INTRODUCTION

IMI approved Centres' will be monitored by an IMI External Quality Assurer (EQA). The frequency and type of monitoring will be based upon factors such as the type of Centre, the nature and number of IMI products offered and how many candidates are currently registered. Larger Centres' (i.e. those with a high number of IMI products offered and/or candidates registered) will be monitored more frequently, while some Centres' (e.g. those offering a small number of IMI products and/or enter limited candidate registrations) are likely to be monitored less often.

Note: EQA monitoring usually consists of a Centre visit however in some cases the IMI will also carry out 'remote' engagement visits. In instances such as these the visit planning processes, as detailed in the sections below, will still apply.

TYPES OF APPROVED CENTRE

Approved Centre assessment delivery for IMI products can be through a combination of site types and this forms an integral part of the quality management structure.

The combination and number of sites can vary and will commonly fall into four main categories:

- **Lead site**

The majority of IMI approved Centres' are defined and operate as a standalone site, which is the site from which the quality management of all provision operates.

- **Multi-site**

Some larger approved Centres' operate on multiple-sites in addition to the lead/primary site, which takes **full control** of and responsibility for quality assurance / quality management arrangements EQA monitoring would therefore only concentrate on resources, assessment and internal quality assurance.

- **Satellite site**

A training and assessment facility that runs IMI products on a regular basis in its own right, but is not the main approved lead site, is referred to as a 'satellite site'. Satellite sites would be subject to full external quality assurance monitoring.

- **Sub-contracted delivery site**

Sub-contracted delivery sites are contracted by the lead site to deliver training, carryout assessments and internally quality assure on their behalf. Quality assurance / management is through the sub–contracted delivery sites own system(s) and therefore the approach to quality assurance should mirror the Centres' activity for its own candidates.

FREQUENCY OF MONITORING VISITS

The frequency and nature of monitoring will be based upon a risk management and risk status of the Centre and their current levels of activity.

Note: The risk status will take into account the size and nature of the Centre and the type and range of IMI products offered.

Additional monitoring may be carried out if requested by the Centre or in response to a non-compliance that may have been identified during a monitoring visit, from an investigation into a complaint or appeal, or where malpractice/maladministration is suspected at the Centre.

Note: Such issues include suspected or actual adverse effects notified to the IMI by another awarding organisation or a regulatory authority.

In addition to regular EQA monitoring, the IMI reserves the right to carry out pre-arranged or unannounced visits in the interests of ensuring maintenance of quality standards. Such visits may be undertaken by the EQA or other representative(s) appointed by the IMI.

Note: A charge will be made for additional visits requested by the Centre or deemed to be necessary by the IMI. The Centre will be advised of these costs in advance of the visit being arranged. Centres that cancel visits at short notice and do not give at least 10 working days' notice will be charged for the rearranged visit.

ARRANGING MONITORING VISITS

Dates and times of monitoring visits will be agreed between the IMI EQA and the nominated Centre Coordinator at the approved Centre.

Note: Centres that do not allow monitoring visits to take place within the timescales required will be considered as an increased risk, with the removal of direct claims status and face sanctions being implemented (IMI Sanctions Policy).

Approximately 6 weeks before a visit is due, the EQA will contact the Centre Coordinator to agree a convenient time for the visit and explain the nature and type of visit.

A maximum of 15 days before the visit is due, the EQA will confirm details of the arrangements made by submitting a written visit schedule via email and EQA sampling plan to the Centre Coordinator and through the IMI Centres' Hub (engagement form) whilst observing GDPR.

Note: There may be instances where the EQA is unable to provide such notice or written confirmation (e.g. additional visits at the Centres' request, short notice visits due to concerns about quality assurance at the Centre, increased risk rating etc.).

CARRYING OUT MONITORING VISITS

The purpose of a monitoring visit is for the EQA to ensure that the Centre is continuing to meet and maintain criteria against which it was approved (see section 2.1), to support the Centre in mitigating risks and to provide ongoing advice and guidance to support development.

During the visit, the EQA will carry out a range of activities in accordance with the outlined visit plan, such as:

- sampling internal quality assurance processes and systems
- where required the auditing of Centre moderation prior to certification has been undertaken
- sampling of candidates' in-progress and certificated work/evidence
- observing assessments (practical and/or online)
- candidate feedback
- invigilation of IMI on-line assessments
- Centre management of registration and certification data, which includes candidate withdrawals

Note: Internal quality assurance activities and records will form part of each monitoring visit due to the importance of this activity within the Centres' quality system.

The EQA's monitoring activities will vary from visit to visit depending upon the nature of the IMI products offered and the level of activity. However, as part of the overall monitoring approach, the EQA will review and:

- confirm that previously identified actions have been met
- check that the Centre has a suitable internal quality assurance strategy in place which meets section 2.4 requirements, IMI products and, where appropriate, regulatory requirements
- confirm that effective, rigorous and robust internal quality assurance is taking place whilst following the Centres' IQA strategy
- ensure, through appropriate sampling, that assessment arrangements are fit for purpose and the criteria against which candidates' performance is differentiated are being applied consistently by assessors within and across Centre/s and in accordance with requirements specified for each IMI Product
- ensure moderation of specific qualification/component has been undertaken. The moderation activity must ensure that an assessment outcome, or grade awarded is fair, valid, reliable and the assessment criteria has been applied consistently by the assessor/s across all cohorts of candidates who are progressing the qualification
- confirm that assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally competent Assessors

The EQA will also ensure that the Centre is complying with the requirements as determined by the IMI Products offered, which is stated within the relevant qualification specification and accompanying guidance.

It is essential that the requirements of the IMI products are scrutinised as part of external quality assurance activities, as certain IMI products that require the approved Centre to:

- limit the number of assessments undertaken by candidates
- identify candidates who usually progress the IMI product
- ensure units are undertaken in a specific order
- the number of components required to sample
- require moderation of assessments that are marked by the Centre
- conduct open book online assessments
- gather destination data, or
- source, arrange and record meaningful employer involvement for candidates.

In any instance, the EQA will request and scrutinise evidence in accordance with the stated criteria. Should an approved Centre be found to have not complied with the specified requirements, sanctions will be applied *(IMI Sanctions Policy).*

Note: Full details of EQA sampling activities are contained in section 7.2 'External Quality Assurance – Sampling'.

MONITORING VISIT REPORTS

The EQA will complete an engagement form, applying the relevant risk and compliance status that has been identified at the audit and any associated forms (e.g. sampling reports,) using IMI Centres Hub. When this is not possible, the EQA will ensure that the Centres Hub engagement form is completed and submitted to the Centre within five (5) working days from the date of the visit was concluded.

The EQA will discuss their findings with the Centre Coordinator who will be invited, to add their comments to the engagement form. A copy of the engagement form will be available to access by the Centre Coordinator within IMI Centres Hub and can be accessed by Centre personnel who have the appropriate level of access.

Where the EQA identifies any areas of non-compliance, an action will be raised which will clearly specify the action required and a completion date.

Note: Any recommendations EQAs make to encourage or strengthen best practice will be documented within the report but only included as an action if the requirement must be carried out.

Depending upon the severity of a non-compliance, the IMI EQA will issue a sanction against the Centre or against the delivery of specific IMI products in accordance with the tariff specified in the IMI Sanctions Policy.

The EQA will track the progress of any actions raised and sanctions imposed on the Centre using Centres Hub. It is the Centre Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that all actions raised are completed by the required date and signed off by the EQA.

Note: Failure to complete actions by the date due will result in sanctions being raised against the Centre.

Where a Centre is not satisfied with the EQA decision and findings, the Centre Coordinator (or other authorised Centre personnel) may appeal against these findings in accordance with the IMI Appeals Policy.

OTHER FORMS OF CENTRE MONITORING

In addition to the regular monitoring visits carried out by the EQA, they also carry out 'remote' activities such as sampling, tracking outstanding actions etc.

Other members of IMI quality assurance team also monitor Centre activities. These include:

- monitoring the IMI online assessment system to identify anomalies and analysing trends. Any discrepancies or irregularities identified are investigated thoroughly.
- reviewing documentation and electronic submissions made by Centres, particularly those relating to candidate registration and claims for certificates. Any problems identified will be referred back to the Centre, outlining corrective measures required.

Note: Failure to comply with all IMI registration and/or certificate claim requirements will result in registrations and/or applications for certification being delayed or rejected.

- monitoring Centres, websites, publicity material etc., to ensure that the IMI is not being misrepresented and that information provided relating to IMI products are not misleading.

Note: Inappropriate or incorrect marketing of IMI products and services will result in sanctions being applied to the Centre.

Issue Number	Effective Date	Amendments	Reason for Amendments
10	11 Aug 2023	Removing hyperlinks	As a result of the awarding site to IMI Connect transition