LIGHTHOUSE FUTURES TRUST
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY, FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

SECTION A: POLICY FRAMEWORK

1.   **Scope, Review and Communication of the Policy**

This policy is provided for Lighthouse Futures Trust (LFT) learners and staff members who are using or delivering Functional Skills courses and qualifications offered by LFT.

LFT will review this policy annually. It will also be revised as and when necessary, in response to customer and learner feedback, or good practice guidance issued by NCFE or other relevant awarding organisations or regulatory bodies.

Every staff member involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications offered by LFT, shall be made aware of this policy during their induction period of employment.

Learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications shall be informed of this policy during their induction process.

2.   **Statement and Principles**

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is concerned with monitoring the learner journey throughout their time undertaking a qualification with LFT.

It involves monitoring the training and assessment activities and the quality of work that learners produce, in terms of meeting the correct grading criteria. Internal quality assurance helps to ensure that assessment and IQA activities are valid, authentic, sufficient, fair and reliable.

Internal quality assurance measures the quality, delivery, processes, procedures and learner achievements.

Statement of Principles
Key concepts and principles of internal quality assurance of assessment include:-
- ensuring quality standards throughout the learner journey
- ensuring accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions made by assessors
- identifying issues and trends that develop
- supporting and developing assessors and tutors
- ensuring accountability for assessment decisions and quality standards, awarding body procedures and policies are maintained
- ensuring achievement made by learners and judged by assessors is recognised and meets the grading criteria
- ensuring the correct and appropriate assessment strategies are used by assessors
- ensuring confidently of the learner and provider are maintained at all times
- ensuring sampling both interim and summative is occurring

Internal quality assurance principles include; ensuring standardisation activities take place, assessment decisions embrace inclusion, equality is promoted with learners and the diversity of learners is valued by all staff. It ensures that fairness is apparent in all assessment decisions and that there are auditable records to show this.

Other principles include maintaining health and safety practices, such as risk assessments. Also ensuring all staff have access to training and CPD, that assessors and staff members are motivated and that clear communication between takes place regularly.

All documents relating to IQA activities will be held securely, in line with Data Protection and confidentiality requirements. Access will be granted to all relevant awarding organisations to any assessment documents and related materials.

SECTION B: PROCEDURES

1. <u>Assessment (Currency) and Validity</u>

- Each learner is required to provide proof of prior attainment in Maths and English upon enrolment.
- During induction, learners are assessed by completing online BKSB tests. This helps LFT develop a more up-to-date analysis of their skills level and competency.
- A combination of the two is then used to confirm what level of study they should be aiming towards in both Maths and English: Entry Level 1; Entry Level 2; Level 1; Level 2.
- English and Maths is also embedded into other aspects of the internship – both in Employability and Enterprise work, and via work placements. Where appropriate, evidence of this is also included in the learner portfolio, in addition to the more curriculum-focused activity.
- Strong channels of communication have been set up between the team running the Functional Skills curriculum, and on-site job coaches which allows them to share information and progress towards objectives. The Assessor, for instance, may identify a particular learner needs more support in understanding the practical application of Maths and they will communicate that with the learner's Job Coach, who will then devise a programme of study for them to incorporate into their work placement.

2. <u>Sufficiency</u>

Once a learner has been assessed, an individual plan is agreed to ensure they are able to sit the appropriate qualification level in the appropriate time-scale. For Supported Interns this is a 10-month period from September to mid-July. For pre-interns this can be within a 10-20 month period, or longer if required.

The learner's individual time-table is then specifically designed to ensure that all aspects of the relevant qualification are covered and that sufficient evidence is gathered. All supporting information is included in an individual learner's file. This portfolio of evidence is reviewed a minimum of once a term and is undertaken by the IQA and the Assessor together. Together they ensure the evidence is accurate, reliable and sufficient and demonstrates that the learner is ready to sit the relevant exam.

3.   Standardisation Plan

Standardisation activities will be undertaken regularly (at least every eight weeks) with IQAs, Assessors, Trainers and relevant line managers present. Standardisation activities will meet the requirements of NCFE (the awarding body LFT are approved with).

- All meetings will have a set agenda and minutes shall be produced and disseminated to all relevant staff members.
- An action log will be created and updated after each meeting identifying the action, person responsible and target date.
- Once the action has been completed, the item will be struck-through and moved to the bottom of the action log in order to track progress on an ongoing basis.

4.   Staff Observation and Feedback

Observations of staff members involved in delivering Functional Skills qualifications are determined by a yearly cycle, with all training and assessing staff members receiving a minimum of two observations per year by the IQA.

- All observations will be documented and moderated. Action plans and support will be in place for any staff members identified as 'requiring improvement'.
- Lighthouse currently has 4 assessors who each operate independently. On a minimum of 2 occasions a year, an assessor will observe the assessment of another assessor. This allows them to see how other assessors within the team operate so that they can develop their own practice, and that, as a team, they can work together to ensure greater consistency.
- All LFT staff will receive access to regular, continuous professional development (CPD) and shall be encouraged to undertake reflective practice

5.   Learner Observation and Feedback

Learner feedback is collected through surveys, focus groups and comments, complaints and compliments feedback. Learner feedback will be regularly obtained and analysed and improvements shall be highlighted and implemented across the organisation, where required.

As assessment is continuous, it tends to be part of ongoing conversations between tutors and learners. At the end of terms 1 and 2 there is a formal assessment in which learners are asked to share their experience of the relevant curriculum work to date. At the end of the 2nd term, learners are asked to complete and return a formal evaluation. This is repeated at the end of term 3, before the learner leaves the College.

The results of these regular reviews and observations are included in each learner file, so that their learning can continue uninterrupted if there is any staff sickness or absence.

If a leaner is not happy with the results of their course or qualification, there is an Appeals progress.   The IQA ensures that any feedback from this process is also shared with the wider team as part of the quality review. This can be used to improve the assessment system.

SECTION C: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

1   Roles and Responsibilities

The IQA has overall responsibility for delivering the wider Supported Internship programme, and is an integral part of the learner termly reviews. They also have detailed oversight of the assessment decisions both within year, and from year-to-year. This helps ensure consistency across learner cohorts.

LFT adopts a system of ongoing review of progress and feedback, combined with a more formal termly review. This covers general progress towards the internship targets, as well as specific progress towards achieving Maths and English qualifications.

LFT regularly refer back to the standards and will build an archive up, over time, so that an evidence and knowledge base can be created and developed.

2   Meetings and communications

The team involved with the qualifications meet monthly to: discuss individual progress; review the examination framework and confirm who is ready to sit an exam; report on any feedback from learners, the IQA or other relevant sources such as any External Quality Assurance feedback.

The IQA uses this – and other evidence – to review the effectiveness of the programme so that discussion can take place, and decisions be made, as to how to amend the programme to take account of relevant feedback.

The limited number of learners, assessor and programmes means that the IQA can more easily review the work of Assessors to ensure they are accepting evidence of a suitable quality and that, where necessary, they are challenging evidence that is below standard.

3   Sampling Approach

LFT's criteria for sampling of assessment judgements is:
- In the first 2 years of running a new qualification, sampling will take place on 100% of all learner evidence.
- From year 3 onwards, sampling will be on 40% of learner evidence, providing the assessor has at least 2 years' experience (with LFT or another learning organisation).   If the assessor is new to assessment, 100% of their work will be assessed in year 1.

LFT's wider approach to sampling is:
- Sampling may take place formatively including all completed qualifications.
- An assessor will receive a sampling report within three days of submitting a learner portfolio for sampling.
- Any disagreements with an IQAs findings will be reviewed by the CEO of LFT, who will have the final say on any judgements.
- Sampling plans will identify learners, assessors and the assessment criteria to be sampled. Sampling activities will meet the requirements of NCFE (the awarding body LFT are approved with).

4   Authentication

Ensuring that the work that is submitted has actually been completed by the individual is of significant importance. Accordingly, all curriculum work on English and Maths is done "in lesson" and is supervised by a member of staff.

- If evidence of progression towards the qualification comes from a Job Coach who is not part of the team delivering the qualification, it has to be approved by the IQA prior to being included in the learner portfolio.
- When learners were having to work remotely, during lockdown, we introduced an online classroom led by a tutor/job coach with a specific focus on Maths, English (as well as employability and enterprise). This allowed the supervising staff member see the progress that individual learners were making.
- If any other evidence is submitted (by the learner, a staff member or placement employee) that has not been done under supervision of a member of the Functional Skills team, it is always externally verified by at least 1 qualified person, to ensure it has been produced independently by the learner.
- In some instances, learners work together on a project, particularly in the enterprise elements of the programme.   If we are not able to independently verify that the work is the direct contribution of a named individual, it will not be included in the curriculum evidence.

Appendix 1: Management and Quality Assurance Plan

November-July
- Recruitment of learners takes place (into main Supported Internship programme)

September
- Induction of Learners.
- Initial assessment takes place, with proof of prior attainment in English and Maths.
- Decision about what level of qualification they are studying for, update on Arbor.
- Create individual student plan, agree any access arrangements.
- Plan timetable and schedule for English and Maths, including study periods, assessment timetable and exams.
- Agree staff CPD calendar and review training needs

October
- Curriculum starts with weekly timetable sessions for English and for Maths. This continues until student has successfully passed exam.
- IQA planning
- Team meeting

November
- Assessor standardisation meeting
- Team meeting

December
- Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) review before end of term
- IQA standardisation review of term 1
- IQA meeting/ feedback with Assessors
- Review assessment tracking and planning, team meeting.
- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting

January
- Diarise and prepare for EQA visit
- Review individual students and confirm who is ready to sit exam, complete entry requirements
- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting

February
- IQA standardisation
- Review Assessment and IQA planning
- Host EQA visit
- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting
- Review staff CPD training programme

March

- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting
- Review individual students and confirm who is ready to sit exam, complete entry requirements

April

- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting
- Assessor and IQA meeting
- IQA tracking review

May

- Internal Quality Assurance review
- IQA standardisation
- IQA planning and tracking
- Assessor planning and tracking,
- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting

June

- Team meeting
- Assessor standardisation meeting
- Review individual students and confirm who is ready to sit exam, complete entry requirements

July

- Planning for new year programme
- Review Staff CPD
- Process reviews

August

- Staff induction for any new staff
- Review scheme of work
- Review learner induction
- Team meeting