedure

- 4.9 Advance Assessments risk assessment
- 4.10 Advance Assessments three-year business plan
- 4.11 Advance Assessments three-year strategic plan

## 5.0 Document Revision History

5.1 Following improvement identifications and review with colleagues, the Assessment Manager is responsible for revisions of this policy/procedure and completion of the table below, before issue of the amended policy/procedure.

Date (most recent first)	Revision(s)	Reason for revision(s)	New Version Number	Approved by (Initial)
02/12/2022	Item 3.31 consolidated into item 3.14 – Item 3.31 removed and subsequent items renumbered	Removal of duplication	2022/02	G.M.
03/01/2022	Item 3.31 added.  Name of meeting changed to Independent Governance and Advisory Committee meeting, to reflect change in governance structure for Advance Assessments	Review of risk assessment added, following proposal from November 2021 meeting	2022/01	G.M.
28/07/2021	Item 2.6 – minimum quorum added.  Item 2.7 added, Item 3.34 added.  Item 3.28 added.  Item 3.26.3 added.	Clarity.  To enable Independent Governors to request actions to be competed and reported on prior to the next scheduled Governing Board Meeting.  To ensure review of confidentiality arrangements by an Independent Governor. To ensure that assessors, verifiers and others have reviewed Equality legislation.	2021/03	G.M.
06/07/2021	Item 2.2 revised to refer to 'one or more' Independent Governor(s).	Potential requirement for one or more governors.	2021/02	G.M.

AA\_OP\_18  
Advance Assessments Practice Governance Policy and Procedure

	<p>Item 2.4 revised to refer to 'General Practice Review Meetings'. Sentence referring to Extraordinary General Practice Review Meetings added.</p> <p>Item 3 completely revised, all sections. Agenda for meeting revised.</p>	<p>Clarity of wording to align with latest version of AA_OP_20.</p> <p>To more explicitly link the procedure to the Ofqual General Conditions for Recognition</p>		
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