

POLICY & PROCEDURE GUIDANCE FOR IAB ACCREDITED CENTRES

1. Scope & purpose

This guidance document provides a framework for developing and maintaining policies and procedures for centres seeking IAB accreditation or for currently approved centres undergoing their accreditation renewal process. This framework is designed to assure compliance with Ofqual regulations, data protection laws, and to fulfil the standards set by the IAB.

The purpose of this guide is to assist centres in developing and maintaining their policies and procedures to make them both effective and tailored to the specific needs and risks of their operation, as well as gaining further understanding into the IAB accreditation process.

2. Introduction

Centres are required to have clear, structured, and documented policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with applicable industry standards and regulations. These documents should evolve to meet changing regulations, business needs, and internal objectives.

Monitoring and tailoring policies and procedures to the centre specific operational environment, ensures they are practical, achievable, and proportionate to the risks faced by the Centre. This approach minimises regulatory risks and promotes effective business operations.

Every centre is unique, and processes applicable to one may not be suitable for another. For example, a large centre may require more detailed and robust compliance procedures compared to a smaller, less complex operation. The goal is to assure that all practices remain flexible and able to respond to regulatory changes or emerging risks. It is crucial to continually evaluate whether the policies are effective, proportionate, and updated as necessary to address changing business risks or external regulations.

3. What are 'Policies & Procedures'?

Policy: A Policy is a guiding principle or course of action adopted by an organisation. It serves as a framework for decision-making, outlining the desired approach and objectives of the organisation.

Procedure: A Procedure is a detailed, step-by-step instruction that defines the process for implementing a Policy. It specifies how actions should be carried out and who is responsible for carrying them out, and how the success of those actions is monitored and reviewed.



4. Policies and Procedures in IAB Accreditation

IAB Approved Centres and centres seeking IAB accreditation must have a clear understanding of the Policies and Procedures they must adhere to. This understanding is illustrated through the documents submitted as part of the accreditation process.

Centres must not only have clear policies in place but also ensure these are supported by corresponding procedures to demonstrate how the policies are implemented effectively. The IAB applies a risk-based approach when assessing centres as part of the accreditation process.

Failure to provide adequate policies & procedures upon request from IAB may result in a centre being identified as high risk. This rating may result in accreditation being declined or highlight the centre for additional monitoring to ensure compliance criteria are met.

One method of additional monitoring that may be conducted is in person monitoring visits to identify areas of improvement or mandatory actions that must be completed to ensure compliance with IAB standards.

Failure to act on the mandatory actions prescribed following the monitoring visit, within the timeframe stimulated, may result in sanctions such as loss of current accreditation or failure to be newly accredited.

5. Considerations for Development of Policies and Procedures

When developing or reviewing policies and procedures it is important to:

- ✓ Understand the relevant regulatory requirements and internal responsibilities.
- ✓ Ensure that policies align with these regulations while supporting the organisation's overall goals.
- ✓ Create policies that are relevant to the organisation's risk profile and objectives, ensuring they are flexible and capable of addressing emerging risks.
- ✓ Develop procedures that are clear, actionable, and designed to achieve the goals set out in the Policy.
- ✓ Regularly review the effectiveness of Policies and Procedures, making updates when necessary.

By considering the unique needs and risks the centre can ensure their approach remains effective and aligned with industry best practices.

6. What should be included in policies and procedures?

Each policy and procedure should be designed to meet the specific needs of the business while also fulfilling regulatory requirements.

Upon writing or updating specific policy and procedure documents, consider addressing the following:

- **Scope & Purpose:** Clearly outline what the policy or procedure aims to achieve, and why it is needed.
- **Introduction and overview:** Specify what actions, records, or outputs are required as part of the process.
- **Process overview:** Define the method, techniques, or systems that must be used to carry out the process.
- **Accountability:** Assign responsibilities for carrying out specific tasks and ensure that it is clear who is accountable.
- **Performance monitoring:** Identify how processes will be monitored, checked for accuracy, and reviewed for ongoing effectiveness.
- **Review and updates:** Establish a system for periodically reviewing Policies and Procedures to ensure they are still relevant and effective. Specify how often they should be reviewed and who is responsible for review and approval.

7. Implementation of policies and procedures

It is crucial that policies and procedures are accessible to all staff members, clearly understood, and applied consistently.

Centres should ensure that all relevant parties (depending on the policies and their application, this may include Learners) understand the appropriate policies and procedures. Centres should establish competency assessments to evaluate staff understanding and capability. Any amendments to policies or procedures must be clearly communicated to all relevant parties. The implementation of policies and procedures should be regularly assessed for effectiveness. This includes tracking the outcomes of any procedures and addressing any gaps or inefficiencies identified.

8. Regular Review and Updates

In line with evolving business practices and regulatory changes, policies and procedures must undergo regular reviews to ensure their relevance and compliance. The frequency of these reviews should be determined by the centre and clearly specified within the document. This review schedule may vary, depending on the pace at which the respective business processes

evolve. For example, a Policy related to Artificial Technology (AI) which evolves at a rapid rate may need more frequent updates than one addressing general operations.

It is recommended that all IAB Accredited Centres review their policies and procedures **annually**. This review schedule should be explicitly stated within the document, with review dates noted. To maintain clear and accurate records, version control should be implemented to track all updates. This ensures that staff are always working with the most current version of each document.

If a document is reviewed on its due date with no changes or updates required, it should be noted as 'Reviewed without change'.

Revision record should include the version number, date of revision, a summary of changes and the name of the person or team responsible for the revision, such as the Policy/Procedure author, owner, or the head of the department to which the policy pertains.

When significant changes occur within the business—whether due to new services, technologies, or emerging risks—updates to policies should be documented with clear explanations of the reasons for the changes and the person or authority responsible for authorising them.

If new services are introduced, new technologies are adopted, or new risks emerge, it may be necessary to adjust existing policies or create entirely new ones. Any such changes should undergo a thorough review and be carefully considered before implementation to ensure they align with the centre's overall objectives and regulatory requirements.

9. Common Issues and Omissions in policy & procedure documentation

Following the ongoing review of Centre documentation as part of the IAB accreditation process, the following common issues have been identified:

- × Policies that are generic or not tailored to the specific needs of the organisation.
- × Failure to update documents regularly to reflect new regulations or business changes.
- × Lack of clarity about specific responsibilities and accountability.
- × Insufficient detail in procedures, leading to inconsistent practices across staff members.
- × Missing provisions for reviewing and updating policies and procedures.
- × Lack of processes for performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

To avoid these issues, the Centres should commit to tailoring policies and procedure documents to the specific context of your organisation, consider what actions are necessary for compliance,



and make sure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to reflect any changes in business operations or legal requirements and staff are aware and trained accordingly.

10. Summary

Creating and maintaining effective policies and procedures is an **ongoing** process. By regularly reviewing and updating centre documents to ensure they remain relevant, clear, and proportionate to the risks the organisation faces, centres can help ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and enhance operational efficiency.