

Internal Policy: Quality Assurance & Standardisation

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency, fairness, and quality across the delivery and assessment of Level 2 and Level 3 dog grooming qualifications and related industry courses provided by Career Hounds. Standardisation is essential to maintain the integrity of qualifications and ensure that all learners are assessed to the same high standards, regardless of the tutor or assessor involved.

Scope

This policy applies to all courses offered by Career Hounds, including Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications and any additional industry-related training. The policy encompasses all aspects of course delivery, assessment, and internal quality assurance (IQA).

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Tutor:** Responsible for the delivery of training, creation of assessment materials, and marking learner assessments in line with agreed standards.
- **Internal Quality Assurer (IQA):** Responsible for ensuring consistency in assessments, providing feedback to the tutor, and overseeing the standardisation process. Supports the standardisation process by collaborating with the tutor to ensure alignment with quality assurance standards.
- **Moderator:** Holds subject-specific qualifications and a quality assurance qualification to oversee quality assurance in dog grooming, ensuring assessments meet industry standards and identifying areas for improvement.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance at Career Hounds focuses on maintaining consistent and fair assessment practices, structured as follows:

Assessment Process:

- All assessments align with the VetSkill standards for each qualification.
- The tutor administers practical and written assessments and provides constructive feedback to learners.

Assessment Decisions

1. Grade Determination

- The tutor is responsible for determining each learner's overall grade, which is classified as *Fail*, *Pass*, or *Distinction*, in accordance with VetSkill's grading criteria and assessment policies.
- The tutor's decision is based on an evaluation of the learner's knowledge, skills, and competencies demonstrated throughout the qualification process.

2. Fairness and Consistency

- To ensure consistency and fairness, all assessment decisions will be reviewed through regular standardisation meetings, where the tutor and IQA compare and discuss grading approaches and outcomes.
- The IQA is responsible for monitoring the tutor's assessment decisions to verify that they align with VetSkill standards and are applied consistently across all learners.

3. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Review

- The IQA will review a representative sample of learner assessments to confirm that grading decisions are fair, transparent, and supported by evidence in the learner's portfolio or assessment records.
- The IQA will provide ongoing feedback and support to the tutor via scheduled observations.
- Any discrepancies or deviations from VetSkill's grading standards identified by the IQA will be addressed promptly, with the tutor providing any required explanations or adjustments to maintain alignment.

Feedback and Documentation:

Assessment records, feedback notes, and learner progress are documented in line with Career Hounds' confidentiality policies and securely stored for quality review.

Learners receive prompt and transparent ongoing verbal feedback throughout their learning journey, formative feedback to ensure readiness for assessments and written feedback following each assessment.

Moderation

The moderation process ensures that assessments are aligned with industry standards and VetSkill's policies. The steps include:

Moderator Involvement:

- The moderator, who is qualified in dog grooming and quality assurance, reviews a representative sample of assessments where specific subject knowledge is required, focusing on Level 2 and Level 3 Dog Grooming qualifications.
- For any areas identified as requiring improvement, the moderator provides targeted feedback to the tutor and IQA.

Learner Feedback

- Learners will receive constructive feedback on their performance to support their understanding of their assessment results and areas for improvement. This

feedback will be recorded and shared with the IQA during standardisation discussions to verify alignment with the grading criteria.

Appeals Process

- Learners who wish to challenge their grade may do so through the appeals process, as outlined in Career Hounds' appeals policy. The IQA will review the appeal and assessment evidence, and the final decision will be communicated to the learner in writing.

Standardisation Objectives

1. **Consistency:** Ensure uniformity in assessment decisions across all learners, ensuring each qualification meets the national standards.
2. **Fairness:** Guarantee that assessments are marked objectively and consistently across different cohorts of learners.
3. **Quality Assurance:** Uphold high standards in training delivery and learner assessment to meet regulatory requirements and ensure learner satisfaction.

Standardisation Process

1. **Regular Meetings:**
Career Hounds will hold quarterly standardisation meetings between the tutor and IQA to review assessment criteria, learner outcomes, and any changes to qualification standards or requirements.
2. **Assessment Review:**
 - The IQA will sample a proportion of assessments from different cohorts and levels (both Level 2 and Level 3) to check for consistency.
 - Any discrepancies or concerns identified during the sampling process will be discussed and resolved in the standardisation meetings.
3. **Assessment Criteria Updates:**
The tutor and IQA will ensure that all assessment materials are up to date with the latest awarding body and industry standards. Any changes to criteria will be discussed in advance, and materials will be amended as necessary.
4. **Observations**
The IQA will carry out routine observations and schedule any additional observations that may be deemed beneficial.
5. **Feedback and Development:**
Constructive feedback will be provided by the IQA to the tutor, focusing on areas of improvement in assessment techniques and learner support. This will form part of the continuous professional development (CPD) process.
6. **Learner Feedback:**
Learner feedback will be reviewed during standardisation meetings to identify any areas of concern or opportunities for improvement in delivery and assessment methods.

7. Record Keeping:

Records of all standardisation activities, including meeting minutes, assessment decisions, and any action points, will be maintained and reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance.

Continuous Improvement

Career Hounds is committed to the ongoing development of its courses and qualifications. The standardisation process will evolve as required to accommodate changes in industry best practices, regulatory requirements, and learner needs. Career Hounds requires staff involved with the delivery of qualifications to carry out 30 hours of CPD per year.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as needed, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and in line with the requirements of awarding bodies and industry standards.

Approval and Implementation

This standardisation policy has been approved by the business partners and will be implemented with immediate effect.

Feedback Mechanisms

Learner feedback is gathered post-assessment to improve course delivery and assessment practices. The IQA collects feedback from all quality assurance parties to refine Career Hounds' policies regularly.