



# EdgeWorks™

## Centre handbook

(v3.3)

# Version Control

Version	Date	Modification
3.3	20/01/2026	Update and Review of Procedures for VTCT Skills and NCFE Centre Attainment.

This document provides an introduction and reference for all EdgeWorks™ Care Academy Assessment Centre roles.

# 1. Centre statement

**EdgeWorks™ attaches significant importance to learning and development in support of its organisational aims and its commitment to high standards in vocational education and lifelong learning.**

EdgeWorks™ is an approved and regulated centre delivering qualifications under the **Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)**. The Centre operates in accordance with:

- The Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
- The requirements and centre guidance of its approved Awarding Organisations
- Relevant funding body rules and regulatory expectations

Internal quality assurance and governance policies

EdgeWorks™ is also a **Quality Assured Care Learning Service (QACLS)** endorsed training provider, demonstrating our commitment to recognised standards of quality in training delivery and organisational governance for the health and social care workforce.

## **Governance and accountability**

The Centre has a designated **Head of Centre**, responsible for overall compliance, regulatory accountability and quality assurance.

A **Qualification Administration Co-ordinator (QAC)** oversees operational processes and coordinates the activities of Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs), Assessors and Learners to maintain compliance with awarding organisation and regulatory requirements.

Internal quality assurance systems are structured to ensure:

- Assessment decisions are valid, reliable and consistent.
- Sampling activity is planned and risk-based.
- Standardisation is maintained across assessors.
- Regulatory updates are reviewed and implemented promptly.

## **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

EdgeWorks™ may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support assessors and internal quality assurance staff. AI is used only to assist professional judgement, for example, by generating draft feedback or identifying areas for review.

AI does not make autonomous assessment decisions.

All final assessment outcomes, feedback and certification decisions are made by qualified assessors and are subject to internal quality assurance in line with awarding organisation requirements and EdgeWorks™ policies.

Any misuse of AI, including inappropriate reliance on AI-generated content or improper handling of learner data, will be managed under the Centre's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

## Centre aims

The aim of the EdgeWorks™ Centre is to:

- Deliver high quality training and assessment that meets RQF and awarding organisation standards.
- Maintain robust and transparent quality assurance systems.
- Ensure fair access to assessment for all learners.
- Operate in full compliance with regulatory, funding and data protection requirements.
- Promote professional development across the assessment team.
- Respond flexibly to client and learner needs without compromising quality or compliance.

## How these aims are achieved

EdgeWorks™ will achieve these aims by:

- Maintaining a sufficient number of qualified and occupationally competent Assessors and IQAs.
- Ensuring all assessment staff hold, or are working towards, recognised assessor and internal quality assurance qualifications (including legacy awards accepted as equivalent by awarding organisations).
- Providing ongoing continuing professional development for staff.
- Holding regular assessor and IQA standardisation meetings.
- Implementing structured sampling plans and documented quality assurance activity.
- Providing appropriate resources, systems and approved documentation to support delivery.
- Monitoring learner progress and acting promptly where support is required.

Reviewing policies and procedures at planned intervals to ensure continued regulatory alignment.

## Document control and regulatory updates

The Head of Centre and Qualification Administration Co-ordinator are responsible for:

- Monitoring regulatory updates from Ofqual, Awarding Organisations and funding bodies.
- Reviewing and updating centre procedures accordingly.
- Issuing revised documentation to relevant staff.
- Ensuring that any material changes affecting assessment or internal quality assurance are notified to the relevant Awarding Organisation in line with centre approval conditions.
- Maintaining secure and accurate records of assessment, quality assurance and certification in accordance with regulatory and data protection requirements.

All centre policies, procedures and quality assurance systems are subject to periodic review and formal evaluation to maintain compliance and continuous improvement.

## 2. Centre structure

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Head of Centre

Responsible for:

- Business Plan.
- Marketing Strategy.
- Liaison between Centre – Technology Team – External Consultant.
- Contract Management / Recruitment.
- Sales Strategy.
- Day 2 day running of the Centre.
- Ensure there are sufficient qualified and occupationally competent assessors.
- Ensure that documentation meets Awarding Body requirements.
- Liaison with awarding organisation - accounts and administration.
- Sales / Client / Account Management.
- Internal and external reporting.
- Ensure that training needs of centre staff are identified and that provision is made to meet those needs.

#### Centre Administrator

Responsible for:

- Setup of learner user accounts / induction packs.
- Management of individual learner contracts.
- Help desk support (technical / usability level).
- Maintain centre records about assessors' details and learners' progress.
- Assessor / IQA task assignment.
- Inform the awarding organisation of changes to Centre staff.

#### Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

The co-ordinating IQA will be the main point of contact for the company and will have overall responsibility for the qualification Delivery Team and internal quality assurance. They will be a highly experienced member of staff, with substantial experience of Centre administration, and a management qualification.

In addition, the Co-ordinating IQA will be a qualified Assessor, an experienced and qualified IQA, and will have a care/ child care vocational qualification appropriate to the level and role at which they will be working.

The Co-ordinating IQA will have sufficient standing within the Company to gain access to and request financial and human resources, thereby maintaining the quality assurance of the qualification.

- Manages staff within their occupational area.
- Conducts Standardisation meetings and reviews with staff.
- Liaises with Centre Manager for the initial recruitment of potential new Assessors.
- Complete Complaints and Appeals process as indicated by Centre Manager.
- Continuously improves provision in line with national standards.
- Ensures that all completions are administered correctly.
- Ensure effective operation of the appeals process.
- Ensure that the Equal Opportunities and Access policy is applied to all aspects of centre ordination.
- Ensuring that assessors are competent in the theory and practice of competency-based vocational qualifications.
- Ensuring continuous professional development records are maintained by the team.
- Providing feedback to the External Verifier, via Centre Manager on the effectiveness of assessments.
- Ensuring that action points agreed with the Awarding Body External Verifier are implemented.
- Evaluate and develop all centre systems, materials and documentation in conjunction with Centre Manager.
- Ensuring that all appropriate assessment and quality assurance documentation, records and personnel are available for the External Verifier visit.
- Maintain good communication links with centre staff.
- Keep information confidential and secure.
- Providing support and advice to assessors and other staff involved with the learner's development.
- Ensuring assessors are applying the qualification requirements by observing practice, sampling assessment and internally verifying assessment decisions.
- Providing prompt feedback to assessors.
- Taking part in standardisation exercises to ensure consistency of own practice and judgements with other IQA.
- Contributing to the evaluation of assessment and quality assurance procedures, incorporating feedback from "Learner voice" and learner reviews.
- Monitoring and reviewing learners' achievements in relation to access to a fair assessment.
- Arranging the checking and countersigning process.
- Completing and signing the Certification Record Forms before submission to the Awarding Body.
- Ensuring that the Centre's Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures are consistently implemented.
- Managing and sampling online assessments for knowledge only units.

## **Technology Team**

Responsible for:

- Development of initial technology / content.
- Review of technical processes / procedures to support centre requirements.
- Data Management / Back up process.
- Development of new features based on centre feedback.

## **External Consultant / QA**

Responsible for the independent checking of QA of the following functions:

- Administration.
- Contract Management.
- Assessor / IQA functions.

## Assessors

- Follow observation assessment procedures.
- Provide consistent and accurate statements, planning and feedback to assessors in a timely manner.
- Maintain their occupational competence and update knowledge / skills to ensure robust delivery of qualifications.
- Liaise with the IQA to ensure high standards are maintained.
- Respond to feedback from assessor and IQA reviews.
- Where AI-supported tools are used, review and amend all AI-generated feedback or suggestions before issuing outcomes to learners.

## OCPAs (Occupationally Competent Proxy Assessors)

- Follow observation assessment procedures.
- Provide consistent and accurate statements, planning and feedback to assessors in a timely manner.
- Maintain their occupational competence and update knowledge/skills to ensure robust delivery of qualifications.
- Liaise with the assessor to ensure high standards are maintained.
- Respond to feedback from assessor and IQA reviews.

## Learners

- Sign and agree with learner contract.
- Agree to a completion programme with the Centre and their Manager.
- Carry out all actions agreed with their assessor / tutor / IQA within agreed timescales.
- Keep their own copies of submitted assessment methods (this will be done electronically for knowledge assessments).
- Take overall responsibility for the successful completion of the award.

## Qualifications for centre staff

- Assessors - D32/D33 or A1 (Learning Disability Qualification optional not mandatory) or level 3 assessing qualification.
- IQAs - D32/D33 and D34 or A1 and V1 or level 4 quality assurance qualification.
- OCPAs – Will be approved by AO before assigning assessments. CV and CPD required.

# 3. Appeals and complaints process

## Appeals

The following procedure applies to all learners who feel that they have a legitimate reason to appeal against any decision made by a member of the EdgeWorks™ Awarding Body Registered Centre.

Action the learner must take:

- Discuss with The IQA the nature of the issue being raised.
- If the matter cannot be resolved at this level the Centre Manager will intervene and attempt to find a resolution to the issue being raised
- If the matter cannot be resolved at this level then the learner is to appeal in writing to
- Another qualified assessor (the “Appeals adjudicator”) will be appointed to investigate the appeal.
- The learner maintains the right to appeal to the Awarding Organisation of they choose to.

A successful appeal does not mean that the learner is competent; a re-assessment may be needed to prove this.

Records of appeal will be kept in the appeals file. The learner’s right to appeal is contained in all Awarding Organisation learner books.

## Complaints

EdgeWorks™ expect all learners to have a positive experience, but recognise that, at times, this may not be the result. The company expects all reasonable steps to be taken to ensure that learners are dealt with, with courtesy, respect and professionalism at all times. If the learner is not satisfied, this should be discussed at the earliest opportunity to prevent the situation from escalating. If, after an informal discussion with their assessor / tutor or their IQA, the learner wishes to make a formal complaint, this must be done, in writing, within 5 working days and addressed to the IQA.

They will then investigate the circumstances and meet with the learner to feedback, within 10 working days of the receipt. A written record of the complaint, the investigation and the initial outcome should be maintained and forwarded to the Centre Manager.

The outcome of the complaint may be as follows;

- Complaint upheld and resolved.
- Complaint upheld and unable to resolve at this level (This will be referred to the Centre Manager for further investigation).
- Complaint not upheld (This will be referred to the Centre Manager for further review and investigation if required).

Any complaint forwarded to the Centre Manager will be investigated further and a written response will be given within 5 working days. If the learner remains unsatisfied with the decision at this stage and this procedure has been exhausted, then the learner can contact the awarding organisation. The awarding organisation should only be contacted when this procedure is FULLY exhausted.

## 4. Fair access of assessment

This section contains a statement of EdgeWorks™ policy for:

- Access to equality of opportunity in the assessment process.
- Learners with special needs / additional learning needs.
- Fairness in assessment and quality assurance.

### **Access to assessment and equality of opportunity**

EdgeWorks™ will ensure that learners have access to assessment for qualifications regardless of their sex, sexuality, marital status, age, religion, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin or disability.

The assessment process must be free from any barriers which unnecessarily restrict access. In particular the Centre Manager must ensure that.

- There are no upper or lower age limits (unless this is a legal requirement of the employment role/care setting), unless restricted by funding.
- Assessment is independent of a specified period of time to be spent in education, training or work,
  - except where legal/statutory constraints make this necessary.

- Any learners with additional/special support needs are given the opportunity to discuss ways of
  - providing solutions to problems they feel are related to access and other issues and have the potential to impede their demonstration of competence. Wherever possible the necessary resources are made available to facilitate the assessment of these learners.
  - configuring the online system to suit their individual access requirements.
- Assessment decisions are free from discrimination on any grounds other than competence.

Wherever possible, work should be completed in normal working time. Managers should ensure suitable learning and development time is given for this. Issues in this area should be highlighted in writing to the Centre Manager.

## **Learners with special needs / additional learning needs**

IQAs must ensure that access to assessment is available to all learners, and the assessment system must allow them to demonstrate their competence / knowledge in the most appropriate way.

To enable access to assessment, there needs to be a reasonable amount of flexibility in considering alternative methods of assessment satisfaction.

There may be learners with particular special needs, such as those with a visual, hearing or mobility impairment, or learning difficulty, which need to use alternative means of providing evidence. In these cases, there is a need to adopt different approaches to assessing particular elements of competence at all times, however, the proposed assessment methods must be genuine alternatives ensuring that the evidence collected is of equal quality and rigor to that required of other learners. The requirements of the standards cannot be compromised.

Any aids can be used in assessment that could reasonably be employed in the job, such as:

- A word processor for learners with writing or learning difficulties.

If there are any concerns about the use of alternative assessment methods the Centre Manager must be consulted and, if need be, the matter will be referred to the External Verifier.

## **Fairness in assessment and quality assurance**

The IQA will ensure that the principles of open access and fair assessment are central to qualifications and regulated qualification framework (RQF) units. Part of the IQA's role is to guide and support assessors to ensure judgments relating to assessments are fair, consistent and free from any bias.

Fairness is making sure that:

- The system has not asked the learner to do things which are not required by the qualification.
- Learners are carrying out tasks of equal difficulty in relation to the same unit.
- The methods of assessment used for each learner offer equal rigor, while providing valid and reliable assessment.
- Each learner has covered all the requirements of the qualification.

Assessment opportunities do not discriminate against individuals or groups of learners.

Information about how EdgeWorks™ uses AI to support assessment, including learner choice, accessibility and how concerns can be raised, is set out in the Fair Access of Assessment Policy and is available on request.

# 5. Centre Quality Assurance procedure

All internal quality assurance activities at EdgeWorks™ will follow this procedure. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all assessment and internal quality assurance activities are undertaken in a way which meets the requirements of the Awarding Organisation and National Occupational Standards. IQAs must not verify their own work and the system will not allow this to occur.

The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring all IQAs are trained, competent and qualified, maintaining, monitoring and reviewing arrangements for processing internal quality assurance information and providing confirmation to Awarding organisations that internal quality assurance practices are to national occupational standards.

- EdgeWorks™ recognises the role and responsibility for the IQA and allows sufficient time and resources for the activities to be undertaken effectively.
- nominated person has been nominated by EdgeWorks™ to be responsible for operating, monitoring, reviewing and adapting Centre systems and internal quality assurance. This person has obtained a nationally recognised internal quality assurance award, works consistently with the national occupational standards and supports other IQAs to meet qualification standards.
- Each IQA must maintain a sampling plan detailing dates when sampling will take place.
- Each qualification should be verified at least twice during the programme, including summative quality assurance and the sampling plan updated appropriately.
- Decisions of trainee and newly qualified assessors will be 100% verified until the IQA is confident that work meets the national standards. 50% will be sampled following agreement with external verifier.
- Where concerns on assessment decisions are identified by the IQA additional quality assurance and support will take place until confident the assessment decisions made by the assessor meet national standards.
- This procedure will be reviewed every three months by the Centre Manager.

## Assessment staff

The Centre Manager and IQA will:

- Ensure all assessors have sufficient relevant and current occupational competence, understand the national standards and hold or are working towards a nationally recognised Assessor qualification. All trainee assessors must have appropriate and time-sensitive target dates for completion of the Assessor Award and must have all decisions agreed and counter-signed by an appropriately qualified and experienced assessor and have the level of support and mentoring required to enable them to complete the award and make assessment decisions in a way which meet national standards.
- Ensure that any training and development needs identified through the counter-signatory process will be recorded and reported to the Centre Manager.
- Ensure all assessors have access to, and understand, copies of centre and Awarding organisation paperwork, policies and procedures, along with full and up-to-date Awarding Body information and scheme books.
- Ensure all assessment and quality assurance staff attend and participate in standardisation exercises as a means of making consistent quality decisions.

## Standardisation sessions and exercises

The IQAs will:

- Plan and record dates of standardisation and other meetings and activities to cover at least the next six months of assessment and internal quality assurance cycles.
- Coordinate and ensure participation of regular standardisation exercises by each assessor.
- Record and monitor feedback and action planning with the assessor when training and development needs are identified.

## 6. External verifier visits and certification

The following procedure will detail what must happen before during and after an External Verifier visit.

The co-ordinating IQA must:

- Prepare for the external quality assurance visit in line with the Centre Manager.
- Check that the planning schedule has been completed to date and all relevant items are available for the external verifier.
- Ensure that a certification record is completed for each learner being put forward for certification and that a certification record summary sheet is completed before external quality assurance where Direct claims status (D.C.S.) is not held for any qualification.
- Retain copies of these after issuing the originals to the external verifier.
- Feedback to Awarding organisation information from the assessment team.
- Make arrangements for external verifier visits and ensure that room and computer are available to access Learner work, records and internal quality assurance records are available for each visit.
- Retain a copy of the feedback for the Centre file.
- Receive and retain a verifier report form for each external verifier visit and ensure that any action arising out of the visit is disseminated to the team and taken by the dates indicated.
- On receipt of certificates, ensure that these are passed to learners and a record maintained.

### Evaluation and review policy

Policies and procedures will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure the centre maintains the highest standard of quality assurance and meets the regulatory requirements of outside agencies.

Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating of policies will take place during an annual cycle, culminating in the final stage – the centre policies and procedures evaluation - which will feed into the centre quality assurance circle. Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating, all aspects of delivery and management of Qualifications will take place on an ongoing basis i.e. learner voice will be sought after induction, by the IQA when interviewing the learner and a summative review will take place.

A monthly and annual evaluation will take place of the overall provision.

EdgeWorks™ will review trends in responses to the assessment questions. If any questions are identified as “problematic” for learners, we will review against learning content and ensure there is no ambiguity, clarifying questions/content where appropriate.

External subject matter experts (SME) review learning modules against unit learning outcomes, ensure assessment questions are referenced within learning content, are mapped to unit assessment criteria as well as ensuring there are sufficient questions to meet the unit assessment criteria.

Clear information and guidelines will be provided to all staff and information bulletins on updating and changes will be distributed.

All members of staff will be encouraged to take part in this practice and documentation and systems will be available to ensure this takes place. Records of the process at each stage will be retained and filed.

## 7. Centre communication

All communication of relevance will be made in writing to all team members. Wherever possible, this will be made via electronic communication (Email, Skype, Web Conference) and receipts and records will be kept. Relevant communication topics will include:

- Alterations to policies / procedures.
- Alterations to staff - roles / responsibilities and new staff.
- Alterations to the systems.
- New client / learners / contracts.
- Meeting notes.
- Quality Assurance documentation.

### **Continuous Professional Development of contract staff**

Contract staff will be included in all formal review and training programmes. However, the requirement to remain and prove operational competence will remain the responsibility of the individual during contract reviews.

### **Occupational expertise requirements: Assessors**

In order to be appointed and retained as an Assessor for the qualifications in health and social care / child care, individuals must demonstrate that they:

- Have identified and current expertise in Health and Social Care/Child Care relevant to the level of the Qualification they are seeking to assess.
- Have a relevant assessing qualification.
- Maintain a CPD record and keep themselves up to date with developments in Health and Social Care/Child Care practice.
- Have a thorough understanding of the Care Quality Commission Essential standards of quality and safety and can apply these to the workplace.

### **Occupational expertise requirements: IQAs**

In order to be appointed and retained as an IQA for the Qualification, they must demonstrate that they:

- Have identified and current expertise in Health and Social Care/Child Care relevant to the level of the Qualification they are seeking to assess.
- Have a relevant quality assurance qualification.
- Maintain a CPD record and keep themselves up to date with developments in Health and Social Care/Child Care practice.
- Have a thorough understanding of the Care Quality Commission Essential standards of quality and safety.

## IT and system process training

EdgeWorks™ will provide I.T. and system process training to all staff at the following occasions:

1. System go-live.
2. As part of individual staff induction.
3. When I.T. modifications / system processes are amended.

EdgeWorks™ also run a client support help desk. This facility will be extended to all remote staff in the day-to-day use of the system.

## 8. Unit certification statement

In certain circumstances, and in agreement with the Client and learner, the Centre will make unit certification available (where a completed qualification has not been achieved). These circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Learner leaves employment with the client.
- Learner moves to another Assessment Centre.

## Appendix 1 - Health and safety policy

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 imposes certain obligations on an employer not only to take all such actions as are reasonable to safeguard the health and safety of their employees but also to be able to show that they are doing so, by producing adequate written policies and procedures. EdgeWorks™ fully accepts its responsibilities under the Act.

The Act refers to what is reasonable in given working situations. EdgeWorks™ will:

- Assess the risks in the workplace and put appropriate management measures in place.
- Have written health and safety procedures.
- Ensure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements for ventilation, temperature, lighting and staff facilities.
- Ensure safe and clear access to and from the building, including fire exits.
- Regularly check the premises for structural defects, worn fixtures and fittings or electrical equipment, and take the necessary remedial action.
- Ensure that all equipment is suitable for its intended use and is properly maintained and used.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the fire procedure and regular fire drills are carried out.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the procedure in case of accidents.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of and carry out their health and safety responsibilities.
- Prohibit smoking on the premises.

The Management considers this matter of such importance, that breach of health and safety procedures by staff constitutes misconduct and will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Employees will also be made aware of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act and will:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others around them.
- Co-operate with the employer on matters of health and safety
- Use work equipment correctly
- Provide guidance to visitors to the office and act responsibly to ensure their health and safety
- Visitors, including contractors, will also be made aware of their responsibilities and will:
- Agree to use the equipment safely with regard to the health and safety of those around them.

The Management considers this matter of such importance, that breach of health and safety procedures by staff constitutes misconduct and will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

In addition, the centre will liaise with learners' workplaces to ensure that the working environment is assessed and meets regulatory requirements, as well as ensuring the "Safe Learner".

It is not possible to detail here all the health and safety matters that come up on a day-to-day basis, so staff and management must constantly be mindful of their responsibilities individually and collectively for the safety of themselves and their colleagues.

## Appendix 2 – Equality of opportunity policy, including equality and diversity

The Company recognises the value of equal opportunities in employment for both existing and prospective employees and learners and the process or forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

The Company recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origins, religion, beliefs and disability. The Company undertakes to apply this procedure in such a way as to prevent discrimination.

This policy sets out the framework for the provision of equal opportunities and the elimination of unfair or unlawful discrimination.

This policy extends to visitors, clients, learners and those who provide services to the Company.

### **Aims of the policy**

The main aims of the policy are:

1. To promote equal opportunity in employment.
2. To eliminate unfair or unlawful discrimination in employment.
3. To ensure that no job applicant is placed at a disadvantage by criteria that cannot be justified.
4. To ensure fair assessment of learning activity.

## Equality commitments

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons.
- Promoting a good and harmonious working and learning environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate.
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

## Implementation

The Centre Manager has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, manager and supervisor also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective. In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants, learners and relevant others (such as contract or agency workers).
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff.
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing learners for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques.
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices (e.g., staff newsletters, intranet).
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

## Responsibilities of the employer

It is recognised that responsibility for providing equal opportunities rests primarily with the Company as the employer.

The Managing Director will have overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

## Responsibilities of the employee

It is recognised that responsibility for providing equal opportunities rests primarily with the Company as the employer.

1. The employees are required to comply with measures introduced by the Company to promote equal employment opportunities and eliminate discrimination.
2. Employees must not discriminate against other employees of the Company or job applicants.
3. Employees must not induce or attempt to induce other employees, management or clients to practise discrimination.
4. Employees are required to draw to the attention of management any suspected discriminatory acts or practices in contravention of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

5. Employees must not victimise any individual to have made complaints or who have provided information about discrimination or harassment.
6. Employees must not harass, abuse, or intimidate other employees on any grounds or otherwise act in a discriminatory manner.
7. Employees must ensure that no actions are undertaken in their dealings with clients and members of the public which could be held to be discriminatory under the terms of this policy.

## Monitoring and review

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy. The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly [at least annually] [in consultation with the recognised trade union(s) if appropriate] and action taken as necessary. For example, where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group or groups, we shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

## Complaints

Those who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures. A copy of these procedures is available from Managing Director. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal as per current UK legislation. However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first. Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

# Appendix 3 - Data protection and usage policy

EdgeWorks™ holds and processes information about employees, learners, and other data subjects for academic, administrative, and operational purposes. This policy is written in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

All staff, learners, and third parties who process or use personal information must comply with the following principles. Personal data must:

- Be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.
- Be collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes.
- Be adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary.
- Be accurate and kept up to date.
- Be kept only as long as necessary.
- Be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security.
- Respect the rights of data subjects under UK GDPR.
- Only be transferred outside the UK if appropriate safeguards are in place.

## Definitions

- “Data controller” further information about Organisation data controllers is available from the Data Protection Officer.
- “Other data subjects” and “third parties” may include contractors, suppliers, contacts, referees, friends or family members.
- “Processing” refers to any action involving personal information, including obtaining, viewing, copying, amending, adding, deleting, extracting, storing, disclosing or destroying information.

## Notification of data held

EdgeWorks™ will inform individuals about the personal data it holds and processes about them, including why it is collected and how it is used. This information is maintained in the organisation’s data inventory and may be updated as needed.

## Lawful basis for processing

EdgeWorks™ will only process personal data where there is a lawful basis under UK GDPR Article 6. These include:

- Consent.
- Contractual necessity.
- Legal obligation.
- Vital interests.
- Public task.
- Legitimate interests.

For learners, processing will normally be based on contractual necessity and legal obligation relating to qualification registration, assessment and certification. Special category data (such as health information for reasonable adjustments) will be processed in accordance with Article 9 UK GDPR and relevant statutory conditions.

Where learners are sponsored by an employer, relevant progress and activity data may be shared with that employer in accordance with contractual arrangements.

## Staff responsibilities

All staff shall;

- Ensure that all personal information which they provide to EdgeWorks™ in connection with their employment is accurate and up-to-date.
- Inform EdgeWorks™ of any changes to information, for example, changes of address.
- Check the information which EdgeWorks™ shall make available from time to time, in written or automated form, and inform EdgeWorks™ of any errors or, where appropriate, follow procedures for updating entries on computer forms. EdgeWorks™ shall not be held responsible for errors of which it has not been informed.

When staff hold or process information about learners, colleagues or other data subjects (for example, learners’ course work, pastoral files or personal details), they should comply with the Data Protection Guidelines.

Staff shall ensure:

- That all personal information is kept securely.
- That personal information is not disclosed either orally or in writing, accidentally or otherwise to any unauthorised third party. Unauthorised disclosure may be a disciplinary matter and may be considered gross misconduct in some cases.

## Learner responsibilities

All learners shall:

- Ensure that all personal information which they provide to EdgeWorks™ is accurate and up-to-date.
- Keep usernames/passwords and any resources shared in the undertaking of their qualification confidential.
- Check the information which EdgeWorks™ shall make available from time to time, in written or automated form, and inform EdgeWorks™ of any errors or, where appropriate, follow procedures for updating entries on computer forms. EdgeWorks™ shall not be held responsible for errors of which it has not been informed.

## Rights to access information

Staff, learners and other data subjects in EdgeWorks™ have the right to access any personal data that is being kept about them either on a computer or in structured and accessible manual files. Any person may exercise this right by submitting a request in writing to the appropriate designated data controller.

EdgeWorks™ will not normally charge a fee for responding to a Subject Access Request. A reasonable fee may be charged where a request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, in accordance with UK GDPR.

EdgeWorks™ will respond to Subject Access Requests within one month of receipt. This period may be extended by up to two further months where requests are complex or numerous, in accordance with UK GDPR. In such cases, the reason for the delay will be explained in writing by the designated data controller to the data subject making the request.

## The data controller and the designated data controllers

The Managing Director is ultimately responsible for implementation. Responsibility for day-to-day matters will be delegated to the Centre Manager as the designated data controller. Information and advice about the holding and processing of personal information is available from the Data Protection Officer.

## Assessment marks certification

Learners shall be entitled to information about their marks for assessments; however, this may take longer than other information to provide. EdgeWorks™ may withhold enrolment, awards, certificates, accreditation or references in the event that monies are due.

## AI (artificial intelligence)

AI tools may be used to support professional judgement within assessment and quality assurance processes. AI systems do not make autonomous assessment decisions.

Learner work must not be used to train external AI models or processed by systems that store or reuse data without explicit approval and appropriate safeguards.

All AI use must comply with UK GDPR and EdgeWorks™ data protection and information security requirements. Any suspected misuse must be reported immediately in line with incident reporting procedures.

## Data breach response

All staff must report any data breach or suspected breach to the Data Protection Officer immediately. EdgeWorks™ will investigate and report notifiable breaches to the ICO within 72 hours.

## **International data transfers**

Personal data will only be transferred outside the UK where appropriate safeguards are in place in accordance with UK data protection law.

## **Retention of data**

Different types of data are retained for different periods based on legal and operational needs. Details are provided in EdgeWorks™ Records Retention Schedule.

Care Academy learner platform accounts are subject to defined inactivity rules. An account is considered inactive where there has been no login activity and no active qualification. The 10-year retention period is calculated from the later of last login, employment status change to “ex-employee”, or qualification completion, withdrawal or lapse. Further operational detail is set out in the Records Retention Schedule and internal Retention SOP.

Records must not be retained beyond the periods defined in the Records Retention Schedule unless a documented lawful basis for continued retention exists.

## **Compliance**

Compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 is the responsibility of all learners and members of staff. Any deliberate or reckless breach of this Policy may lead to disciplinary, and where appropriate, legal proceedings. Any questions or concerns about the interpretation or operation of this policy should be taken up with the Data Protection Officer.

Any individual, who considers that the policy has not been followed in respect of personal data about him or herself, should raise the matter with the designated data controller initially. If the matter is not resolved it should be referred to the staff grievance or student complaints procedure.

# Appendix 4 - Data backup process

Our data backup process work on 4 basic levels:

- Web Server System Back up.
- Office Server Back up.
- Employee Back up.
- Learner Responsibilities.

## **Web server system back up**

The Qualification runs on Care Academy, a 24/7 website located in a dedicated data centre in Maidenhead. The databases and system is backed-up every 2 hours locally, copies of backups are also transferred to an offsite location daily.

In addition, once a week the contents of the Web Server Databases are downloaded to the Office Server. Any work carried out by the Development Team must be preceded by a manual database / system back up as required.

## **Office server backup**

All administration files are held centrally within the office server. This server has a daily backup facility - cloud backups are also performed and stored off-site for safe-keeping.

In addition, EdgeWorks™ run periodic (at least at monthly intervals) backups to CD / DVD, External Hard drives for all client, internal and administration projects. These backups are in duplicate, one copy archived and the other stored off-site.

Finally, all MS Outlook profiles and data files are stored centrally in the office and are subjected to the same daily / monthly backup processes.

## **Employee backup processes**

All Employees must comply with our data usage policies and procedures. In particular, no Employee should store key Assessment Centre documents on their local hard drive. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Learner Registration Forms.
- Client Account Forms.
- Sales enquiries.
- Complaints and Appeals forms.

All Contract staff must ensure all EdgeWorks™ Assessment Centre documents are sent to the Centre Manager periodically (not less than weekly) via email for storage within EdgeWorks™ systems.

Employees must ensure their MS Outlook personal folders are located on their own User drives on the server.

# Appendix 5 - Health and safety policy for learners

EdgeWorks™ recognises that under relevant health and safety legislation it has a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its learners and all others who may be affected by EdgeWorks™ undertakings. Wherever reasonably possible, we are committed to ensuring continuous improvements in all aspects of health, safety and welfare.

It is EdgeWorks™ policy to:

- Comply with all statutory demands and standards in the maintenance of a safe and healthy learning environment in which approved, safe systems of work are identified, assessed and correctly employed, whether on-site or at a learner's place of employment.
- Ensure individual learners are aware of their respective health and safety responsibilities.
- Ensure, as necessary, safe access and egress to locations where the training and learning will be undertaken, together with suitable and adequate welfare facilities for all learners.
- Maintain own on-site procedures for the safe evacuation of the premises together with the access of first aid, ensuring that they are sufficient and well known to learners.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to allow learners to undertake their activities in a safe fashion.
- Maintain and support effective health and safety administrative arrangements and other processes to allow and encourage full and effective communication on all aspects of learner health, safety and welfare with the client and/or learner.
- Conduct monitoring and measuring, including risk-assessments of the health and safety standards to confirm legal standards are met and wherever possible seek to improve on those standards.
- Ensure appropriate records and other health and safety-related documents are maintained and regularly reviewed to verify their content and confirm their current relevance.
- Encourage all learners to participate in the promotion of health and safety and assist in the development of a positive, pro-active attitude and relationship
- Recognise that additional steps may need to be taken in relation to younger Learners to ensure that they are fully aware of the appropriate health and safety risks, controls and good practices. Greater emphasis is placed on these both at induction training and throughout the learner journey.
- Ensure that health and safety, together with the well-being of staff, learners (irrespective of age group), contractors and visitors is of paramount importance, and positively aim to ensure the highest standards are being maintained. With these obligations and aims in mind, resources will be allocated accordingly.

(\*Most of the EdgeWorks™ delivery is computer-based learning, delivered remotely.)

## **Appendix - Safeguarding statement**

Within EdgeWorks™, we treat all our learners with the respect they deserve. We have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our learners. We have developed a safeguarding policy that aims to meet these duties.

A safer learning environment is about more than safer recruitment of staff and protecting vulnerable adults from harm. These are both vitally important and should be seen as strategies and processes that are part of a culture of well-being, safety and security, which applies to all learners and all staff (NIACE)

The policy covers abuse and neglect, prevention of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

All staff have received training on safeguarding issues and are supported by the centre manager to comply with this policy.

If you, as a learner here, have any concern about your wellbeing, safety or rights, then you should talk to your assessor / manager.

## Appendix 6 - Equal opportunities policy

The following policy is to be used alongside EdgeWorks™ Equality of Opportunity Policy and is applicable to all learners:

- The procedures involved in gaining admission to the qualification through EdgeWorks™ will be clearly expressed and structured to allow ease of access for learners. Prospective and enrolled learners will be offered support and guidance at all stages.
- At enrolment, learners will be asked to complete a form asking for information about their ethnic origin and any additional support needs. This information is required by our funding partners and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and is used purely for purposes of providing support, for monitoring and review purposes and as a reference when considering necessary adaptations or updates to the assessment process.
- EdgeWorks™ will provide professional advice throughout the recruitment and guidance procedures, which will in no way discriminate against any group of individuals.
- Any learner with additional support needs will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of providing solutions to issues of access and any other issues which may present a barrier to learning.
- All registered learners will be given the opportunity to access the support they need in order to complete their qualification Award.
- EdgeWorks™ will ensure all learners are allocated an assessor who will assess their work in accordance with the requirements of The Awarding Organisation.
- EdgeWorks™ will allocate an IQA to each learner whose role is to maintain the consistency and quality of assessment processes and to ensure compliance with Awarding Organisation requirements.
- The usual policy is for EdgeWorks™ to request full accreditation for the learner's competence upon completion of all Units. However, unit accreditation may be agreed subject to individual circumstances.

## Appendix 7 - Plagiarism and assessment malpractice policy for staff and learners

### **Purpose/scope**

That we have policies and procedures in place to deal with malpractice.

- To ensure that issues are dealt with in an open, fair and effective manner.
- That centres provide appropriate deterrents and sanctions to minimise the risk of malpractice.

### **Definitions/terminology**

Learner Malpractice: Any action by the learner which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of the learner's work (plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc.).

**Assessor Malpractice:** Any deliberate action by an assessor which has the potential to undermine the integrity of qualifications. Misuse of artificial intelligence, including failure to appropriately review AI-generated outputs or unauthorised use of learner data, may constitute maladministration or malpractice and will be managed in line with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

**Plagiarism:** Taking and using another's thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. as one's own.

**AI-Assisted Plagiarism:** The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated text in assignments and assessments that are submitted towards achievement of qualifications. AI is a powerful tool that can have benefits, for example, to help overcome linguistic barriers, but when used to generate the bulk of an assignment or assessment, it is a form of plagiarism and is subject to the same sanctions as standard plagiarism.

**Minor Acts of Learner Malpractice:** Handled by the assessor by, for example, refusal to accept for marking and learner being made aware of malpractice policy. Learner resubmits work in question.

**Major Acts of Learner Malpractice:** Extensive copying/plagiarism, 2nd or subsequent offence, inappropriate for assessor to deal with.

## Responsibilities

- Centre: Should seek proactive ways to promote a positive culture that encourages learners to take individual responsibility for their learning and respect the work of others.
- Assessor: Responsible for designing assessment opportunities that limit the opportunity for malpractice and for checking the validity of the learner's work.
- IQA: Responsible for malpractice checks when internally verifying work.
- Head of Centre or their nominees: Required to inform the awarding organisation of any acts of malpractice. Responsible for any investigation into allegations of malpractice.

## Procedures

The Centre will address potential learner malpractice in the following ways:

- Promote positive and honest study practices.
- Ask learners to declare that work is their own: check the validity of their work.
- Use learner induction and handbook to inform about malpractice and outcomes.
- Ensure learners use appropriate citations and referencing for research sources.
- Assessment procedures should help reduce and identify malpractice.

## Definition of malpractice by learners

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this centre at its discretion:

- Plagiarism of any nature (including AI assisted).
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work.
- Copying.
- Deliberate destruction of another's work.
- Fabrication of results or evidence.
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework.
- Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.

# Appendix 8 - Learner Voice

Learner Voice is the involvement of learners and potential learners in shaping the learning opportunities that are available to them. The policy emphasis is on putting learners 'at the heart of the system' and listening and responding to the needs of learners.

- Review.
- Initial Advice and Guidance.
- Completion questionnaires / feedback.
- IQA interviews with learners.
- Monitoring of feedback.

# Appendix 9 - Learner Confidentiality Policy

## **Purpose / scope**

To ensure that learners' rights to confidentiality of personal information are protected. Personal information may be held in a variety of formats about learners at many stages of the learner journey, including:

- At enrolment, for purposes of funding and fee remission.
- When disclosing information about an impairment, health issue or learning need.
- When disclosing financial or residency information, e.g. at enrolment or for Discretionary Learner Support applications.
- During Information, Advice or Guidance sessions or discussions.
- When being referred for additional or specialist information or support.
- In "classroom" settings, e.g. if disclosing information about beliefs or domestic circumstances during discussions.
- During assessment and review.
- During completion of Individual Learning Plans.
- When giving feedback.

Learners have rights under the Data Protection Act 2018. This protects personal information from being used inappropriately. Under the Acts, this information must be destroyed when it ceases to be relevant. (The SFA requires providers to retain information for six years plus the current academic year). Everyone also has a right to see information held about them if they ask.

Confidential information may be disclosed in classroom situations, e.g. where learners are discussing personal issues in personal development, community education or family learning programmes. The Confidentiality Policy also applies in these situations.

## **Policy**

EdgeWorks™ policy requires that:

- All staff and volunteers maintain a high standard of confidentiality.
- All staff and volunteers are made fully aware of EdgeWorks™ policies on Data Protection and confidentiality.

- All staff and volunteers abide by the principles of these policies, and report any breach in confidentiality or weaknesses in the systems guaranteeing confidentiality.
- Where there may be legal requirements for disclosure (e.g. in cases of a suspected criminal offence, where there is a likelihood of harm to an individual, or where there may be child protection issues) individuals will be told about this at the earliest possible stage.
- Individuals are made aware of:
  - Their entitlements to confidentiality.
  - Their right to see any personal information held about them.
  - Their right to refuse to give personal information and any likely impact on them, e.g. Discretionary Learner Support refusal.
  - How information collected about them is used and stored.
- Where the SFA requires EdgeWorks™ to record, store or pass on information to other agencies, e.g. for data analysis or for follow up surveys, individuals will be informed about this at enrolment and induction, along with any rights to opt out.

Where learners request access to their personal information, the request should be dealt with sensitively, in a timely manner and with a clear explanation about the process and its outcome (e.g. likely timescales and next steps). Learners receive information about both confidentiality and about the Learner Code of Conduct in the learner induction leaflet “Services for Learners”.

EdgeWorks™ recognises the needs of learners covered by the Mental Capacity Act 2005, i.e. those who cannot make or express their own decisions. Learners should always be assumed to have mental capacity unless there is good evidence to the contrary, and any decisions made on their behalf (e.g. with partner organisations) must be shown to be in the best interests of the learner.

## Implementation

All staff and volunteers are responsible for implementing the Confidentiality Policy according to their roles. Breaches of confidentiality or weaknesses in systems should be reported to line managers and action taken through the Management Team or fed back to an appropriate director.

## Monitoring

- Through feedback, i.e. client meetings, helpdesk support and learner voice.
- Through annual policy review.

# Appendix 10 - Corporate Social Responsibility Policy Statement

This Statement is about how EdgeWorks™ takes account of its economic, social and environmental impact in the way it operates as a business. By demonstrating our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility we aim to align our business values, purpose and strategy with the needs of our clients, whilst embedding such responsible and ethical principles into everything we do.

The elements of this Statement cover our approach in dealing with our clients, suppliers and the local community principles in an effort to support reducing our energy, procurement, transport, water use and other business usage to reduce our carbon footprint and environmental impact.

## Environment

Protection of the environment in which we live and operate is part of EdgeWorks™ values and principles and we consider it to be sound business practice. Care for the environment is one of our key responsibilities and an important part of the way in which we do business.

In this policy statement we commit our company to:

- Complying with all relevant environmental legislation, regulations and approved codes of practice.
- Protecting the environment by striving to prevent and minimise our contribution to pollution of land, air, and water.
- Seeking to keep wastage to a minimum and maximise the efficient use of materials and resources.
- Managing and disposing of all waste in a responsible manner.
- Providing training for our staff so that we all work in accordance with this policy statement and within an environmentally aware culture.
- Regularly communicating our environmental performance to our employees and other significant stakeholders.
- Developing our management processes to ensure that environmental factors are considered during planning and implementation.
- Monitoring and continuously improving our environmental performance.

The nature of our work as a consultancy means that we do not inherently have a high environmental impact but we will take into consideration of environmental issues in the professional services we provide and endeavour to reduce our environmental impact to an absolute minimum.

The Directors will ensure that the Company reduces the environmental impact on the Company by:

- Reducing all our transportation requirements wherever possible, utilising such facilities as web-ex and conference call facilities and public transport.
- By using vehicles that are regularly serviced and checked with regards to their emission levels and economically use their fuel.
- Sourcing and buying locally to save fuel costs wherever possible.
- Ensuring that all lights and equipment is switching off when not required.
- Ensuring that water is used efficiently.
- Using scrap paper for drafts and notes.
- Printing in mono and double sided wherever possible.
- Recycling all waste (shredding all business documentation).
- Sourcing recycled materials wherever possible.
- Working with like-minded suppliers who take steps to minimise their environmental impact.

The Directors will also ensure that our work with the local community involves:

- Working and supporting local and national charities.
- Encouraging volunteer work in community activities.
- Supporting local schools.
- Undertaking voluntary business advisory services via professional bodies.

## Clients

The Directors will also ensure that we deal responsibly, openly and fairly with clients and potential clients by:

- Ensuring that all our advertising and documentation about the business and its activities are clear, informative, legal, decent, honest and truthful.
- Being open and honest about our products and services and telling customers what they want to know, including what we do to be socially responsible.
- We will avoid pressure selling techniques.
- Ensuring that if something goes wrong we will acknowledge the problem and deal with it.
- We will listen to our clients so that this can help us improve the products and services we offer to them.
- Ensuring that we benchmark and evaluate what we do in order to constantly improve our competitive edge in the marketplace.

The Directors will also ensure that we deal responsibly, openly and fairly with suppliers by:

- Ensuring that we use local suppliers as much as possible.
- That we will endeavour to pay on time.
- Not expecting any discounts to have a detrimental effect on their business.

The operational and ultimate responsibility for the commitment to our corporate social responsibility principles lies with the Directors of EdgeWorks. Every employee of EdgeWorks™ is expected to give their full co-operation to the above principles in their activities at work. Consultants or visitors are also expected to apply our environmental principles.

The effectiveness of the Policy Statement will be monitored and reviewed at least annually by the Directors to ensure the Company's continuing compliance with any relevant legislation and to meet new business requirements and to identify areas in need of improvement. We will also ensure that all areas changes will be brought to the attention of employees as necessary.

## Appendix 11 - Withdrawal policy

System progress monitoring identifies and highlights learners as having periods of non-activity (absence).

If periods of absence are causing concern, either through not logging in and completing learning sessions or unit task activities, the learners employer will be made aware of this problem.

Investigation will be undertaken, involving the Centre Administrator, Assessors, IQAs, and the employer to determine the reasons the learner is not progressing.

The investigation will determine whether the learner has withdrawn from learning, or whether the learner can be considered to be on an agreed break. Examples of reasons for an agreed break could be:

- Sickness or injury.
- Maternity/Paternity leave
- Work secondment.
- Operation deployment (MOD).
- Religious reasons.

Other reasons can be considered.

If the learner is identified as being on an agreed break, funding ceases until the learner returns – a Data change Form will be completed.

If the learner has withdrawn from training a Data change Form will be completed with leave details.

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