



QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR LEARNING AND ADULT EDUCATION MODEL

Code of Conduct



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1. Introduction

This Code is written for organisations working in adult education that are in an initial stage or still developing their Quality Assurance systems, either for their internal needs or to respond to existing standard quality assurance requirements. The Code is useful at all levels of the organisation, from managers who set direction, to course organisers who design learning, to educators who hold the room.

The main purpose of this Code is **to build a shared understanding of what quality in ALE means**, and to serve as a first step to building quality assurance systems for ALE organisations. The main approach of this Code is to foster a culture where quality assurance is a mindset and supported as an everyday process.

The Code is formulated to support non-formal adult learning organisations to improve their quality assurance processes, to structure and formalise them, make them regular and coherent, and prepare the organisation to comply with current and potentially new QA standards in their countries, etc., also to respond to the current and future challenges our sector is facing.

The Code supports an ‘organic approach’ to quality assurance, following OECD categorisation:

1. The regulatory approach typically sets out clear minimum quality requirements that providers need to meet to be recognised.
2. The advisory approach advises providers on what quality should look like, providing guidelines and examples of good practices for them to follow.
3. The organic approach leaves to providers the overall definition of their own professional standards and quality systems.



Reference: OECD, Getting Skills Right Improving the Quality of Non-Formal Adult Learning FROM EUROPEAN BEST PRACTICES ON QUALITY ASSURANCE, 2021, p. 7

1.2 What does the Code offer?

This Code offers **guidelines and a self-assessment tool** across three levels—Educator, Course Designer, and Organisation Manager—so you can adopt what fits your institution today and grow over time. **Use it as a reference before planning, a guide during delivery, and a checklist after each cohort.**

We use this Code to **build a common culture of work** across the non-formal adult learning organisations. It helps raise the **standard quality of adult learning provisions** by translating values into observable and identifiable practices.

The Code also **supports quality assurance in the learning activities**. At the organisational level, it guides policies and resourcing. At the course level, it supports planning, accessibility, and evaluation. At the educator's level, it supports facilitation, reflection, and adaptation.

It offers the following benefits at each level.

General level

- You strengthen your credentials
- You earn prestige
- It can be your **credibility proof** – what exactly? Results of the self- assessment- you have assessed your institution with the quality criteria, you know what works and what could work better, you know what to work on. You can even show a future working plan!
- If you prove quality work and credibility, you get better chances to receive support from the donors


For the Manager

- For organisation development you have the mapped needs and areas of future improvement- you can use it e.g. for the future fundraising opportunities supporting institutional development of your institution.
- It helps you build framework for your work which you can then just use and multiply - your donors and educators understand what matters to you from the start.
- It allows you to support each other and remind staff about the vital principles of your work.
- If you have it written, you have written point of reference – strong base for building the quality culture.

For the Course Designer:

- When in doubt, check the principles. They should help you find the answers or gain the broader perspective.
- If you have many trainers/educators from different fields/with different background- it helps easily define and present what matters to you in your philosophy of work
- More trust of your work and the programmes you offer

For the Educator:

- It helps you reflect on your work and get a pat on the back for the things you are doing well already! And a badge in the self- assessment 
- At the end, it can bring a good feeling of the quality work you do- it just feels good



You don't have to finish the whole meal at once. Take a bite, taste it, come back for seconds.

The Code of Conduct offers self-assessment tools in both printed and online versions. If you wish to assess quality assurance at any of the three levels, you can easily do so using the questionnaires available in the 'Annex' section or interactive version: <https://erasmusq-ale.github.io/gale/>

1.3 How to navigate the Code

This Code is organised so you can quickly find what you need—whether you're a **Manager (M)**, **Course Designer (C)** or **Educator (E)**.

1. **Core values** – an anchor of what we stand for and why it matters.
It defines key underlying values of quality in ALE as defined by the partnership.
2. **Main statements** – these define the main standards of assuring quality in an ALE
3. **Actionable statements** – concrete, auditable “We...” actions referring to three levels (Manager/ Course Designer/ Educator). Each item is written to be observable, identifiable and evidence friendly.
4. **Good practices** – real-world examples to inspire action and show how others do.
These are suggestions: take them as they are or adapt to your context.
5. **Questionnaire for self-assessment (Annex)** – a short set of diagnostic questions.
Use it as your to-do list when designing, delivering, or managing, check where you are now, choose one or two improvements for the next cycle, and track progress over time.

2. Core values

2.1 Learner-centricity

How can the learner become **empowered and develop their agency**?

How can we create **a meaningful and tailor-made educational process**, valuing prior knowledge, based on actual needs?

This value contributes to the relevance of the learning process. In the process, there is space for the learner to find their sense of agency and take responsibility. It involves learners' own personal and professional development throughout the whole learning process, taking into consideration their needs and experiences.



Reference: Bremner N., Sakata N., Cameron L. (2022), The outcomes of learner-centred pedagogy: A systematic review, *International Journal of Educational Development*, v. 94 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2022.102649>

2.2 Participation and dialogue

How can we offer, **maintain and support a safe environment**, where participation and dialogue can thrive?

Participation and dialogue take into account different perspectives, acknowledge differences, and foster deeper understanding. It is fundamental to build meaningful cooperation inside and outside the organisation and enable participative learning processes.



Reference: Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, page 12: Citizenship Competence. European Union 2019. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. [Key competences for lifelong learning - Publications Office of the EU](#)

2.3 Ethics

How do you ensure that the ALE organisation **respects ethical and legal matters** on all levels and in all processes and services?

How to ensure **a learning environment free from bias (prejudice and favouritism)**, in which all learners have equal opportunities to demonstrate and develop their abilities?

Ethics in adult education refers to the principles and standards that guide fair, transparent, lawful and responsible practice in education and organisational management. They assist in the design, implementation, and evaluation of organisational processes and educational programmes. They include respect for human dignity, honesty, transparency, personal and professional integrity, confidentiality, and accountability.



Reference: OECD Public Integrity Handbook. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020. UNESCO. Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), 2015. Paris: UNESCO, 2016.

2.4 Relevance and impact

How do we ensure that learning programmes that organisations design and deliver **stay relevant and create meaningful impact** in the context where the organisation operates?

How can we guarantee that the learning program **remains relevant to the learner**?

RELEVANCE: The degree to which the educational content, methods, and timing align directly with the expressed needs, interests, goals, and real-life context of the adult learners and the community they belong to.

IMPACT: The measurable, demonstrable change or benefit (social, economic and personal) that occurs in the lives of the learners and their communities as a direct or attributable result of their participation in the program.



Reference: UNESCO, Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), 2015 — emphasises that adult learning should be “relevant, equitable, inclusive” and aligned with learner needs.

2.5 Equity and inclusion

How do we ensure that all adult learners have **equitable access to and meaningful participation in our learning opportunities**, regardless of personal circumstances, socioeconomic background, demographics, etc. and in an **intersectional perspective**?

How do we apply these principles also in the way we **work internally and with external stakeholders**?

How do we **measure the impact** of our equity and inclusion approach?

In the adult education context, equity means providing tailored programmes and resources and removing barriers and acknowledging different starting points, so that everyone has a fair chance at reaching the achievements they set for themselves.

Inclusion is about creating an environment where all individuals feel welcomed, respected, valued, and empowered to participate fully and authentically. Together, they aim to move beyond simple equality (treating everyone the same) to create truly just and effective systems and cultures.

An **equitable and inclusive adult education** organisation fosters fair access, multiple entry points, meaningful participation, and active and responsive support for **all staff, learners and external collaborators**, removing barriers, and valuing diversity in every aspect of its work.

Specific attention is also dedicated to preventing discriminatory behaviours and to tackling prejudice and stereotypes.

An inclusive organisation also guarantees a **safe space for everyone** and **prioritises creating supportive and respectful environments** where people can participate and freely explore and experiment.



Reference: EAEA, The Power and Joy of Learning - Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century, pag. 17 Inclusion, empowerment and social justice, https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/EAEA_Manifesto_Digital_compressed-1.pdf

2.6 Sustainability

How do we make sure that our organisation acts **sustainably**?

How do you make sure that it uses its **environmental, human and financial resources sustainably**?

How do you ensure **viability**, financial stability, and positive impact in the **long-term**?

A sustainable adult education organisation ensures long-term impact by balancing environmental responsibility, financial stability and a human resources approach that fosters the well-being of the learners and staff. 'It adopts strategies that meet current needs while preserving resources for the future. It encompasses ethical, legal, economic, and socially responsible commitments, ensuring that present decisions do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



Reference: EAEA, The Power and Joy of Learning - Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century, pag. 9 and pag. 12 https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/EAEA_Manifesto_Digital_compressed-1.pdf

3. Quality Assurance Commitments (Statements of actions)

3.0 Cross-cutting quality assurance commitments - Universal Quality Assurance mechanisms

We apply systematic quality assurance mechanisms across all values to ensure consistency, transparency, and continuous improvement. Commitments:

We apply systematic quality assurance mechanisms across all values to ensure consistency, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Commitments:



We collect and analyse structured learner feedback for each program cycle.



We conduct monitoring and evaluation for each program cycle and record the results.



We implement institutional self-evaluation using recognised cycles (e.g., PDCA: Plan-Do-Check-Act).



We update learning programs after each cohort cycle, based on documented evaluation evidence.



We involve relevant stakeholders in the educational program design and review.



We maintain written policies, procedures, and records to support all quality processes.

3.1. We support learners' agency and empowerment.

We have guidelines in place on how to create frameworks offering learners space and opportunity to claim their agency and empowerment and apply them.

Abbreviations used in the table: M - Manager, C - Course Designer, E – Educator.

Activity statements	M	C	E
We integrate the process and andragogical tools (methods, and activities involved in teaching adult learners) in our learning environments to create a safer space* .	✓	✓	✓
We design courses based on learners' actual needs by asking about their needs and monitoring them throughout the programme implementation.		✓	✓
We have a system for collecting learners' feedback. We adapt and modify learning offers in reference to the feedback received .	✓	✓	
We design learning environments to foster curiosity and promote autonomy . We invite everyone's experiences, perspectives and offer an opportunity for learning by experience. We apply reflective thinking and dialogue as andragogical key tools for adult learning.			✓
We offer flexibly organised learning pathways to provide learning opportunities to people in different life situations.		✓	
We evaluate our learner-centricity approach at the end of each program cycle, using a defined evaluation tool, and conduct an annual cross-program review for institutional improvements	✓	✓	

* A **safe space** is an environment where people feel respected, accepted, and free from judgment, discrimination, or harm. It encourages open expression and dialogue without fear of ridicule or reprisal.

3.2. Dialogue and participatory processes are our core values and ways of acting.

Dialogue and participation are our **core values**. We include and describe them in our guiding documents and ways of working, educating and cooperating with other people and organisations.

ACTION	M	C	E
We integrate participatory and dialogical processes to the organisation's daily working culture	✓		
We involve our community and other stakeholders to create our learning programmes and other activities.	✓	✓	
We use peer review as a method for evaluation.	✓	✓	✓
We use peer learning as an andragogical method.	✓	✓	✓
We include open communication and dialogue in all activities.	✓	✓	✓
We value and encourage critical and constructive thinking .	✓	✓	✓
We use an andragogical approach, which supports dialogue and participation .	✓	✓	✓
We have communication guidelines that everyone follows.	✓	✓	✓

3.3. Our organisation respects ethical and legal matters on all levels and in all processes and services.

We ensure that our organisation acts **lawfully, transparently**, and with professional integrity in all educational, financial, and organisational processes. We **protect the rights, dignity, and data** of learners, staff, and partners, and we apply clear ethical standards in decision-making.

ACTION	M	C	E
We ensure confidentiality and data management (GDPR) with proper policy, protocols and data protection measures established.	✓		
We defined, published, and reviewed organisational values and ethical principles in formal documents annually as a part of the institutional QA review.	✓		
We document, internally review, and publicly report the use of funding , including financial records and balance accounts.	✓		
We use written and published recruitment and selection procedures and provide documented feedback to candidates.	✓	✓	
We use documented, transparent, and fair learning assessment methods and certification criteria.		✓	✓
We respect and protect intellectual property .	✓	✓	✓
We have legal and ethical methods and tools in place in our organisation. We guarantee that all members of our staff respect it .	✓		
We engage competent trainers and educators in our organisation. We ensure ongoing training—expert, andragogical, legislative, and aligned with our ethical code—delivered through a structured annual training cycle.	✓		
We operate documented, confidential mechanisms for learners to provide feedback without fear of negative consequences.		✓	✓
We deliver educational content that is accurate, evidence-based, and free from political or commercial bias.		✓	✓

3.4. Our organisation ensures that our learning programs stay relevant and impactful for the learners.

Our organisation ensures that our learning programs stay **relevant** and **impactful**. We regularly review and improve our programmes to strengthen their relevance and impact.

ACTION	M	C	E
We ensure to conduct needs analysis for each learning programme and update after each cohort cycle, based on feedback and evaluation results.	✓	✓	
We undertake monitoring and evaluation for each program cycle, and record results for comparison across cohorts.	✓	✓	
We ensure that all stakeholders are included in the process : creation, evaluation and update.	✓	✓	
We use institutional self-assessment. (for example: Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle)	✓		
We define clear learning objectives and measurable outcomes for every learning programme.		✓	
We align learning content, methods, and timing with the real-life contexts and constraints of adult learners.		✓	✓
We collect structured learner feedback during and after programme delivery.		✓	✓
We adapt and update learning programmes on the basis of documented evaluation results.	✓	✓	
We involve learners in co-designing and reviewing learning activities where possible.		✓	✓
We track short- and medium-term outcomes of learning (e.g. application of skills, employment, community engagement) where feasible	✓		

3.5. Our organisation ensures equitable, meaningful participation for all learners, regardless of their circumstances or background.

We apply these principles in the way we work internally in the team, with learners and with external stakeholders. We actively identify and **remove barriers** that limit access, participation or success in learning. We actively show our **commitment to equity**.

ACTION	M	C	E
We have written anti-discrimination guidelines in our recruitment procedures, available internally, on our website, and reviewed annually .	✓		
We regularly adapt our content language , including learning materials, to comply with anti-discrimination laws and an intersectional perspective , supported by written guidelines shared internally and externally.	✓		
We have our premises and resources accessible to individuals with disabilities, and facilities, technology, language, and materials are adapted to learners' needs.	✓		
We value diversity as part of our mission and values. We encourage inclusive behaviour, provide written learning materials on equity and inclusion, and ensure staff receive training in inclusive, non-discriminatory practice within each organisational training cycle.	✓		
We provide tailored support for individual learners, monitor participation and outcomes to address inequities, and consider learners' needs and limitations wherever possible.	✓		
We actively challenge prejudice and discrimination, fostering a respectful culture, addressing improper behaviour, and supporting individuals in problematic situations.	✓	✓	✓
We ensure that our decision-making process reflects diverse perspectives from our learner community, and we co-design our vision, strategy and learning programmes together with learners, staff, partners and relevant stakeholders.	✓	✓	✓

3.6 Our organisation supports multidimensional sustainability

Our organisation ensures that appropriate approaches supporting multidimensional sustainability **towards key resources** are **formulated** and **in place** to ensure longevity of the organisation and implementation of its mission.

ACTION	M	C	E
We integrate sustainability goals into our mission, strategy, and daily operations, addressing them across key documents and policies .	✓		
We ensure financial sustainability through a stable, diversified model and plan with a long-term perspective beyond individual projects or funding cycles.	✓		
We manage office resources , travel, training venues, and materials responsibly, guided by a written environmental policy which is reviewed annually for improvement among staff and learners.	✓	✓	✓
We manage human resources responsibly, fostering a healthy**, supportive work environment with work-life balance and well-being, embedded in our management guidelines and regulations.	✓		
We reuse and reinvest resources, knowledge, and outcomes to develop our community and staff, leveraging existing materials and experiences for new initiatives and programmes.	✓	✓	✓
We include sustainability and responsible citizenship in both theory and practice within our educational programmes.		✓	
We maintain partnerships and networks beyond project lifetimes to support ongoing cooperation.	✓	✓	
We encourage staff and learners to adopt sustainable habits , supported by specific guidelines covering all organisational processes.	✓		

** By ‘**healthy environment**’ we understand open, trustful and direct communication with an approach aiming at solving problems in advance and recognising a good atmosphere in the workplace as one of the key aspects of good working conditions.

4. Good practices

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a short selection of practices on quality assurance and evaluation (frameworks, guidelines, approaches, single practices and tools), to support the development of continuous quality assurance processes in ALE organisations.



The resources are described in terms of how they can be used in the development of a QA Strategy and in its implementation, in an ALE organisation



They are organised according to three main roles: M - Manager, C - Course Designer, E - Educator



They are linked to the Code of Conduct content (values). We conduct monitoring and evaluation for each program cycle and record the results.

The overview contains resources in different languages. For a quick exploration, a simple automated translation using free online tools can provide an overall idea of the content of the resource and whether it is useful for your purpose.



To translate a page in Chrome, select Translate on the right side of the address bar (the three dots menu) or right-click anywhere on the page and select Translate to [select language]. On a mobile device tap the menu (three dots) and select 'Translate'.

Similarly, to translate a page in Mozilla Firefox, select Translate from the menu on the right side of the address bar or click the translation icon in the address bar.

If you wish, we also suggest getting in contact with the author of the resource (when possible) and/or exploring more resources from the same organisation and topics.

4.2 Good practices overview

Title	Level	URL	Country	Author	Why it's a good practice	Links to Q-ALE
OQEA - Approach to self-evaluation offering quality education to adults	M	Slovenian https://mozaik.acs.si/ Self-evaluation report: https://mozaik.acs.si/kazalnik/samoevalvacijsko-porocilo	Slovenia	ACS – Slovenian Institute of Adult Education	The guidelines for the self-evaluation report of the OQEA system provide relevant information and ideas for translating it into quality assurance strategies and statements, at training provider level, including considerations related to writing style, clarity, transparency, diversity etc. Specific guidance is also provided for preparing the self-evaluation and report template.	Self-assessment process
OQEA - Quality indicators in adult education	M	Slovenian https://kakovost.acs.si/knjizna-polica/quality-indicators-in-adult-education	Slovenia	ACS – Slovenian Institute of Adult Education	These are the quality indicators designed for the self-evaluation model of the OQEA system, used by adult education organisations in Slovenia. The Quality Areas and the related Quality standards are a good base to develop a QA strategy for ALE organisations. These can be used as inspiration to create the overall strategy, for internal quality assessment and development (self-valuation, self-assessment) and for preparing for external quality assessment.	All Values and Statements Self-assessment process

Title	Level	URL	Country	Author	Why it's a good practice	Links to Q-ALE
eduQua - Quality Label for Continuing Education Providers	M	English eduQua official site – alice.ch https://alice.ch/app/uploads/2024/04/eduqua-2021-quality-standard.pdf	Switzerland	Swiss Federation for Adult Learning SVEB	This is a voluntary certification system for adult education and lifelong learning institutions in Switzerland. The approach of EduQua combines self-evaluation, learner feedback, and peer-based external auditing. The focus of this approach is on continuous improvement.	All Values and Statements Self-assessment process
Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully	M	English https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully_543e84ed-en.html	International organisation	OECD	These guidelines aim to support understanding and use of the six evaluation criteria developed by OECD (Network on Development Evaluation - EvalNet): Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The report provides definitions, explanations and examples with concrete ideas for using them.	Values: Impact and Relevance Sustainability
Sustainability Criteria for Educational Establishment	M	English https://kouluajaymparisto.fi/wp-content/uploads/SD_CRITERIA_General_ed.pdf	Finland	The OKKA Foundation, Eco-One, SYKLI Environmental School of Finland	This is a check-list tool to design sustainable education that can be applied by any type of education organisation.	Values: Sustainability Self-assessment process

Title	Level	URL	Country	Author	Why it's a good practice	Links to Q-ALE
Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education Recommendations for Practice	M C E	English https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Key-Principles-2011-EN.pdf	EU	European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education	This guideline provides organisation-level principles to embed inclusion, equity and participation across educational institutions, in terms of organisation policy, resources and accountability. The approach includes leadership commitments, definition of roles and how to monitor progress against shared indicators.	Values: Learner centricity; Participation; Equity and inclusion
The UDL Guidelines (Universal Design for Learning)	C E	English https://udlguidelines.cast.org/	USA	CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology)	This guide introduces the Universal Design for Learning as a practical standard for building accessible, flexible courses from the outset. It supports course designers to embed multiple means of engagement, representation and action/expression into the design, reducing barriers before they appear and improving outcomes for diverse adult learners. The Guide also includes auditing materials for quality assurance of learning design.	Values: Learner centricity; Participation; Equity and inclusion Self-assessment process
Check list for planning a sustainable course	C	Finnish https://www.opintokeskussivis.fi/app/uploads/2024/12/Sivis_Kestavan_koulutuksen_sunnittelun_tarkistuslista.pdf	Finland	Study Centers	This checklist is intended to support course planners in integrating ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainability into their course design.	Values: Sustainability Self-assessment process

Title	Level	URL	Country	Author	Why it's a good practice	Links to Q-ALE
Developing and quality assuring RARPA programmes for learners with special education needs and disabilities	C E	English https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RARPA-Guidance_Natspec_ET_F_2025-1.pdf	United Kingdom	Education and Training Foundation	RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) is a quality assurance framework, primarily used in education, which helps ensure the quality of non-accredited learning programs, particularly those for learners with additional needs. RARPA provides a structured process for assessing progress, recording achievements, and ensuring that learning experiences are tailored to individual needs. The Audit tools are organised by each main step of the learning programme development, with self-assessment and corrective actions required.	Values: Learner centricity; Participation; Equity and inclusion Self-assessment process
Safe Spaces for Learning	C E	English https://www.safespacesale.eu/Learning-Guide - https://www.safespacesale.eu/the-safe-learning-guide/	EU	European Association of Adult Education and partners	The SAFE methodology provides a comprehensive guide for creating and maintaining safe spaces for adult learning. The guide offers good support to also design quality assurance aspects related to inclusive learning design and processes.	Values: Learner centricity; Participation; Equity and inclusion
Future-Ready Teacher Checklist	E	Polish https://szkoladobreirelacji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Dla-nauczycieli-checklista-nauczyciela-przysz%C5%82o%C5%9Bci.pdf	Poland		This checklist defines future-ready educator competencies and prompts reflective and ethical facilitation. It supports educators to understand and implement "ethical" aspects in their practice (domain expertise, inclusive facilitation, preparation, reflection). It also provides self-reflection tools, to support continuous professional growth.	Values: Learner centricity; Participation; Ethics; Equity and inclusion Self-assessment process

Title	Level	URL	Country	Author	Why it's a good practice	Links to Q-ALE
Principles of Safer Space	E	English https://kansalaisfoorumi.fi/en/about-us/equality-and-equity/safer-space/	Finland		These principles support educators to enable open interaction and safe learning, as well as to create a safer space agreement with learners in the learning process.	Values: Learner centricity; Participation; Equity and inclusion
Developing and validating qualifications of trainers	E	Polish https://stowarzyszenie-stop.pl/certyfikacja-stop/	Poland	NGO Trainers Association	A certification system developed by an NGO offers a list of competences for a trainer and a supervisor (supporting personal development of a trainer). It presents list of demanded competences and experience to certify quality work of both.	All Values and Statements

5. Annex

Q-ALE Self-Assessment Questionnaire

1. INTRODUCTION

This Code is written for organisations working in adult education that are in an initial stage or still developing their Quality Assurance systems. The main purpose is to build a shared understanding of what quality in ALE means.

The Code supports an 'organic approach' to quality assurance. Instead of just ticking boxes to satisfy a regulator, we aim to foster a culture where quality assurance is a mindset and an everyday process.



The Reality Check (👉): We don't believe in "Quality Control" (policing people). We believe in a Culture of Quality. We do this not because a bureaucrat told us to, but because it makes sense, it makes us better, and it stops us from going crazy.

The "Reality Check" Edition

** We took a **Learner-Centric approach** to our own team. We wanted a tool that fosters a sense of safety and comfort, so people feel comfortable being honest about your strengths and gaps rather than just ticking boxes.*

1–5 Scoring Scale (The Maturity Model)

The idea is for you to do an in-depth self-reflection on your organisation's processes and approaches. Being honest is fundamental, since the core objective is to continuously check and improve, not to be judged!

Be honest. This tool is for improvement, not judgment.

Please rate the **LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION** for each statement:

- **1 - Not Implemented (The Ghost Town 🏘️):** No action has been taken. We didn't even know we were supposed to do this.
- **2 - In Progress / Ad-hoc (The Cowboy Era 🤠):** We do it sometimes, when we panic or remember. No written rules, just vibes.

- **3 - Defined & Documented (The Rulebook 📖):** It is official. We have a policy. We usually follow it.
- **4 - Managed & Monitored (The Well-Oiled Machine ⚙️):** We do this like clockwork. We actively check if it works. It is going smoothly.
- **5 - Fully Integrated (The Jedi Master 🧙):** This is in our DNA. We dream about this. We feel our approach could serve as a good practice example for other organisations.

Note: Evidence for scores of 3–5 may include policies, procedures, reports, meeting notes, curricula, or feedback summaries. *(Or just point to the binder on the shelf).*

Organisational Profile (tick boxes)

Organisation type:

- NGO
- Public
- Private
- Other

Size:

- 1–5 staff
- 6–20
- 21–50
- 50+

Main target group(s): _____

Maturity of QA system (self-perception):

- Low
- Medium
- High

 SECTION 0: Universal QA Mechanisms (The Umbrella)

To be completed by: Organisation Manager (M) with Course Designer (C).
These are the vegetables of QA. You have to eat them before you get dessert.

ID	Universal QA Commitment	Score (1-5)	Evidence / Notes
3.0.1	<p>Structured Feedback: Collection and analysis of structured learner feedback for <i>every</i> single program cycle</p> <p><i>👉 Do we ask them, or do we just guess and hope they liked it?</i></p>		
3.0.2	<p>Monitoring & Evaluation: Execution of monitoring and evaluation for <i>every</i> program cycle with recorded results.</p> <p><i>👉 Do we write it down, or does the data disappear into the void?</i></p>		
3.0.3	<p>Institutional Self-Evaluation: Implementation of institutional self-evaluation using recognised cycles (specifically PDCA).</p> <p><i>👉 Do we Plan-Do-Check-Act, or do we just "Plan-Do-Panic"?</i></p>		

3.0.4	<p>Evidence-Based Updates: Updating of learning programs after <i>each</i> cohort cycle, strictly based on documented evaluation evidence.</p> <p>☞ <i>When we change a learning program, is it because of documented evidence or because it felt urgent at the time?</i></p>		
3.0.5	<p>Stakeholder Involvement and context relevance: Active involvement of relevant stakeholders (partners, community, alumni) in design and review.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we talk to the outside world, or do we live in a bubble?</i></p>		
3.0.6	<p>Documentation: Maintenance of <i>written</i> policies, procedures, and records to support all quality processes.</p> <p>☞ <i>The "Bus Factor": If the Manager left tomorrow, is everything written down?</i></p>		



Feedback: If you score low (1 or 2) here, stop. Fix this first. You cannot build a house on quicksand.

What now: Start with the core content of this Code of Conduct, go through it and see which aspects you are already tackling, perhaps informally and without structured procedures. Organise some focus groups on the general idea of building a QAS in the organisation with the staff, and start drafting together a general QA strategy relevant for you.

 SECTION 1: Organisation Manager (M)

Responsible for: Keeping the lights on, the rules legal, and the people sane.

ID	Quality Assurance Commitment	Score (1-5)	Evidence / Notes
M.1	<p>System for collecting learner feedback and modifying offerings based on results.</p> <p><i>☞ When they complain, do we actually change, or do we just nod politely and think "they just don't get it/ they want too much/ they are spoiled"?</i></p>		
M.2	<p>Guidelines/frameworks supporting educators in creating "safe spaces".</p> <p><i>☞ Do we give educators the tools to handle the room, or throw them in the water?</i></p>		
M.3	<p>Conduct an annual cross-program review to improve the learner-centric approach.</p> <p><i>☞ Do we step back once a year to look at the big picture?</i></p>		
M.4	<p>Integration of participatory and dialogical processes into the daily working culture.</p> <p><i>☞ Do we practice participation in our own "boring" staff meetings?</i></p>		
M.5	<p>Involvement of the community and stakeholders when creating or reviewing programmes.</p> <p><i>☞ Is cooperation in our nature or "a must"?</i></p>		

M.6	<p>Existence and adherence to communication guidelines for all staff and partners.</p> <p><i>☞ Do we have rules so nobody feels left out?</i></p>		
M.7	<p>Active management of GDPR policy and data protection measures.</p> <p><i>☞ Is personal data locked up, or living its best life on sticky notes and shared drives?</i></p>		
M.8	<p>Annual review and publication of organisational values and ethical principles.</p> <p><i>☞ Are the values on the wall actually lived, or just a nice decoration?</i></p>		
M.9	<p>Documentation and public reporting of the use of funding/financial records.</p> <p><i>☞ We are transparent. We know where every Euro went.</i></p>		
M.10	<p>Publication of written recruitment procedures and provision of feedback to candidates.</p> <p><i>☞ Do we treat applicants with respect, even the ones we don't hire?</i></p>		
M.11	<p>Provision of an annual training cycle for trainers (expert, andragogical, ethical).</p> <p><i>☞ Do our trainers get smarter every year, or are they recycling skills from 2015?</i></p>		

M.12	<p>Regular use of institutional self-assessment (e.g., PDCA cycle).</p> <p><i>☞ Do we look in the mirror regularly?</i></p>		
M.13	<p>Conduct a needs analysis for programmes and update it after each cohort.</p> <p><i>☞ Do we research what people need, or do we just copy-paste last year's course?</i></p>		
M.14	<p>Tracking of short- and medium-term learning outcomes.</p> <p><i>☞ Do they get jobs? Do they get happier? Do they contribute to society and the environment? We try to find out.</i></p>		
M.15	<p>Collection of at least one form of follow-up evidence to assess long-term impact.</p> <p><i>☞ Do we check in on them a year later?</i></p>		
M.16	<p>Annual review of anti-discrimination guidelines for recruitment.</p> <p><i>☞ Is anti-discrimination in recruitment a shared mindset, or just a yearly paperwork ritual?</i></p>		
M.17	<p>Accessibility and adaptation of access for all learners with diverse needs</p> <p><i>☞ Can a wheelchair get in? Can someone with dyslexia read our font?</i></p>		

M.18	<p>Training of staff on inclusive, non-discriminatory practices.</p> <p>☞ <i>Does staff really know how to include, or did they just watch a 5-minute video?</i></p>		
M.19	<p>Periodic review of participation and outcomes to identify potential inequities.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we check who ISN'T showing up?</i></p>		
M.20	<p>Integration of sustainability goals into mission, strategy, and daily operations.</p> <p>☞ <i>Is green thinking part of the plan, or just an afterthought? Do we also take into account other forms of sustainability?</i></p>		
M.21	<p>Financial planning ensures stability beyond individual project cycles.</p> <p>☞ <i>Are we solid, or are we worried about funding every month?</i></p>		
M.22	<p>Annual review of written environmental policy for resources (travel, office).</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we track our carbon footprint, or just ignore it?</i></p>		
M.23	<p>HR guidelines fostering a "healthy environment" (work-life balance/well-being).</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we preach "wellness" but send emails at 10 PM?</i></p>		

M.24	<p>Promotion of sustainable behaviours among staff and learners.</p> <p>👉 <i>Do we walk the talk?</i></p>		
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 SECTION 2: Course Designer (C)

Responsible for: Turning chaos into a curriculum.

ID	Quality Assurance Commitment	Score (1-5)	Evidence / Notes
C.1	<p>Design of courses based on monitored, actual needs of learners.</p> <p>👉 <i>Did we build this because they need it, or because WE think it's cool?</i></p>		
C.2	<p>Provision of flexibly organised learning pathways for different life situations.</p> <p>👉 <i>Is the schedule as rigid as stone, or can a busy single parent actually attend?</i></p>		
C.3	<p>System for modifying the learning offer based on collected feedback.</p> <p>👉 <i>Are we agile enough to pivot when things aren't working?</i></p>		
C.4	<p>Involvement of stakeholders in creating specific learning programmes.</p> <p>👉 <i>Do we co-create, or do we just deliver?</i></p>		

<p>C.5</p>	<p>Use of peer review as a structured method for evaluation.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we let colleagues critique our work, or are we too proud for feedback?</i></p>		
<p>C.6</p>	<p>Documentation, transparency, and fairness of learning assessment methods.</p> <p>☞ <i>Are the rules of the game clear to everyone from Day 1?</i></p>		
<p>C.7</p>	<p>Confidential mechanism for learner feedback (free from concern of reprisal).</p> <p>☞ <i>Can a learner say "this is bad" without fear?</i></p>		
<p>C.8</p>	<p>Accuracy and evidence-based nature of educational content, with active bias awareness.</p> <p>☞ <i>Is it fact-checked, or is it just "trust me, we are great"?</i></p>		
<p>C.9</p>	<p>Definition of learning outcomes at the program design stage. Using clear and diverse assessment methods for learning outcomes.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we know what success looks like before we start?</i></p>		
<p>C.10</p>	<p>Recording of M&E results to allow comparison across cohorts.</p> <p>☞ <i>Can we prove we are getting better over time?</i></p>		

C.11	<p>Alignment of content and timing with real-life contexts of adult learners.</p> <p>☞ <i>Does this work on a Monday morning, or is it just nice theory?</i></p>		
C.12	<p>Involvement of learners in co-designing and reviewing activities.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we build it WITH them, or only FOR them?</i></p>		
C.13	<p>Active challenging of prejudice and fostering a respectful culture.</p> <p>☞ <i>If someone says something biased, do we have a plan, or does it get awkward?</i></p>		
C.14	<p>Co-design of programmes with learners to reflect diverse perspectives.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do our case studies represent everyone?</i></p>		
C.15	<p>Maintenance of partnerships and networks beyond the project lifetime.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we keep the relationship alive after the money runs out?</i></p>		
C.16	<p>Reuse and reinvestment of resources/materials for new initiatives.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do we reinvent the wheel every time, or do we reuse our best stuff?</i></p>		

💡 SECTION 3: Educator (E)

Responsible for: Holding the room and sparking the brain and heart.

ID	Quality Assurance Commitment	Score (1-5)	Evidence / Notes
E.1	<p>Use of andragogical tools to create a safe space (free from judgment/harm).</p> <p>☞ <i>Is the vibe in the room safe for everyone?</i></p>		
E.2	<p>Use of reflective thinking and dialogue to foster curiosity and autonomy.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do I invite them to think, or do I tell them what to think?</i></p>		
E.3	<p>Integration of learner experiences and provision of experiential learning.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do I use the wisdom in the room, or do I act like the only expert?</i></p>		
E.4	<p>Use of peer learning as an andragogical method.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do I let them teach and inspire each other?</i></p>		
E.5	<p>Encouragement of critical and constructive thinking in the group.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do I love it when they challenge me? (Even if it's annoying?)</i></p>		
E.6	<p>Assurance of open communication and dialogue in all activities.</p>		

	<p>☞ <i>Is the dialogue real, or are we just following a script?</i></p>		
E.7	<p>Application of fair and transparent assessment methods.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do I assess with criteria everyone knows, or with instincts I trust?</i></p>		
E.8	<p>Presenting topics and different perspectives related to them (values, opinions, ideologies, etc.) clearly and fairly, supporting learners to develop their own meaning.</p> <p>☞ <i>Am I aware of my own values and world views that might affect my teaching? Are all perspectives truly welcome in my class?</i></p>		
E.9	<p>Respect and protection of intellectual property in materials.</p> <p>☞ <i>Do I credit my sources, or do I pretend I invented everything?</i></p>		
E.10	<p>Alignment of methods and timing with learners' real-life constraints.</p> <p>☞ <i>Am I reading the room? If they are tired, do we still push through 50 slides?</i></p>		
E.11	<p>Collection of structured learner feedback during delivery for adaptation.</p> <p>☞ <i>If they are lost, do I catch it now, or wait for the bad review at the end?</i></p>		

<p>E.12</p>	<p>Actively challenging and facilitating the resolution of prejudice/discrimination if it arises in the group.</p> <p><i>☞ Do I act as the guardian of the vibe? Do I shut down discrimination immediately?</i></p>		
<p>E.13</p>	<p>Support for individuals in vulnerable situations to ensure a respectful culture.</p> <p><i>☞ Do I protect the vulnerable in the group?</i></p>		
<p>E.14</p>	<p>Responsible management of training venues and materials (reducing waste).</p> <p><i>☞ Am I printing a forest of paper that ends up in the bin?</i></p>		
<p>E.15</p>	<p>Inclusion of sustainability and responsible citizenship teaching and learning methods and practices.</p> <p><i>☞ Do I help them think about the future?</i></p>		
<p>E.16</p>	<p>Documentation of andragogical methods appropriate to learning objectives.</p> <p><i>☞ Do I record what worked so I don't have to guess next time?</i></p>		

Addendum - open questions:

A reflective open question:

- **Manager:** What is currently the biggest quality risk in our organisation?
- **Course designer:** What part of programme design causes the most recurring problems?
- **Educator:** What usually blocks you from applying your best teaching practice?

 INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANALYSIS & SCORING

Now that you have completed the questionnaire, follow these steps:

1. **Calculate Averages:** Sum the scores and divide by the number of questions.
2. **Identify Gaps:** Look for any **1s or 2s**.
3. **Take Action:** If you have any 1s or 2s, you have the "Oops" Section below (PART B — mitigation protocol).

Rule of thumb: If you laughed uncomfortably while reading a question, the score is probably a 2.

Mitigation Mini-plan

1. Snapshot of Results (Analysis)

Purpose: turn raw scores into patterns.

Suggested elements:

- Top 5 lowest-scoring items
- Top 5 medium-risk items (score 3)
- Strongest areas (score 4–5)

Self-reflection prompts:

- Where are our weakest clusters?
- Are weaknesses concentrated in one role or across roles?
- Which gaps most affect learners?

2. Root Cause Reflection

Purpose: avoid treating symptoms.

Guided prompts

- Is this gap mainly due to:
 - lack of knowledge?
 - lack of time?
 - lack of tools/templates?
 - lack of decision?
 - lack of quality culture?
- Which causes repeat across several gaps?

This allows grouping fixes.

3. Priority Selection

Purpose: prevent overload.

Prompts:

- Which 3–5 gaps will we address first?
- Which ones are prerequisites for others?



Simple rule: High impact + low effort first.

4. Corrective Action plan

Table format (simple):

Issue	Action	Responsible	Support	When	Evidence



Key principle: Actions must be small and concrete.

Not: *Improve feedback culture*

But: *Create a learner feedback form template and test it in the next cohort*

5. Roles & commitment

Manager commits to:

- enable time
- approve templates
- monitor

Course designer commits to:

- apply tools
- collect data

Educator commits to:

- test practices
- give feedback



No signatures needed. Psychological contract is enough.

6. Milestones

Examples:

- Month 3: feedback form exists and is used
- Month 6: first internal review meeting held
- Month 12: repeat self-assessment



Milestones = rhythm.

7. Review loop

One sentence:

This mini-plan is reviewed every 12 months together with the self-assessment.

PART B — mitigation protocol

The "Oops" Section. Don't panic. This is the Fix-It zone.

(Triggered for any item scored 1 or 2)

1. The Gap:

What is broken, missing, or just plain messy?

2. The Root Cause (The story we usually tell ourselves):

- "We forgot to write it down." (No written guideline)
- "We don't know how yet." (Lack of training)
- "We are swamped." (Time constraints)
- "The budget says no." (Funding limits)
- "It's just not our vibe yet." (Culture not embedded)

3. The Plan (Corrective Action):

What is one small, realistic thing we can do so we don't score a '1' next time?

4. Responsibility:

- Manager
- Course Designer
- Educator

5. Timeline:

- Next cohort (We're on it!)
- Within 6 months (Give us a minute...)
- Within 12 months (It's a big project.)