

Quality Improvement Policy



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Quality Improvement Policy



Policy Statement

Step Ahead are committed to providing a quality service to all of our customers. Our approach to quality is centred around meeting the individual needs of our learners¹, partner organisations, funders and other customers, ensuring that they are satisfied with the service they receive.

We are dedicated to:

- continually improve the quality of our products and service delivery to meet the needs of our customers,
- continually developing the effectiveness of the systems and processes that support our delivery,
- developing our staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to provide a quality service,
- creating a culture of continuous improvement across our organisation and within our subcontractors,
- listening to our customers and focussing on their needs,
- complying with recognised quality standards and best practice within the industry.

This policy is underpinned by our mission of being seen as a provider of high-quality services to clients, suppliers, funders, agents and partners in the delivery of educational services, empowering people to create a better future for themselves.

¹ The term Learner includes students, clients, candidates, participants and other persons accessing our programmes.



Commitment

Step Ahead are committed to delivering quality Information, Advice & Guidance and both regulated and non-regulated learning programmes, improving our performance through the management and development of our staff. We regularly monitor our position against national standards to ensure we continue to meet or exceed minimum levels of performance required by our funders and deliver Qualification Achievement Rates above national averages.

Approach to Managing Quality

Teaching and Learning

- To encourage continuous improvement in the quality of all teaching and learning programmes, thereby making learning an enjoyable activity and through this, increasing learner retention and the achievement of individual learning aims
- To develop and sustain a diverse range of learning programmes which provide qualifications suited to their learning aims and which provide learners with opportunities for progression into meaningful employment and/or further learning
- To ensure rigorous, standardised and consistent assessment procedures, which meet the standards of awarding bodies and funders
- To provide information which supports strategic planning for Step Ahead's business development
- To monitor and evaluate the procedure for advising, interviewing and counselling learners at entry and throughout their time at Step Ahead
- To establish standards and monitoring procedures for providing a supportive and accessible range of services to all learners

Staff

- To review regularly the performance, training and developmental needs of all employees at all levels and with all staff
- To encourage continual professional development and to offer training and development to individuals from induction and throughout their employment
- To monitor and evaluate performance and developmental needs through two internal observations a year
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the training and development against Step Ahead's strategic goals.

Learners

- All learners will be made aware of the quality standards at Step Ahead
- All learner feedback including comments in the suggestion box, review meetings and exit questionnaires will be analysed and acted upon
- All learners performance in their learning programme will be monitored and evaluated
- All learners files and data will be continuously and rigorously assessed for quality

Subcontractors

- To have in place a rigorous system of quality assurance based on the regular review and assessment of the quality of the services delivered.



- To comply with the requirements and observe guidance on the process for performance management review and assessment, which is issued by our funders, Ofsted and Common Inspection Framework from time to time and applicable to the Services or required by Step Ahead.
- To make available to Step Ahead a report on its own assessment of the quality of the Services, which the Step Ahead will require under the timeframe necessary for self-assessment reporting and related quality improvement frameworks.
- Where applicable, to agree on an action plan for the improvement of services following the any review or inspection by the Step Ahead, our funders or Ofsted.

Employers

- All employers will be made aware of the quality standards of Step Ahead
- All employers will be assessed for safeguarding procedures and health and safety
- All employers will be monitored and evaluated on the quality of vacancies offered

Continuous Improvement Framework

Step Ahead are committed to implementing a robust customer focused Continuous Improvement Framework. The Framework includes:

Caseload management - to assess the progress of students, agree specific actions to improve individual progress, identify improvements in delivery and key processes that impact on student success and satisfaction.

Process audits - concentrating on key activities including initial assessment, planning and reviewing of learning, target setting and performance, to ensure that we are identifying and meeting the needs of students and employers.

Observation - direct observation of delivery is undertaken to ensure, promote and enhance the quality of the learning experience for all students and teaching practices of staff.

Customer feedback - it is only through seeking feedback from our customers that we will know if we are meeting their needs. A range of methods are used to gain feedback, which is regularly analysed to identify areas of good practice that can be shared, and areas for improvement to be addressed.

Self assessment - our annual self assessment offers the opportunity to undertake an objective and measured view of our products and services, and judge how effective we are in meeting the needs of our customers. All staff and stakeholders are involved, and we bring together the results of all of our continuous improvement activity to inform the assessment. A resulting development plan then provides an ongoing framework for improvement activity.

In addition to our Continuous Improvement Framework, we have robust programme planning and review processes. These processes help us to ensure that we put in place suitable resources at the outset of programme delivery to meet the needs of our customers, and that we review the delivery to ensure needs continue to be met and that we respond effectively to changing demands.

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Our robust internal communication ensures that staff regularly have the opportunity to share best practice and highlight areas for improvement in service delivery and key processes that impact on quality. We also have a strong commitment to staff development and will use the outcomes of our continuous improvement activity to inform our training and development activities.

Procedure

- The process of quality control and improvement requires **all staff** to meet on a regular basis to review their work, set standards and monitor learner perceptions and achievements.
- Quality control will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate performance indicators
- Statistical analysis will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate performance indicators
- Review will be supported by analysis of learner, employees and stakeholder views and perception, gathered via questionnaires, surveys and review meetings

The outcome of these processes will provide information:

- To action plan for improvement at Step Ahead
- To highlight issues that need consideration by Step Ahead
- To support Step Ahead's business and strategic planning cycle
- To support Step Ahead's contract compliance to a high standard
- To inform the process of Step Ahead self assessment and development planning

Responsibilities

The Managing Director will assign responsibility to a senior manager who will ensure that all quality assurance and continuous improvement activities take place as planned. The senior manager will report back to the Managing Director and Board Directors on a regular basis regarding the status and outcome of activities.

Key staff will be directed by the senior manager on their role in implementing specific aspects of the Continuous Improvement Framework and other quality assurance activities and will be supported to ensure they can fulfil their responsibilities.

Tutors, assessors and internal quality assurance officers will fully implement all quality standards, Awarding Body guidance, relevant codes of practice, and other standards relating to formally accredited qualifications and non-regulated learning, to ensure that we meet (and exceed where possible) the requirements therein.

All staff have a responsibility for striving to attain the standards and work within the Frameworks outlined in this policy and contribute to quality and continuous improvement in their everyday activities. They are also responsible for contributing to specific activities, such as caseload reviews and self assessment, and should fully participate and actively contribute to these activities when requested.

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Communication

All new employees will receive a copy of this policy as part of their induction, along with an introduction to the principles herein. The policy will be published on our website and intranet for all staff, students and partners to access, and will also be displayed in our centres.

Appropriate training will be provided for staff who are directly responsible for activities covered by this policy, to ensure they have sufficient knowledge and capability to carry out their duties effectively.

Staff will be advised of the results of process audits, customer surveys, and other reviews, and contribute to improvement planning processes, as part of the general communication processes.

Evaluation & Review

The responsible senior manager will monitor implementation of the policy on an ongoing basis and take action to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

The success of the policy will be measured through customer feedback, audit results (internal and external), self assessment judgements, inspection outcomes, and achievement of performance targets and other goals.

The senior manager and directors will formally review this policy on an annual basis and update it as appropriate to ensure it reflects current best practice and changes to quality standards and ensure its continued effectiveness and appropriateness to the needs of our customers.

Responsible Person:

Name: Kristina Harper

Title: Agility Support Manager

Contact Email: kharp@stepahead.co.uk

Tel: 0330 335 6500

Approved by:

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jackie Bedford".

Name: Jackie Bedford

Title: Chief Executive

Date: 15th September 2020