

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

DGDT - QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2017 TO 2018

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Period covered: 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE DGDT SCHEME

The purpose of this DGDT report is to provide feedback to the Department for Transport (DfT), Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and Training Providers with regard to quality assurance (verification, invigilation and administration) activity, which has taken place during the past year within the Dangerous Goods Driver Training (DGDT) Scheme.

This has been a very proactive year, comprising of:-

1. Updating of the Manual of Practice (MoP).
2. Introduction of the revised multi-choice examination question papers.
3. Review and approval of training providers' course material.
4. Retirement and appointment of new external verifiers.

1. Updating of Manual of Practice:

One amendment of note within the Manual of Practice is within section 9.4 – Adding a new course programme. The amendment requires a Variation Template document to be submitted when adding a course programme that is not one of the pre-approved course programmes. This template now introduces a standardised approach to all variation programme submissions.

In addition, section 9.9 – Instructor qualifications – Class 7, has also been amended. Each potential instructor must provide written evidence of their qualifications and experience, specific to radioactive material. Following this submission the approval process now includes a visit from an external verifier, where the potential instructor will deliver two Class 7 teaching units to the verifier. This change within the Manual of Practice and the approval process has been developed in conjunction with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR).

A full list of all changes made to the Manual of Practice are listed on the “ADR MoP Amendments Overview 2018” document which accompanied the release of the Manual of Practice.

2. Multi-choice examination question papers:

After release of the new multi-choice examination question papers in September 2016, all Training Providers were asked to provide feedback to SQA. All questions were monitored and analysed to measure their performance. There was no evidence of any reduction in the overall pass rate and the performance of individual questions was very encouraging.

As a result of the feedback a review team further analysed the questions that had been identified and, where relevant, rewrote or withdrew them. SQA have since replaced only those question papers where amendments or withdrawals had been made. These new question papers are now available to training providers for use from April 2018 onwards.

3. Review and Approval of Training Providers' Course Material:

An ongoing review of training providers' course material has taken place during this period. This included instructors' Teaching Notes and PowerPoint presentations. The purpose of the review was to ensure compliance with the recent changes made to the DGDT scheme syllabus. The majority of training material has now been reviewed and re-approved.

As a control measure, SQA introduced a "version control" document, using a spreadsheet, to show all training providers' material which had been updated and re-approved in line with the MoP (September 2016 version). External verifiers use this document to identify any Training Providers whose training material is not approved, up to-date or current.

4. Retirement and Appointment of new External Verifiers:

Two long standing external verifiers with a great many years of service to SQA will be retiring at the end of this period. Namely: Mr Michael Edmond and Mr Trevor Hardy. The SQA team would like to express their thanks for their hard work and service over the years, and wish them a happy retirement. New external verifiers have recently been appointed and will commence their duties in the new contract term.

2. VERIFICATION ACTIVITY

During this period, continued unannounced monitoring visits have been made to training providers by the team of external verifiers.

The team have reported an overall improvement in the standards, including training premises and training provision during their visits.

This was reflected in the reduced number of Grade 3s issued during this contract term. The following gives an indication of some of the general common contraventions:

- Current insurance certificate not uploaded onto the SQA database.
- First Aid at Work Certificates and current documentation not uploaded.
- Reference material not available during training.
- Incorrect course programme uploaded and timings not adhered to.

2.1 TRAINING COURSES & FACILITIES

Monitoring of training courses by external verifiers has revealed that, in some cases, ADR2 Candidate Registration Forms are not always accurately completed, and are

often signed by the instructor prior to the actual completion of the practical exercises. In most cases, this was addressed immediately during the visit by the instructor.

There is a noticeable improvement in the standard of training facilities now being used by training providers throughout the country. Also, with the introduction of PowerPoint presentations during these latter years, the standard of delivery by instructors now makes the information presented to candidates more interesting, clearer and interactive, resulting in greater retention of information by the candidates.

3. INVIGILATION ACTIVITY

External verifiers have continued to make unannounced invigilation visits to training providers throughout this period. The following are some of the common contraventions identified when Grade 3 reports are issued:

- INV1 forms and examination inventories missing from course files.
- Examinations not conducted as notified.
- Examination amendments not notified to SQA.
- Candidates' information not entered on the SQA database at the end of the first day.
- Failed visits.

3.1 ONLINE EXAMINATIONS

SQA have been monitoring the database and online examination service in order to determine how to improve performance. SQA and their software provider will be undertaking development of a new technology platform and database system to deliver DGDT and PDP and the online examinations.

Online examinations are becoming increasingly more popular than the paper based examination. It is believed that this may be due to the examination results becoming available upon completion of the training course, as well as ADR Driver Training Certificates normally being issued to candidates in a shorter period of time. However, where individual training providers are operating on a "mobile" basis, this is not always feasible.

4. ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITY

Routine administration visits are conducted by the external verification team on a biennial basis with the purpose of ensuring all essential records are up to date, accurate and are retained for the 5 year period as required by the MoP.

The introduction of a new pro-forma letter by the SQA is now being sent to training providers in advance of an administration visit. This notifies the training provider of expectations monitored throughout the administration visit by the external verifier.

The purpose of this notification is to assist training providers in their preparations for the visit. A good example being, current documents are uploaded onto the SQA database in readiness for the visit, which has mutual benefit to all concerned. One of the main functions of this visit is to check quality control procedures are implemented and documentary evidence is retained. This includes historic and ongoing instructor assessment's.

The security of examination question papers is monitored during the visit which includes accountability for spoilt papers, replacement, and traceability.

It was found that a minority of training providers who had received the new examination question papers issued in September 2016 had signed the "acknowledgement receipt form" and uploaded this onto the SQA database without having checked the number of examination papers contained in each package. This was rectified immediately during the visit.

Some of the common problems found during these visits which resulted in Grade 3s being issued are as follows:-

- Candidate registration forms not completed accurately.
- Candidate desktop exercises not retained on the course file.

During these visits external verifiers provide advice and guidance to training providers on the need to carry out a general tidy up of their database. This includes identifying appointees who are no longer active; identifying mobile sites that are no longer active and the withdrawal of training programmes that are no longer used.

4.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Since 1st April 2017, 16 new centres have been approved by the external verification team. There has also been 27 new instructor approvals. The current standard of training facilities, training material and presentation is of a very good standard.

The number of training providers now offering "online examinations" is 76.

There has been a reduction of Grade 3s issued overall to training providers within the verification, invigilation and administration visits.

4.2 DATABASE ADMINISTRATION AND TRAINING

Part of the external verifiers' role is to check the SQA database of the relevant training provider prior to any visit to ensure compliance and identify any shortfalls, thus making the visit more effective. The most common weakness is the failure to

upload documentary evidence, in particular current public liability insurance certificates.

SQA have produced a “Step by Step Guide” to using the database. It has proved most beneficial to new and existing training providers, administration staff and examination secretaries.

All training providers were offered familiarisation training with SQA on the database. This was taken up by a few training providers who found it extremely helpful and beneficial.

Continual ongoing improvement of the SQA database is taking place with a view to making it more efficient and to meet the current demands for both SQA and training providers alike.

5. SUMMARY

Continued positive feedback throughout this period with regard to the helpfulness and quick response by the SQA ADR team in dealing promptly with queries and also the improved processing of the candidates examination results.

In many areas of the country, there is a noticeable improved awareness amongst drivers of the requirement for ADR Driver training to comply with the “Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations”, the actions to be taken in an emergency and the risks involved.

In summary, it is evident that in the majority of cases the DGDT Scheme is being delivered effectively throughout the country. This is reflected in the increased number of quality assurance visits conducted by the external verifiers and consequently the reduced number of Grade 3s issued to training providers.

With ongoing new developments introduced by the SQA team and the continued commitment and professionalism shown by both the SQA ADR team and the team of external verifiers, can only result in maintained quality assurance of the DGDT scheme.

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