

QA Framework and Standards Policy

Including Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA)

Hybrid Technical Services Ltd

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the quality assurance framework for Hybrid Technical Services Ltd (HybridTec). It defines the systems, processes, and standards that underpin the quality of teaching, learning, assessment, and learner outcomes across all provision.

The policy integrates all quality assurance activities into a single framework, including Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA), curriculum evaluation, learner voice, internal quality assurance, and continuous improvement planning.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all HybridTec provision, including apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps, commercial training, and Advanced Learner Loan funded programmes, across all six delivery venues (Liverpool/Aintree, Burnley, Durham, Walsall, Rochdale, and Southwark).

It applies to all staff involved in the delivery, assessment, quality assurance, and management of learning, including directly employed staff, contractors, agency workers, and subcontracted delivery partners.

3. Quality Aims

The aim of our quality system is to ensure that:

- We comply with all legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements, including Ofsted, ESFA, DfE, and awarding organisation standards.
- We routinely assess the needs of all stakeholders, including learners, employers, staff, funders, and awarding organisations.
- We meet our contractual requirements with funding bodies, prime contractors, and combined authorities.
- We meet our regulatory requirements with City & Guilds, BPEC, NICEIC, and other awarding organisations.
- We deliver a high-quality service that maintains excellent relationships with learners and employers.
- All work is completed consistently to a defined standard, measured by our quality objectives.
- We have appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver our provision.
- All activities support the strategic plans of the business.
- We continuously improve our systems, procedures, and learner outcomes.
- We only use subcontractors and delivery partners that meet our quality standards.
- Complaints and feedback are dealt with efficiently, transparently, and within published timeframes.

4. Regulatory Framework

This policy is aligned to and supports compliance with:

- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)
- Ofsted Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook
- ESFA Funding Rules and Performance Management Rules
- DfE Skills Bootcamp Grant Funding Agreements
- City & Guilds Centre Manual and Quality Assurance Requirements
- BPEC and NICEIC Quality Assurance Frameworks
- Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition

5. Responsibilities

Role	Quality Responsibilities
Group CEO	Overall accountability for quality and standards. Ensures adequate resourcing. Presents quality reports to the Board. Champions a culture of continuous improvement.
Head of Quality	Leads the quality assurance function. Owns the QIP and SAR. Manages the OTLA programme. Oversees IQA strategy. Conducts curriculum deep dives. Chairs standardisation meetings. Manages EQA relationships. Reports to CEO on quality performance.
Operations Manager	Ensures operational delivery meets quality standards. Supports the Head of Quality in implementing improvement actions. Manages performance issues arising from quality processes.
Lead IQAs	Create and implement IQA sampling plans. Conduct sampling and provide feedback to assessors. Lead standardisation activities for their qualification areas. Manage EQA visit preparation. Verify learner registration prior to assessment.
Trainers / Assessors	Deliver high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment. Prepare session plans and schemes of work. Participate in OTLAs, standardisation, and CPD. Implement feedback from observations and IQA sampling. Ensure learners are registered before assessment takes place.
Skills Coaches	Conduct regular progress reviews. Support learner achievement and progression. Contribute to learner voice activities. Identify and escalate at-risk learners.

6. Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA)

HybridTec operates a structured programme of Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) to obtain accurate, objective judgements on the quality of training and assessment delivered to learners.

6.1 Observation Schedule

- Every member of staff with responsibility for delivering or supporting learning must be observed at least once every 16 weeks (approximately 4 months).
- Probationary employees will receive a developmental observation within the first 4–6 weeks of employment.
- The yearly OTLA schedule is prepared by the Head of Quality and recorded in the Annual QA Activity Calendar (QA-CAL-01). The schedule is not shared with staff in advance of the formal notification window.
- Where concerns are identified, staff will be observed more frequently than the standard cycle until they reach the expected standard.
- Failure to reach the required standard following professional development, coaching, and additional support may lead to performance management action, up to and including termination of contract.

6.2 Notification and Preparation

- Staff will be notified of an observation by email. Notification may be as little as 24 hours in advance.
- The notification will include the observation window and guidance on appropriate preparation documentation (session plan, scheme of work, learner progress records).
- Pre-observation meetings will be held where required.

6.3 The Observation

- Observations will last a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of one hour.
- Observers will use the standard OTLA documentation and record strengths and areas for development against Ofsted EIF grading criteria.
- The expected standard is that all trainers, assessors, and skills coaches consistently achieve at least 'Good' with outstanding qualities.
- Observers will respect the employee's professionalism and handle all feedback confidentially between the individual and their manager.
- Observations also take place across all aspects of the learner journey, including initial assessment, induction, progress reviews, and learner support sessions.

6.4 Feedback and Follow-Up

- Verbal feedback will be provided immediately after the observation where possible.
- Written feedback will be provided within 10 working days.
- The observer and employee will agree on the focus of identified CPD.
- Any concerns identified during observations will be discussed with the member of staff immediately, with arrangements for further detailed feedback and actions within 48 hours.
- Recommended training arising from observations will be arranged by the Head of Quality in agreement with the Group CEO regarding budgetary implications.
- OTLA outcomes directly inform CPD requirements in relation to pedagogy and assessment practice.

6.5 Appeals

Grounds for appeal may be: (i) the conduct of the observation, or (ii) a dispute over identified areas for development. In either case, the employee should appeal in writing to the Operations Manager. If the appeal is upheld, a re-observation will be arranged. See the Complaints Policy for further details.

6.6 Quality Assurance of the Observation Process

- Joint observations will take place to moderate and standardise between observers.
- IQAs will conduct observations of assessment practices and invigilation procedures in line with awarding organisation requirements.
- A summary report of OTLA outcomes and areas for development will be produced termly and will inform the CPD Plan, the QIP, and the SAR.
- Peer observations are encouraged as part of ongoing professional development.

6.7 Learning Walks

Learning walks will be conducted at various times throughout the year to gauge the quality of delivery. These may be themed to evaluate specific aspects of delivery (for example, attendance, health and safety, embedding of Prevent and British Values, or impact following CPD). Learning walks may also identify the need for additional formal observations.

Findings from learning walks are recorded on the walkthrough form and used to develop practice and inform continuous quality improvement.

7. Curriculum Evaluation and Deep Dives

HybridTec takes a systematic approach to evaluating curriculum design, implementation, and impact. This ensures that the curriculum remains responsive to employer and industry needs, delivers strong learner outcomes, and supports progression into employment or further learning.

7.1 Curriculum Plan Evaluation

Curriculum plans are evaluated using the following methods and metrics:

Method	What Is Evaluated	Metrics / Evidence
Scheme of work and session plan audits	Sequencing, coverage of syllabus, progression, differentiation, embedding of employability skills	Audit completion rate, compliance percentage, identified gaps
Achievement rate analysis	Learner pass rates, timely achievement, retention, progression to employment or further learning	QAR data, internal tracking, benchmarking against national rates
Employer feedback	Relevance of curriculum to workplace requirements, quality of learner skills on completion	Employer survey results, focus group feedback, employer retention rates
Learner feedback	Learner satisfaction with curriculum content, teaching quality, resources, and support	Termly learner survey results, focus group themes, complaints analysis
External quality assurance	Awarding organisation feedback on assessment and delivery standards	EQA reports, action plans, risk ratings
Labour market intelligence	Alignment of curriculum offer to regional skills needs and employer demand	LMI data, employer engagement records, sector forecasts

7.2 Curriculum Deep Dives

HybridTec conducts curriculum deep dives on a termly basis, following the Ofsted methodology. Deep dives provide a thorough examination of curriculum implementation and impact in selected subject areas.

The deep dive process follows these stages:

1. **Selection:** Subject areas are selected on a rotating basis, ensuring all curriculum areas are covered within a three-year cycle. Priority is given to areas with lower achievement rates, recent EQA concerns, or significant changes to delivery.
2. **Intent:** Meeting with curriculum leads to understand the rationale behind the curriculum design, sequencing, and expected outcomes.
3. **Implementation:** Observation of teaching sessions, review of session plans and schemes of work, and scrutiny of learner work to assess how well the intended curriculum is being delivered.
4. **Impact:** Analysis of achievement data, learner progression, employer feedback, and learner voice to assess the impact of the curriculum on learner outcomes.

5. **Learner and staff discussions:** Conversations with learners about what they have learned, how they have been assessed, and how they have been supported. Conversations with staff about curriculum decisions and assessment practices.
6. **Findings and actions:** Deep dive findings are recorded on the Curriculum Deep Dive Record form, with strengths and areas for improvement feeding directly into the QIP.

Deep dives are led by the Head of Quality and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Findings are reported to the SLT and inform the SAR.

7.3 Work Scrutiny

IQAs and managers collect a selection of learner work for examination. The selection represents a range of abilities and all subjects delivered. Findings are recorded on the work scrutiny documentation and highlight good practice and inform training needs.

Good practice identified through work scrutiny is celebrated and shared. Staff achieving outstanding grades are encouraged to support and mentor colleagues.

8. Learner Voice and Stakeholder Feedback

HybridTec is committed to capturing diverse perspectives and actively seeking and integrating feedback from learners, employers, staff, and other stakeholders. The viewpoint of key stakeholders feeds directly into the quality assurance process and informs continuous improvement.

8.1 Learner Voice Strategy

Learner feedback is gathered through multiple channels to ensure a representative and comprehensive understanding of the learner experience:

Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Responsibility
Termly Learner Survey	Quantitative data on learner satisfaction, teaching quality, resources, and support	Termly (3 per year)	Head of Quality
Learner Focus Groups	Qualitative insights from a representative cross-section of learners, including different levels, venues, and demographic groups	Termly (3 per year)	Head of Quality / Skills Coaches
Progress Review Feedback	Individual learner feedback captured during regular progress reviews	Every review cycle	Skills Coaches
Complaints and Compliments	Analysis of formal and informal feedback to identify trends and areas for improvement	Quarterly analysis	Head of Quality
Exit Surveys / Destination Data	Learner feedback on completion, employment outcomes, and further learning progression	On completion	Data Team / Skills Coaches

8.2 Focus Group Methodology

Learner focus groups are conducted termly and are designed to gather diverse perspectives on the quality of provision. The methodology includes:

- Selecting a representative sample of learners across venues, qualification levels, funding streams, and demographic groups.
- Using structured discussion guides covering teaching quality, assessment feedback, support and guidance, resources, and personal development.
- Ensuring learners can contribute anonymously where they prefer.
- Recording key themes and actions arising from each session.
- Feeding findings into the QIP and reporting outcomes to the SLT and Board.

8.3 Employer Feedback

- Termly employer satisfaction surveys are issued to all employers with active apprentices or Skills Bootcamp learners.
- Bi-annual employer focus groups or feedback sessions are held to discuss curriculum relevance, learner quality, and areas for improvement.

- Employer feedback is analysed alongside learner voice data to identify common themes and triangulate findings.

8.4 Staff Feedback

Termly staff engagement pulse checks capture staff perspectives on workload, CPD, resources, and organisational culture. Staff feedback is used to inform leadership decisions and is reported to the Board alongside learner and employer data.

8.5 Integration into Quality Assurance

All stakeholder feedback is:

- Analysed by the Head of Quality and reported to SLT monthly.
- Used to inform the QIP, with specific actions linked to feedback themes.
- Referenced in the annual SAR as evidence of quality and impact.
- Reported to the Board as part of the termly quality report.
- Shared with staff to demonstrate that feedback leads to action ('you said, we did').

9. Internal Quality Assurance and Verification

The IQA system ensures all assessment is fair, consistent, and meets HybridTec and awarding organisation requirements. Full details of the IQA process, including sampling strategy, risk rating, and standardisation requirements, are set out in the Internal Quality Assurance and Verification Policy (QA-IQA-01).

CRITICAL: No assessment may take place until the learner is registered with the relevant awarding organisation. All IQA sampling must verify that registration dates are prior to assessment dates. Any breach must be escalated to the Head of Quality immediately.

Key IQA activities include:

- Risk-based sampling of assessment decisions (100% for new/trainee assessors, 50% for first-year assessors, 25% for experienced assessors).
- Standardisation meetings at least termly for each qualification area.
- Observation of assessment practices and invigilation procedures.
- Written feedback to assessors within 5 working days of sampling.
- Management of EQA visits, including preparation, action plan follow-up, and SLT reporting.
- Secure record keeping of all IQA activities in line with awarding organisation and UK GDPR requirements.

10. Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Planning

10.1 Course Reviews

On a termly basis, the full delivery team for each contract completes a course review based on OTLA evidence, IQA outcomes, learner voice data, achievement data, and EQA feedback. The review identifies strengths and areas for development, supported by explicit evidence. A curriculum-level QIP is created to address areas for development, with actions updated at each curriculum course progress meeting.

10.2 Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

Information from each curriculum course review is gathered by senior leaders to write the annual SAR. The SAR is aligned to the Ofsted EIF and covers Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, and Leadership and Management. The SAR is validated by the SLT and signed off by the Board annually (December).

10.3 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The QIP is the organisation's continuous improvement plan, developed from the SAR and updated with actions arising from OTLAs, deep dives, learner voice, employer feedback, EQA reports, and other quality assurance activities. Progress and impact are monitored monthly by the Head of Quality and reported to the SLT and Board.

11. Annual Quality Calendar

All quality assurance activities are scheduled in the Annual Calendar of Quality Assurance Activities (QA-CAL-01). The calendar covers the full academic year (April to March) and includes IQA sampling, OTLAs, learning walks, curriculum deep dives, learner and employer surveys, focus groups, standardisation meetings, SAR and QIP cycles, EQA preparation, safeguarding audits, governance reporting, and CPD activities. The calendar is owned by the Head of Quality and reviewed annually.

12. Staff Continuing Professional Development

HybridTec believes that staff development is integral to organisational strategic planning. The central aim is to provide an environment where continuous development takes place and staff are supported to meet the changing demands of the business and learners.

12.1 Minimum Qualifications

- All teaching staff and trainers must hold or be working towards a minimum of Level 3 Award in Education and Training.
- All skills coaches must hold or be working towards a minimum of Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement.
- Skills coaches holding the L3 Certificate will be supported to achieve the Level 4 Award in Understanding the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Procedures and Practices.
- All staff must hold relevant industry-specialist qualifications in line with their role.

12.2 Compulsory Training

All staff across all services attend compulsory annual training, which includes Safeguarding, Prevent, Equality and Diversity, British Values, Health and Safety, and e-safety. Annual training days are also used to upskill staff, share good practice, and review the SAR and QIP.

12.3 CPD Needs Analysis

CPD needs are identified through:

- OTLA outcomes and observation action reports
- Curriculum deep dive findings
- IQA sampling feedback
- Supervision, appraisals, and team meetings
- EQA reports and awarding organisation updates
- Staff self-assessment and learning requests

12.4 Weekly Team CPD Sessions

All staff teams meet for 30 minutes each week for structured CPD sessions. These sessions cover SOPs, documentation, procedures, and identified development priorities. Topics are planned by line managers in consultation with the Head of Quality.

12.5 Industry Updating

Technical trainers are supported to maintain industry currency through relevant CPD, site visits, manufacturer training, and industry updating. The annual CPD budget is agreed at the beginning of each financial year.

13. Malpractice

If malpractice is identified at any stage, the person identifying it must report their findings to the Head of Quality or Operations Manager, who will investigate and record their findings in line with the Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy (COMP-04). Where required, the relevant awarding organisation will be notified. Full investigation procedures, timescales, and sanctions are set out in that policy.

14. End-Point Assessment (EPA)

The employer is responsible for identifying the End-Point Assessment Organisation at the start of each apprenticeship. The employer, in collaboration with the provider and apprentice, identifies when the apprentice has met the Assessment Plan and demonstrates competence across all aspects of the apprenticeship (Gateway).

Details of the confirmed EPA booking will be shared with the apprentice and employer, and preparation will be planned using the EPA Gateway Readiness Checklist.

15. Related Policies and Documents

Reference	Document	Relationship
QA-IQA-01	Internal Quality Assurance and Verification Policy	Detailed IQA processes and sampling strategy
QA-CAL-01	Annual Calendar of Quality Assurance Activities	Schedule of all QA activities across the year
SG-AF-01	Safeguarding Accountability Framework	Safeguarding accountability and inter-agency working
COMP-04	Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy	Investigation procedures for malpractice
	Complaints Policy	Formal complaints and appeals procedures
	Equality and Diversity Policy	Embedding equality throughout QA processes
	Recruitment and Selection Policy	Safer recruitment and staff qualifications
	Access to Fair Assessment Policy	Reasonable adjustments and assessment access
	Staff Handbook (including Disciplinary Policy and Code of Conduct)	Staff conduct expectations and disciplinary procedures

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Quality and approved by the Group CEO. It will be updated to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, organisational structure, or delivery arrangements.

Effectiveness of the quality framework is monitored through:

- Monthly SLT quality review meetings
- Termly quality reports to the Board
- QIP progress monitoring
- Annual SAR validation and sign-off
- EQA outcomes and action plan completion
- Stakeholder feedback trends (learner, employer, and staff)
- Achievement rate analysis and benchmarking