Assessment Centre:
Quality Assurance Framework

October 2013   Version 4.3

Version Control

Document	Created Date	Revision Date	Author	Version Number
Assessment Centre Quality Assurance Framework	September 2013	October 2013	Assessment Centre Working Group (NNAC,IAC, SFE, DSA-QAG)	4

Details of Section	Details of Change
1.1 Arranging an Appointment and Pre-meeting	Amended: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.9, New: 1.1.14
1.2 Access and Facilities	Amended: 1.2.2 - 1.2.5
1.3 The Assessment Interview	New: 1.3.5, Renumbered 1.3.5 - 1.3.6
1.4 Post Assessment Stage	Amended: 1.4.1,1.4.2, 1.4.4, 1.4.12 New: 1.4.5 Renumbered: 1.4.5 – 1.4.11
2.1 Centre Facilities	Amended: 2.1.1, 2.1.4-2.1.7 New: 2.1.3, 2.1.5 Deleted 2.1.1, 2.1.5, 2.1.7 and renumbered.
2.2 Policy and Procedures	Amended: 2.2.1 - 2.2.8
2.3 Human Resources	Amended: 2.3.1, 2.3.6
Appendices	Amended: 9, 11 Deleted: 3 Renumbered: 4 to 3 and amended. Appendices renumbered.
Templates	Amended: 2, 3, 5a, 5c, 6 Deleted: 7 with templates renumbered.
Terms & definitions	New

Post QAF Issue Amendments

QAF Reference	Revision Date	Amendment	Version Number
1.4.5	11/11/2013	3 quotes amended to 1	4.1
Template 5c and Appendix 9	15/11/2013	3 hour amended to 2 hour	4.2
Template 6	15/11/2013	Removal of reference to assessment centre replaced with practitioner	4.2
1.4.4	03/12/13	Removal of last paragraph, not relevant to QAF point.	4.3

Contents

Introduction

DSA-QAG (the Disabled Students' Allowances Quality Assurance Group) provides a quality assurance service for assessment centres in the delivery of the Disabled Students' Allowances in England and Wales.

The following document represents the Quality Assurance Framework for assessment centres registered and accredited to undertake needs assessments as part of the Disabled Students' Allowances.

Section 1 – Assessment Process

The key service standards expected for each stage of the assessment process are outlined in Section 1 of the document. Means by which the standards will be measured have also been outlined.

Section 2 – Policies and Procedures

The supporting policies and procedures required in relation to assessment centres have been outlined in Section 2 of the document. Means by which compliance in relation to the policies and procedures will be measured have also been outlined.

The main focus for assessment centres is providing a quality service to the student. To this end, all assessment centres are required to comply with the service standards listed in this document.

Assessment centres, including any outreach provision, will be audited on a regular 12 - 18 monthly interval. Compliance with these standards of any sub-contracted services, including freelance assessors or quality assurance services, which will be included in the audit is the responsibility of the assessment centre.

1.0 Assessment Process – Standards and Measures

The service standards relating to arranging an appointment and pre-meeting are:

1.1.1	The student can choose from a range of methods of contacting the assessment centre.
1.1.2	The assessment centre will have a website displaying directional information including maps, current waiting times for an assessment interview, published hours and means of contact.
1.1.3	Web sponsorship and domain names.
1.1.4	Use of DSA-QAG related domain names.
1.1.5	The student will be offered an appointment for the assessment meeting immediately on initial contact with the assessment centre.
1.1.6	The student appointment will be deferred until diagnostic/medical evidence and funding body evidence is received by the assessment centre.
1.1.7	Where the appointment date can be confirmed, a confirmation letter will be sent to the student by the first working day following initial contact.
1.1.8	Where an appointment cannot be confirmed, a letter requesting copies of diagnostic/medical evidence along with a copy of funding body evidence will be sent to the student by the first working day following initial contact.
1.1.9	The assessment centre will issue information explaining the process and stating the centre's service standards.
1.1.10	The interview will be undertaken within a maximum of 15 working days of the request from the student.
1.1.11	The assessment centre will ascertain the student's accessibility needs and other requirements in advance of the meeting.
1.1.12	The assessment centre will provide the student with clear directions to the centre in advance of the meeting.
1.1.13	The assessment centre will seek authorisation from the funding body prior to conducting a telephone assessment.
1.1.14	The assessment centre will seek authorisation from the funding body prior to conducting an individual student response assessment.

1.1　Arranging an Appointment and Pre-meeting

1.1.1 Student or third party contact assessment centre

Standard	Measure
The student will be able to choose from a range of means of contacting the assessment centre. Contact options will include phone, email, letter and "face to face". The assessment centre should have sufficient administration provision to assist with an efficient delivery of service and to ensure the use of answer phones/voicemail are used as an exception over lunch or out of office hours (refer to Opening Hour Guidance, Appendix 11). All assessment centres must have a nominated administrative contact onsite during their published opening hours.	• Customer feedback • Test calls • QA audit • Website

1.1.2 Availability of website

Standard	Measure
The assessment centre is required to have an accessible website. This will display directional information including maps and current waiting times for an assessment interview. The website will also detail the assessment centre's opening hours and contact details, and as a minimum, will state the QAF KPI waiting times (currently 15 working days). The website will conform, as a minimum, to the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative Content Accessibility Guidelines (http://www.w3.org/WAI/); refer to Appendix 10 for guidelines. Areas for audit will be website: • Usability • Layout • Font size Centres may wish to publish a statement stating that assessments may be conducted at alternative outreach venues to meet the needs of the student. In 'exceptional circumstances', a home assessment may be conducted.	• Customer feedback • Test calls • QA audit • Evidence of compliance to the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative Content Accessibility Guidelines (Appendix 10) • Web accessibility policy

1.1.3 Web sponsorship, sponsored links & Google ad words

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres should refrain from purchasing sponsored links / ad words to avoid displaying their organisation details as the primary search for students searching for the DSA-QAG website via a search engine. The purpose of this requirement is to minimise the risk of a student being unknowingly directed to another organisation's website. It should be made clear to students when they are viewing a centre's site, rather than the DSA-QAG site.	• QA audit • Audit of search results for DSA-QAG • Website

1.1.4 Use of DSA-QAG related domain names

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres must refrain from purchasing DSA-QAG associated domain names and redirecting students to their organisation's website. The purpose of this requirement is to minimise the risk of a student being unknowingly directed to another organisation's website. It should be made clear to students when they are viewing a centre's site, rather than the DSA-QAG site.	• QA audit • Audit of search results for DSA-QAG • Website •

1.1.5 Appointment is booked (Key Performance Indicator)

Standard	Measure
The student will be given an appointment immediately on initial contact with the assessment centre (providing the student has provided sufficient disability-related information to enable the centre to do so; and that the confirmation letter from the funding body is in place). If this process is followed then the next step for the assessment centre is 1.1.7. Or, 1.1.6.	• External – M.I. tracking process • Internal – evidence of tracking process (issue date of confirmation letter and receipt date of diagnostic/medical evidence for comparison) • QA audit

1.1.6 Appointment booking is deferred (Key Performance Indicator)

Standard	Measure
On initial contact from the student to request an appointment (**Note 1**).The assessment centre shall request that the student submits a copy of their diagnostic/medical (**Note 2**) and funding body evidence before the appointment is made. The student should be asked to submit this immediately to avoid delay. The assessment centre is then required to issue an appointment and conduct the assessment within the 15 working day timeframe from initial contact from the student. Please note: the student should be given adequate notice of their assessment appointment. If this process is followed then the next step for the assessment centre is 1.1.8.	• External – M.I. tracking process • Internal – evidence of tracking process (issue date of confirmation letter and receipt date of diagnostic/medical evidence for comparison) • QA audit

Note (1) 1st point of contact – defined as the first verbal contact/email from the student requesting an appointment providing the student has provided sufficient disability-related information for the centre to offer an appointment.

Note (2) in exceptional circumstances, where the student has not provided medical evidence (2 days prior to an appointment), the funding bodies have agreed to supply the diagnostic/medical evidence to centres on request.

1.1.7 Appointment confirmed in writing with request for documentation

Standard	Measure
If the assessment centre has followed step 1.1.5, correspondence confirming the appointment (by letter or email) will be sent to the student by the first working day following the centre and student agreeing an appointment date. The correspondence will include - A. a request to send diagnostic/medical evidence within 5 working days B. explaining that the assessment of needs can only be completed once all relevant and appropriate documentary evidence has been made available. **(Note 2)** C. a note to ask the student if they have previously had an assessment in the last 12 months reducing the instances of duplicate assessments within the same academic year The correspondence may include a pre-assessment form (optional) to be completed by the student (refer to Template 1). Where the assessment centre chooses not to send out a pre-assessment form to the student, the centre must still obtain all the information identified on the pre-assessment form prior to the needs assessment being undertaken. The student will be asked to give written consent for observation of the assessment interview by a member of the assessment centre staff, explaining that the observation is for staff training and quality assurance purposes, where applicable.	• Customer feedback • Internal - evidence of tracking process (date of issuing confirmation letter and first contact by student with the assessment centre) • External – M.I. tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of completed pre-assessment forms (optional Template 1)

1.1.8 Appointment deferred confirmed in writing with request for documentation

Standard	Measure
If the assessment centre has followed step 1.1.6 above, the correspondence requesting a copy of diagnostic/ medical evidence **(Note 2)** along with a copy of the funding body evidence is sent to the student by the first working day following the centre and student agreeing an appointment date. The communication should confirm that on receipt of this evidence an appointment time will be arranged. The student should be encouraged to submit this immediately to avoid delay. The correspondence may include a pre-assessment form (optional) to be completed by the student (refer to Template 1). Where the assessment centre chooses not to send out a pre-assessment form to the student, the centre must still obtain key information identified on the pre-assessment form prior to the needs assessment being undertaken. The student will be asked to give written consent for observation of the assessment interview by a member of the assessment centre staff, explaining the observation is for staff training and quality assurance purposes, where applicable.	• Customer feedback • Internal - evidence of tracking process (date of issuing confirmation letter and first contact by student to assessment centre) • External – M.I. tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of completed pre-assessment forms (Template 1 optional)

1.1.9 Student is given information on the process

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will provide students with information outlining the process and standards to expect. This will include: • the centre's needs assessment procedures • timescales for drafting and finalising the needs assessment report. Information must be available in both digital and physical format and may be provided as an enclosure with written correspondence, as an email attachment, or link to data on the assessment centre's website. The above also applies to students who attend an outreach venue assessment.	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Website

1.1.10 Appointment timeframe (Key Performance Indicator)

Standard	Measure
The assessment interview will take place within a maximum of 15 working days from the student's first point of contact. If a student requests another date beyond the usual 15-day assessment deadline, this must be recorded in the KPIs as an 'exception'. **Note:** If the centre is not able to offer an appointment within 15 days, an alternative centre should be suggested to the student informing the student that they may receive an appointment sooner. However, if the student still wishes to attend the original centre, this should be recorded in the "Over 15 day" KPI field, with a note on the student record database for verification during the audit. Student 'exceptions' are not included in the calculation of the 15 working day KPI calculation for centres.	• Customer feedback • External – M.I. tracking process • Internal - evidence of tracking process • QA audit

1.1.11 Determine needs including accessibility

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will ask the student in advance of the meeting if they have any special requirements. This may include parking, access requirements or adaptations to the interview environment. These should be appropriately recorded on the student file and student record database.	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

1.1.12 Clear directions are given

Standard	Measure
Clear directions will be made available to the student in advance of the meeting (refer to Directional Guidance, Appendix 12) in their preferred format.	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

1.1.13 Telephone assessments – by exception

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will seek authorisation from the funding body to conduct a telephone assessment. These should be considered only in exceptional circumstances and not formally offered or confirmed until authorisation from the funding body is in place. The assessor must record within the needs assessment report (NAR), the funding body authorisation contact, date of authorisation in the 'Assessment Location' section within the NAR. Justification for conducting a telephone assessment must be completed by the assessor within the NAR, Section A -1. Refer to Appendix 14, Telephone Assessment Guidance.	• Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Needs assessment reports • Customer feedback • Funding body - telephone assessment authorisation database

1.1.14 Individual Student Response – by exception

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will seek authorisation from the funding body to conduct an individual student response (ISR). These should be considered only in **'exceptional circumstances'** and not formally offered or confirmed until authorisation from the funding body is in place. The assessor must record within the needs assessment report (NAR), the funding body authorisation contact, date of authorisation in the 'Assessment Location' section within the NAR. Justification for conducting an ISR assessment must be completed by the assessor within the NAR, Section A -1. Refer to Appendix 3, section 3, criteria for conducting an ISR.	• Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Needs assessment reports • Customer feedback • Funding body - telephone assessment authorisation database

1.2 Access and Facilities

The service standards relating to access and facilities for assessment centres and outreach venues are:

1.2.1	**A designated car parking space will be available, arranged or alternative options clearly explained to the student.**
1.2.2	**All assessment centres/outreach venues will be accessible to people with disabilities.**
1.2.3	**All assessment centres /outreach venues will have accessible toilet facilities.**
1.2.4	**All assessment centres/outreach venues will have a receptionist and a waiting area with seating.**
1.2.5	**The assessment room environment will be suitable for the needs of the individual student.**

1.2 Access and Facilities

1.2.1 Car Parking

Standard	Measure
A designated parking space will be available for the student at the place of assessment interview. In situations where this is impracticable, a parking space will be arranged for the student in advance. At centres where there are no dedicated car parking facilities, the student will be informed in advance and advised of alternative options, such as local parking and public transport options (refer to Accommodation Requirements outlined in Appendix 1).	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • In-house assessment centre disability audit • Evidence of compliance with Accommodation Requirements (Appendix 1)

1.2.2 Building access / accessible room

Standard	Measure
All centres will be aware of a student's disability-related requirements and accessibility needs including compliance with the accommodation requirements outlined in Appendix 1.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • In-house assessment centre disability audit • Evidence of compliance with Accommodation Requirements (Appendix 1)

1.2.3 Accessible toilets

Standard	Measure
All centres will have toilet facilities which are accessible, within a reasonable walking distance of the assessment accommodation, and in compliance with the accommodation requirements outlined in Appendix 1. Centres should refer to British Standards for guidance http://www.bsigroup.com.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Accommodation Requirements (Appendix 1)

1.2.4 Reception

Standard	Measure
All centres will have a reception area. The reception area will have appropriate seating. A receptionist / member of the administrative staff or the assessor will be present to greet the student. The reception area will comply with the accommodation requirements outlined in Appendix 1. All centres should have a nominated staff member to cover phones and reception areas to provide services to students during published opening hours.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Accommodation Requirements (Appendix 1)

1.2.5 Assessment room

Standard	Measure
The environment of the assessment room will be suitable for the needs of the individual student and comply with the accommodation requirements outlined in Appendix 1. **Note:** Outreach venues are required to have a **'dedicated'** assessment room.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Accommodation Requirements (Appendix 1)

1.3 The Assessment Interview

The service standards relating to the assessment interview are:

1.3.1	**The assessor will research the student's declared disability or specific learning difficulty prior to the assessment interview.**
1.3.2	**Staff will welcome students, be aware of their disability requirements, offer refreshments, escort them to the assessment room, explain the process and confirm consent to be observed, where applicable.**
1.3.3	**The assessor will be prepared and check the student's personal details. The assessor will discuss the student's disability and experience and ensure that the meeting is structured and student focused.**
1.3.4	**Relevant equipment will be available, demonstrated and trialled. The student will sign a pro forma to confirm which items of equipment have been trialled.**
1.3.5	**The assessor will clearly explain the equipment delivery and training options and record the student's preferred option.**
1.3.6	**The assessor will allow student feedback and explain recommendations. The assessor will confirm if a draft or final report is required and state the timeframe for receipt of the draft. The assessor will complete a *pro-forma* which the student will sign.**

1.3 The Assessment Interview

1.3.1 Assessor's research on disability

Standard	Measure
The assessor should be aware of the following– • the student's declared disability or specific learning difficulty prior to the assessment • must have access to the diagnostic/medical evidence prior to the assessment • made any necessary enquiries prior to meeting the student at the assessment interview (optional Template 1) • where required, arranged appropriate communication support	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer to the DSA-QAG website http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html)

1.3.2 Student arrival and introduction (welcome)

Standard	Measure
When the student arrives at the assessment centre, the assessor/administrator or receptionist will: • greet the student • be aware of the student's disability requirements for access and other needs • offer the student refreshments • escort the student to the assessment room The assessor should then: • give a clear explanation of the process • confirm and record consent to be observed (where appropriate)	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer to DSA-QAG website http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html) • Review sample of consent forms

1.3.3 Conduct assessment

Standard	Measure
When conducting the assessment interview the assessor will: • be well prepared • check the student's personal details • discuss the background of the student's disability or specific learning difficulty, education and experience • explain the funding methodology • conduct a structured and student focused assessment	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with assessor observation criteria (Template 2). • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer

	to DSA-QAG website http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html)
following the criteria outlined in the Observation Criteria (Template 2)	

1.3.4 Demonstrate and trial equipment.

Standard	Measure
Equipment relevant to supporting the student's needs will be available during the interview. The equipment and software will be demonstrated by the assessor and, where appropriate, trialled by the student. There is no expectation that an assessment centre with multiple assessment rooms will have a full range of equipment permanently in each room, however, the assessment centre should have sufficient equipment and software to meet the demands of all students being assessed at the same time. The student will sign part 1 of the Use of Equipment pro-forma (Template 3), to confirm which items of equipment have been trialled. Where training in the use of the equipment or software is required, the assessor will discuss and record the preference of the student regarding face-to-face or virtual delivery.	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of completed pro-forma -Use of Equipment (Template 3)

1.3.5 Student Information – Delivery & Training

Standard	Measure
During the assessment, the assessor should clearly explain the equipment delivery and training options and record the student's preferred option when requesting a quote from an assistive technology service provider/provider – For delivery- • delivery, setup and familiarisation • courier with setup and familiarisation on the same day by an engineer • courier delivery, with setup and familiarisation at a later date For training- • onsite • remote Delivery/installation and training should be supplied according to details on the quotation request and AT provider quote and are separate activities. While training	• Customer feedback • QA audit

may be arranged on the same date it must follow delivery and installation.

Training sessions should be conducted on separate days; however, where it is at the students request to change timings, the ATSP/provider will contact the centre and request authorisation. A record of the change authorised by the centre must be logged against the student's record.

The students preferred options should be recorded in the in the NAR, allowing the funding body to authorise the students request.

1.3.6 Summarise meeting and inform the next step in process.

Standard	Measure
At the end of the interview the assessor will summarise the meeting. In particular, the assessor will: • be student focused and allow for student feedback • make clear the key recommendations from the meeting • complete part 2 of the Use of Equipment pro-forma (Template 3) outlining the key recommendations, which the student will counter sign • reach agreement with the student if they require a draft or final (Note OU students) report, advising that that the needs assessment has been completed and that no follow up research is required • if the student opts in to a draft report, the student should be given a period of up to 5 working days to respond, after which time the assessment centre will proceed and issue the NAR to the funding body. • the student will sign part 3 of the Use of Equipment pro forma (Template 3) to confirm opt in/opt out • request the student signs the Consent Form for Sensitive Personal Data Processing (Template 4) Inform the student that the draft or final report (Note 1) will be issued within a maximum of 10 working days.	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of completed pro-forma - Use of Equipment (Template 3) • Evidence of completed Consent Form for Sensitive Personal Data Processing (Template 4)

Note: Open University policy requires OU students to be issued with a draft report; the 'opt out' process does not apply to OU students assessed by the OU assessors. The 'opt out' option will be offered to non OU students assessed by an OU assessor.

1.4 Post Assessment Stage

The service standards relating to the post assessment stage are:

1.4.1	**The draft needs assessment report (NAR) will be produced in line with the NAR template.**
1.4.2	**Internal QA checks will be conducted by a nominated, trained and knowledgeable person(s).**
1.4.3	**The number of quotations required for needs assessment reports (NAR).**
1.4.4	**Assistive technology training quotations, SFE/SFW must be supplied with 2 like for like quotes.**
1.4.5	**Ergonomic equipment quotations, SFE/SFW must be supplied with 3 like for like quotes.**
1.4.6	**Standard quotations templates will be used for obtaining quotes. The assessment centre will use the standard quotation templates for obtaining quotes for inclusion in the needs assessment report (NAR).**
1.4.7	**The draft report will be sent to the student within 10 working days from the assessment interview taking place.**
1.4.8	**The draft report can be omitted if strategies are agreed with the student at the assessment interview and no follow up research is required.**
1.4.9	**Agreed amendments will be issued within a maximum of 3 working days following approval of the draft report by the student.**
1.4.10	**The final report will be sent to the funding body by email (via secure internet) or by other secure method approved by the funding body within 1 working day from the student's approval.**
1.4.11	**The final report will be issued to the student by email/post within 1 working day from the student's approval.**
1.4.12	**The assessment centre will undertake on-going customer feedback relating to the student's experience.**

1.4 Post Assessment Stage

1.4.1 Draft Needs Assessment Report produced

Standard	Measure
a) The draft needs assessment report (NAR) will be produced in line with the NAR template. The NAR template is available on the DSA-QAG website http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html b) Guidelines in relation to the quality of the NAR are included in the Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report (Appendix 2)	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with current NAR template • Evidence of compliance with the Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report (Appendix 2) • Evidence of internal QA process • Evidence of required quotations obtained for each assessment (Template 5)

1.4.2 Internal QA check nominated person specification

Standard	Measure
Where the QA is not conducted by the assessment centre manager, the needs assessment report will be QA checked by a nominated, trained and knowledgeable person(s) before it is sent to the student. The QA person must be able to evidence their knowledge and experience related to: • disability and specific learning difficulties in education • relevant legislation & guidance related to funding of the Disabled Students' Allowance: Department for Business, Innovation & Skills(BIS) and familiarity with the BIS guidance • required report format and methodology • assistive technology appropriate to the reports being quality assured • and, relevant continuing professional development Records of quality assurance processes must be maintained by the centre and be available for audit. This must include quality assurance for assessments conducted at outreach venues.	• Internal – evidence of adherence to internal procedures with QA track able report (i.e. reviewer responsible/ referral process/ timelines) • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer to DSA-QAG Website www.dsa-qag.org.uk) • Evidence of compliance with the Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report (Appendix 2) • Evidence of adherence to internal training policies for new QA • Evidence of compliance to internal QA process • Staff Competency Framework (Appendix 8)

1.4.3 Quotations for Equipment

Standard	Measure
Centres undertaking assessments administered by SFE/SFW will be required to submit 3 quotations for equipment. Centres undertaking assessments administered by other funding bodies will adhere to the individual funding body procedure for quotations. All quotes for equipment should be obtained from a DSA-QAG registered AT Provider or specialist supplier where appropriate. **Note:** Assessors should refrain from requesting additional unnecessary quotes (more than the number specified by the Funding Body) from AT Providers.	• Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer to DSA QAG Website www.dsa-qag.org.uk) • Evidence of compliance with the Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report (Appendix 2) • Evidence of internal QA process

1.4.4 Quotations for Assistive Technology Training

Standard	Measure
Where virtual /online assistive technology training is proposed, assessors must submit 2 like for like quotes to SFE/SFW, and an outline of the training content. Centres undertaking assessments administered by other funding bodies will adhere to the individual funding body procedure for quotations. The preference of the student regarding face-to-face or online training, and any issues noted, must be recorded within the NAR.	• Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer to DSA-QAG website www.dsa-qag.org.uk) • Evidence of compliance with the Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report (Appendix 2) • Evidence of internal QA process

1.4.5 Quotations for Ergonomic Equipment

Standard	Measure
Centres undertaking assessments administered by SFE/SFW will be required to submit 1 quotation for ergonomic equipment. Centres undertaking assessments administered by other funding bodies will adhere to the individual funding body procedure for quotations. All quotes for ergonomic equipment should be obtained from a DSA-QAG registered AT Provider or specialist supplier where appropriate. **Note:** Assessors should refrain from requesting additional unnecessary quotes (more than the number specified by the Funding Body) from AT Providers.	• Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with NAR Framework (refer to DSA QAG Website www.dsa-qag.org.uk) • Evidence of compliance with the Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report (Appendix 2) • Evidence of internal QA process

1.4.6 Standard quotations templates

Standard	Measure
The standard quotation templates will be used for obtaining quotations from AT Providers of equipment, suppliers of specialist equipment and non-medical helper services. Template 5 (a-c) contains- • Quotation Document 1: Assessor Requirements • Quotation Document 2: AT Providers • Quotation Document 3: Specialist Supplier Quotes • Quotation Document 4: Assistive Technology Training Please refer to Standard Quote Guidance, April 2010 and Appendix 9, for reference. Alternatively, Assessors may use the CQS online system for obtaining quotes which has been agreed by SFE and associated funding bodies.	• QA audit • Evidence of compliance with the standard quote documentation

1.4.7 Send draft report to student (Key Performance Indicator)

Standard	Measure
A draft report will be sent to the (Opt In) student within a maximum of 10 working days from the date of the assessment interview.	• Customer feedback • External – M.I. tracking process • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

1.4.8 Option to omit draft report stage

Standard	Measure
If strategies are agreed during the assessment interview and no further research is necessary, such as contact with the Institution/student/AT provider, the draft report stage can be omitted by mutual consent between the student and the assessor (refer to 1.3.6).	• Customer feedback • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit • Evidence of completed Use of Equipment pro forma – part 1 (Template 3)

1.4.9 Student approval / discussion / agree amendments (Key Performance Indicator).

Standard	Measure
The assessor will issue agreed amendments within a maximum of 3 working days following approval of the draft report by the student.	• Customer feedback • External – M.I. tracking process • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

1.4.10 Final report prepared and sent to funding body for approval (Key Performance Indicator).

Standard	Measure
The centre will ensure the final report is sent to the funding body either by secure email (via secure internet), or other secure method as accepted by the funding body. a) within a maximum of 1 working day from opt in student's approval b) within 10 working days from date of opt out student's	• External – M.I. tracking process • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

approval

Note: All email communication, containing personal information must be secure. The centre may request the assessor carries out this action, but ultimate accountability lies with the centre.

1.4.11 Final report issued to all students (Key Performance Indicator).

Standard	Measure
The assessment centre will issue a copy of the final report sent to the student by email (or the student's preferred method) within a maximum of 1 working day from student approval (opt in) or 10 working days from date of appointment (opt out). **Note**: All email communication, containing personal information must be secure; attachments to email communications to the student should be locked, for example, report sent as a PDF file.	• Customer feedback • External – M.I. tracking process • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

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1.4.12 Evaluation after receipt / use of equipment and other support.

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will provide students with the DSA-QAG online student survey http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/student-survey.html for online feedback. The URL to be included in student correspondence. **Note:** If students cannot use online feedback, alternative formats will be available on request from DSA-QAG.	• Customer feedback • QA audit

2.0 Policy and Procedures– Standards and Measures

2.1 Centre Facilities

The service standards relating to the assessment centre facilities are:

2.1.1	All equipment listed in the "Equipment Requirements" will be available.
2.1.2	Inspection & testing of electrical equipment.
2.1.3	Assessment centre offering outreach services will be in compliance with Appendix 3.
2.1.4	Outreach centres will be in compliance with Appendix 3, section1.
2.1.5	HEI outreach centres will be in compliance with Appendix 3, section2.
2.1.6	Individual student response assessments will be conducted in compliance with Appendix 3, section 3.
2.1.7	Registration of new outreach services.

2.1 Centre Facilities

2.1.1 Availability of equipment

Standard	Measure
Centres will have available the equipment listed in the Equipment Requirements outlined in http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html. A record of all assessment centre equipment is to be maintained for audit purposes (refer to Template 7, Asset Management Record). **Note:** For centres operating outreach services, an individual asset management record must be maintained for each outreach venue.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance sample check of Asset Management Record (Template 7) • Evidence of compliance with Equipment Requirements http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html.

2.1.2 Inspection & testing of electrical equipment

Standard	Measure
The safe working condition of portable electrical equipment (i.e. laptop power supplies) is the responsibility of the assessment centre manager. It is a requirement that centres carry out PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) on all portable electrical equipment as a minimum every two years. For centres based in HE Institutions, PAT testing is to be in accordance with the individual institution's PAT testing policy and procedures, which must be available for audit. Further guidance on PAT can be found on the HSE website http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm	• QA audit • Asset Management Record (Template 7)

2.1.3 Outreach Services

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres operating outreach services will do so in compliance with the Outreach Criteria outlined in Appendix 3.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Outreach Service Models (Appendix 3)

2.1.4 Outreach Centres (OC)

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres operating outreach centre(s) will do so in compliance with the Outreach Services document – section 1, Outreach Centre criteria outlined in Appendix 3. Fully equipped assessment rooms must be available for assessors conducting assessments at outreach centres. Equipment is required to be PAT tested (i.e. laptop power supplies).	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Outreach Service Models – outreach centre (Appendix 3, section 1) • Equipment requirements compliance http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html • Asset Management Record (Template 7)

2.1.5 HEI Outreach Centres (HOC)

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres operating HEI outreach centre will do so in compliance with the Outreach Services document – section 2, HEI Outreach Centre criteria outlined in Appendix 3. Fully equipped assessment rooms must be available for assessors conducting assessments at outreach centres. Equipment is required to be PAT tested (i.e. laptop power supplies).	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Outreach Service Models – HEI outreach centre (Appendix 3, section 2) • Equipment requirements compliance http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html • Asset Management Record (Template 7)

2.1.6 Individual Student Responses (ISRs)

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres conducting individual student responses will do so in compliance with the Outreach Services document – section 3, Individual Student Response outlined in Appendix 3. Mobile kits in line with the mobile equipment list http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html must be available for assessors conducting assessments at a student's home or residential accommodation. Mobile kits are required to be PAT tested.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Outreach Service Models – ISR (Appendix 3, section 3) • Evidence of Compliance with the Mobile Kit requirements http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/qaf.html • Asset Management Record (Template 7)

2.1.7 Registration of new outreach services

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres are required to notify DSA-QAG of new outreach services to be operated by completing and submitting the appropriate outreach application prior to the opening of the service. This will allow DSA-QAG to complete the registration process with the assessment centre. Outreach service registration forms available for download http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/hoc-oc-registration-documents.html **Note:** Centres must not assess students until the registration process has been completed in full.	• Customer feedback • QA audit • Evidence of compliance with the outreach service registration process for HOC/OC

2.2 Policy and Procedures

The service standards relating to the policy and procedures are:

2.2.1	**Assessment centres will maintain a database recording performance against predetermined performance indicators.**
2.2.2	**Assessment centres will operate a complaints policy and procedure.**
2.2.3	**Assessment centres will have appropriate health & safety policies and procedures.**
2.2.4	**Assessment centres will maintain records in compliance with the Data Protection Act and records will contain only information relevant to the provision of support for the student. Students' data must not be transferred or sold to third parties.**
2.2.5	**All centres will have relevant insurance including employer's liability.**
2.2.6	**Assessment centres will complete QAG statistical returns as required.**
2.2.7	**Assessment centres will be independent and objective in the selection of AT Providers.**
2.2.8	**Assessment centres will maintain a Register of Interest (ROI) for employees.**
2.2.9	**Assessment Centres will maintain a Register of Interest (ROI) for the organisation.**

2.2 Policy and Procedures

2.2.1 Management KPI's

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres are required to hold and maintain a data system which is fit for purpose as detailed in DSA-QAG Key Performance Indicators (Appendix 4). MI data must be **automated** to allow for accurate reproduction of data during monthly KPI returns, annual audits or to assist with KPI Performance Monitoring analysis, as and when required by DSA-QAG. **Note:** For centres operating outreach services, KPI data must be accurately recorded at the main centre.	• External – M.I. tracking process • Evidence of M.I. criteria relating to KPIs (Appendix 4) • Internal – evidence of tracking process • QA audit

2.2.2 Complaints procedure

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will operate and adhere to a relevant, published complaints procedure and associated procedures as outlined in Appendix 5. **Note:** For centres operating outreach services, staff or 3rd parties involved, must be fully aware of the centres complaints procedure.	• Evidence of practice including adherence to Complaints Procedure (Appendix 5) and actions taken on complaints • QA audit

2.2.3 Health and safety

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will operate and adhere to a relevant health and safety policy and associated procedures as outlined in Appendix 6. **Note:** Centres based within an institution may be covered by the institution's health & safety policy and must include, as a minimum, the areas outlined in Appendix 6.	• Evidence of compliance to Health and Safety Policy and Procedure (Appendix 6) • QA audit

2.2.4 Data protection

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will maintain records in compliance with the Data Protection Act. Assessment centres will maintain records containing only sufficient relevant information to enable them to meet their liabilities relating to support for the student. Students' data must not be transferred or sold to third parties external to the Disabled Students' Allowance process. **Note:** For centres operating outreach services, the main centre is responsible for ensuring adherence to the Data Protection Act.	• QA audit • Evidence of compliance with the Data Protection Act

2.2.5 Insurance

Standard	Measure
All centres must have relevant insurance including Employer's and Public Liability. **Note:** For centres operating outreach services, the main centre is responsible for ensuring relevant insurance including Employer's and Public Liability covers the outreach venue and staff.	• Evidence of relevant and up-to-date insurance certificates • QA audit

2.2.6 Statistical returns to DSA-QAG

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will complete and submit an annual Statistical Return (refer to Appendix 7) via the DSA-QAG online portal. **Note:** For centres operating outreach services, the main centre is responsible for ensuring statistics for outreach assessments are included.	• Completed Statistical Return (Appendix 7)

2.2.7 Independence

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will be independent and objective in the selection of AT providers. The centre manager is responsible for ensuring a suitable policy is in place for selecting AT providers, and ensuring assessors adhere to the centres AT provider policy. As per the Department for Business Innovation and Skills Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) guidance, in some exceptional cases, it may be felt that the student's disability officer is best qualified to assess the student's course related needs. In such circumstances, and if the student wishes to pursue this option, the assessment centre / disability officer is required to explain and record (Needs Assessment Report) the reasons for this action, see "Disabled Students' Allowance Legislation and the Administration of DSA Applications" published by the Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).	• QA audit • Evidence of documentation relating to AT Providers Selection Policy

2.2.8 Register of Interest (Employees)

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will request an updated Register of Interest (ROI) for each employee annually and will maintain a log for their employees. The purpose of the register is for assessment centre employees to record if they are aware of any potential conflict of interests that may affect the organisation's independence from AT providers or other parties involved in the Disabled Students' Allowance assessment and supply of equipment process. An example of an appropriate register of interest declaration is included in Template 6. Register of interest declarations must include the employee's relationships with 3rd parties who provide goods/services or sponsorship in any form to interested parties such as assessors or funding body staff.	• QA audit - review of a sample of Register of Interest declaration for employees (Template 6) • Register of interest log for employees

2.2.9 Register of Interest (Organisational)

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will maintain an organisational Register of Interest (ROI) for the organisation. This is to ensure that student interests are safeguarded, that public funds are not misused, and that there is no self-promotion of services for personal or organisational gain. The purpose of the register is for the assessment centre to register details of all the services they provide, if these fall within more than one of the areas shown on the chart at Template 8 – Register of Interest (Organisation), Appendix 1. Organisations are required to show the steps or measures they take to ensure that the risk of conflict of interest is appropriately managed and the process followed to avoid the conflicts set out in the principle statement. It is the responsibility for the assessment centre to notify DSA-QAG of any changes to their services which impact on the Register of Interest(s). The assessment centre is required to contact DSA-QAG as soon as a change occurs and submit an updated ROI (Organisational) which will be held by DSA-QAG. The ROI must be reviewed on an annual basis by the organisation.	• QA audit - review Register of Interest Declaration for the organisation (Template 8)

2.3 Human Resources

The service standards relating to Human Resources are:

2.3.1	**Assessment centres will measure staff knowledge, skill and experience using a Staff Competency Framework.**
2.3.2	**The centre manager will be responsible for compliance with QAF criteria.**
2.3.3	**The assessment centre will possess and operate Human Resources Policy and Procedures.**
2.3.4	**Assessment centres will operate an Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure.**
2.3.5	**Assessment centres will operate a Performance Management System.**
2.3.6	**Assessment centres will ensure they conduct DBS checks for employed staff that may be in one to one contact with students.**

2.3 Human Resources

2.3.1 Assessor's knowledge, skills and experience

Standard	Measure
Assessors will possess the knowledge, skills, and experience as laid out in the Staff Competency Framework (Appendix 8) and practice in compliance with all relevant standards and guidance, applicable.	• QA audit • Annual assessor observation documentation • Evidence of compliance with Staff Competency Framework (Appendix 8)

2.3.2 Centre manager knowledge and competence

Standard	Measure
The centre manager will demonstrate knowledge and competence by ensuring that the centre's systems and processes comply with the QAF framework. In addition to providing an efficient student led service the centre manager is responsible for; • ensuring that all quality assurance is in accordance with BIS guidance and in the spirit of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) i.e. every student is entitled to an independent evaluation of their 'extra' need • is responsible for all recommendations made by the centre i.e. he/she is responsible for overseeing all quality assurance i.e. the final arbitrator for what is an 'extra' need and can be permitted by the assessors • ensuring staff are kept up to date of any amendments to BIS Guidance, sector developments and relevant assistive technology updates • initial training and performance review of assessors and QA staff • conducting assessor audit observations • undertaking and documenting all assessor appraisals and staff appraisals • arbitration, on 'additional' recommendations made by assessors' within reports, as required **Note:** New managers and centres are required to supply evidence and references to DSA-QAG to confirm they meet with requirements contained in the Centre Managers' Competency Framework (Appendix 13).	• QA audit • Evidence of adherence to QAF framework • Evidence of overseeing recommendations • Evidence of assessors' report arbitration • Evidence of CPD and training records • Evidence of sector development communication • Evidence of compliance to BIS guidance • Evidence of assessor appraisal documentation • Evidence of meeting the Centre Manager Competency Framework (Appendix 13)

2.3.3 Human Resources (HR)

Standard	Measure
The assessment centre will possess and operate a Human Resource policy and procedure. **Note:** Centres based within an institution may be covered under the institution's HR policy and procedures.	• QA audit • Evidence of compliance to the Human Resource Policy and Procedures

2.3.4 Equality and Diversity

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will operate and adhere to an Equality and Diversity policy and procedure. **Note:** Centres based within an institution may be covered under the institution's Equality and Diversity policy and procedure.	• QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure

2.3.5 Performance Management

Standard	Measure
Assessment centres will operate a Performance Management System which will include: • a structured induction programme • regular staff appraisals • evidence of CPD • evidence of staff development and training • evidence of annual assessment observations (Template 2) **Note**: Centres based within an institution may be covered under the institution's Performance Management policy and procedures.	• QA audit • Evidence of compliance with Performance Management System • Evidence of annual assessment observations

2.3.6 Safeguarding and Basic Disclosure Check

Standard	Measure
Centre managers will ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures including Lone Working are in place and followed by all centre staff. It is the responsibility of the centre manager to ensure all staff in the centre, who work on a one-to-one basis with students, has as a minimum, a current basic disclosure check. A basic disclosure can be obtained via Disclosure Scotland, in addition to CRB agencies: http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/apply-online/ Assessment centres based within an institution may be covered by the institution's safeguarding policies and procedures, where they reflect the operation of the centre. However, a minimum of a basic disclosure check is required. Where such policies and procedures are not in place, the centre will be required to have their own. **Note:** Safeguarding policies and procedures must cover all models of service delivery, including outreach and pre-authorised individual student response assessments undertaken at another venue than the main or outreach centre.	• QA audit • Evidence of compliance with safeguarding/DBS policies and procedures • Sample check of staff records - staff CRB or DBS checks.

Appendices

The undernoted appendices are available for download from the DSA QAG website via http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/appendices.html

Appendix 1: Accommodation Requirements

Appendix 2: Quality Auditing the Needs Assessment Report

Appendix 3: Outreach Criteria

Appendix 4: Management Information Key Performance Indicators

Appendix 5: Complaints Procedure

Appendix 6: Health & Safety Policy and Procedure

Appendix 7: Statistical Return

Appendix 8: Staff Competency Framework

Appendix 9: Standard Quotation Template

Appendix 10: Accessibility Guidelines

Appendix 11: Opening Hour Guidance

Appendix 12: Directional Information Guidance

Appendix 13: Centre Manager Competency Framework

Appendix 14: Telephone Assessments

Appendix 1: Accommodation Requirements

The criteria detailed below apply to the accommodation requirements at DSA-QAG assessment centres and outreach centres/facilities other than those assessments undertaken in the student's residence.

Building Facilities

- Building is suitable to students including those with physical and sensory impairments.
- Building is accessible to students including those with physical and, sensory impairments.
- Building has at least one wheelchair accessible assessment room with demonstration equipment.
- Procedures are in place for client and staff safety.
- All information is in secure storage in compliance with the Data Protection Act and individual centre's policy.
- Centre has access to appropriate space for meetings, training and staff development.

Car parking

- Best practice is that the assessment centre is required to arrange a disabled parking bay, when this is required by a student.
- Car parking spaces for students with mobility impairments are in a convenient location.
- Where best practice is not feasible, the assessment centre must inform the client in advance and provide details of local parking or to discuss alternative travel arrangements.

Toilets

- The assessment centre will have at least one accessible toilet.
- Toilet facilities are fitted with a panic alarm.
- Toilet facilities are compliant with Health and Safety requirements.
- Toilet facilities are compliant with British Standards Regulations.

Reception

- A reception area is available. This is not required to be a dedicated space of the assessment centre.
- The reception area is suitable to students with physical and sensory impairments
- The reception area is accessible to students with physical and sensory impairments.
- The reception area has appropriate seating.
- A receptionist or an assessor is present to greet the client.

Assessment Rooms

- The centre has at least one dedicated assessment room with at least the minimum equipment specified on the Equipment Requirements list.
- The assessment room is appropriate to students including students with physical and sensory impairments.
- The assessment room is accessible to students including students with physical and sensory impairments.
- The assessment space provides a confidential and appropriate environment.
- The assessment room meets the needs of the individual.

- The assessment room has:
  - Adjustable lighting
  - Task Lighting
  - Adjustable desk and chair
  - Computer or laptop for demonstration/student trial of software
  - Internet access
  - Adequate ventilation
  - Adjustable controls for heating
  - Alert method (e.g. panic alarm/button on phone)

Appendix 2: Quality Auditing of Needs Assessment Report

As part of the DSA-QAG quality audit conducted at an assessment centre, the auditor will review a sample of student needs assessment reports. The criteria for auditing the reports will be based on the SFE guidance model for completing the needs assessment report (refer to DSA-QAG website, www.dsa-qag.org.uk, Needs Assessment Report & Guidance). The following areas will be reviewed:

- Evidence of Information Gathering **(Section A of the report)**
- Identification of Need **(Section B of the report)**
- Identifying Suitable Support Strategies **(Section C of the report)**

In addition the following fields completed on the report will be verified against the assessment centre's Disabled Students' Allowance database:

- Date of Assessment
- Date of Draft Report
- Assessor / Assessment Centre Disclosure
- Assessment Venue
- Name and Position of Reviewer
- Date of QA Review
- Date Report Issued to Student
- Date Report Issued to Funding Body
- DSA-QAG registered AT provider (exceptions for specialist equipment)
- Number of quotes obtained in line with the funding body's internal processes (equipment /non-medical helpers)

Appendix 3: Outreach Service Criteria

Reference

Whilst many needs assessments are usually delivered within the environment of an accredited centre there will sometimes be a need for assessments to be undertaken at a student's home, accommodation or place of study by reasons of difficulty in travelling, overriding personal circumstances or disability. In these cases this will always be agreed in advance with the student.

Needs assessment reports relating to assessments undertaken in any outreach capacity must be quality assured by a suitably trained person. Where an assessment takes place through outreach this should be stated along with the reason on the needs assessment report.

In addition, there sometimes arise circumstances in which there may be good reasons for an assessment to be conducted at other venues identified in advance and appropriately equipped as per the outreach centre equipment requirement and outreach facilities mobile kit requirements, and otherwise suitable for assessments. The following three models will clarify the different arrangements for assessments.

Model 1 - Outreach Centre (OC)

An outreach centre (OC) is defined as an alternative venue for assessments at a different location to and managed by the main centre, providing assessments **to students studying at or applying to any institution.**

Model 2 – HEI Outreach Centre (HOC)

An HEI outreach centre (HOC) is defined as an alternative venue for assessments managed by the main centre, located in an HEI and providing a service **for students currently studying at that institution only**. The service is not available to students who are studying at other institutions or those applying and not yet following a course.

Model 3 – Individual Student Response (ISR)

An individual student response is defined as a service available to a student in '**exceptional circumstances'**. The main centre is required to seek authorisation from the funding body prior to confirming an assessment of needs appointment with the student. The assessment should not be confirmed until this authorisation is obtained.

Website publications and advertising

The OC and/or HOC will be listed on DSA-QAG website and the main centre may choose to advertise their accredited outreach centre on their website.

Section 1 - Outreach Centre Criteria

The main accredited centre **must** submit a registration form (http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/hoc-oc-registration-documents.html) as part of the registration process –

- signed duly by the centre manager
- must include details of the rationale for setting up the outreach provision
- start and end date, with an annual review of the operation included
- a withdrawal clause
- full disclosure of all financial arrangements, disclosure of any other mutually beneficial arrangements
- disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, including where in-house training or NMH are available and demonstration of conflicts are avoided. The SLA must be submitted to DSA-QAG annually when requested and will be reviewed as part of the HOC audit.

The application will be held confidentially by DSA-QAG.

1.1 Equipment - An individual asset management record must be maintained for each outreach venue. Each outreach centre will be fully kitted to enable the assessment to be conducted in full, and to allow for demonstration of equipment to take place**.**

1.2 Needs Assessment Process – Needs assessments conducted at outreach centres must be done so in compliance with QAF points 1.1.1 to 1.1.14. Please note, the needs assessment report must be completed recording the location where the assessment took place.

1.3 Outreach Facilities – The facilities at an outreach centre will be in compliance with QAF points 1.2.1 to 1.2.5. Please note, the outreach centre must have a dedicated assessment room.

1.4 Policies and Procedures – Outreach centre's policies and procedures will be in compliance with QAF points 2.2.1 to 2.2.9.

Section 2 - HEI Outreach Centre Criteria

The main accredited centre **must** submit a service level agreement (SLA) (http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/hoc-oc-registration-documents.html) as part of the registration process -

- signed duly by the HEI and the main centre
- the SLA must include details of the rationale for setting up the outreach provision
- start and end date, with an annual review of the operation included
- a withdrawal clause
- includes an agreement for the host HEI to meet reasonable requests from DSA-QAG to evidence that the institution's students are being allowed to make an informed choice of assessment centre
- full disclosure of all financial arrangements, disclosure of any other mutually beneficial arrangements
- disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, including where in-house training or NMH are available and demonstration of conflicts are avoided. The SLA must be submitted to DSA-QAG annually when requested and will be reviewed as part of the HOC audit.

The application will be held confidentially by DSA-QAG.

2.1 Equipment - An individual asset management record must be maintained for each outreach venue. Each HOC will be fully kitted to enable the assessment to be conducted in full, and to allow for demonstration of equipment to take place**.**

2.2 Needs Assessment Process – Needs assessments conducted at HOCs must be done so in compliance with QAF points 1.1.1 to 1.1.14. Please note, the needs assessment report must be completed recording the location where the assessment took place.

2.3 Outreach Facilities – Outreach facilities will be in compliance with QAF points 1.2.1 to 1.2.5. Please note, the outreach centre must have a dedicated assessment room.

2.4 Policies and Procedures – Outreach centre's policies and procedures will be in compliance with QAF points 2.2.1 to 2.2.9. Where a HOC is using the HEI's policy documents, this must be indicated on the SLA document.

Section 3 - Individual Student Response Criteria

Criteria on which the decision to authorise an ISR may include:

1. **Study location** – a location where there is no main or outreach centre within reasonable reach of where the student is currently studying. 'Reasonable' may be defined, for example, when:

   a. travel time is more than 1 hour each way
   b. public transport is poor and would require complicated arrangements such as several changes that the student would have difficulty managing (see 3)

2. **Student location** – when the student is unable to travel due to personal circumstances, for example-

   a. Studying from home and unable to leave the house due to ill health or disability (see 3)
   b. They are in secure accommodation

3. **Accessibility** –where the impact of the student's disability makes travel to a main, outreach centre or HEI outreach centre unreasonable or unfeasible, and where alternatives, for example private car or funded taxi transport, have been evaluated and confirmed unavailable or impractical. For example, where the student has

   a. mobility difficulties that make use of any form of transport to the centre impossible or unreasonable (see 1 and 2)
   b. stamina, mental health, anxiety or severe organisational issues, when the travel time or a complicated journey may be beyond the personal resources of the student (see 1)

Notes:
- An ISR will only be available to students in exceptional circumstances, where justification is clear, and not in response to their request.
- It is the responsibility of the assessment centre/assessor to provide adequate detail to inform the decision-making process of the funding body prior to authorisation. This should include evidence of distance and relevant details, including that alternatives have been evaluated, for example provision of taxi transport to take the student to a main or Outreach centre.
- Every request for an ISR must be **individually justified** based on the accessibility of the service to the individual student, taking all the circumstances into account. An ISR should not be requested, or the decision to authorise an ISR should not be based, solely on an individual's disability. For example, it should not be assumed that a wheelchair user or a blind student is unable to travel to a main or outreach centre.
- Inadequate justification for an ISR will be referred back to the centre. If no more information is available, the ISR will not be authorised.

3.1 Equipment – the main centre will supply and ensure that the appropriate mobile kit in line with the QAF is taken by the assessors to the student's home, HEI residence or other venue to allow the assessment to be conducted in full, and to allow for demonstration of equipment to take place.

3.2 Need Assessment Report – must be completed recording the location where the assessment took place, the reason for the ISR and the 'authorisation to assess' details from SFE and other funding bodies.
3.3 Volume of assessments - a maximum number of **10** per annum at one location is acceptable. More than 10 assessments, the main centre may be requested to apply for OC or HOC registration depending on the location. The number of ISRs undertaken at an individual location, and the criteria on which they may be authorised, will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by DSA QAG in consultation with SFE as the

main funding body. All funding body authorisations for ISRs must be available for annual audit.

The accredited centre's monthly KPIs will be monitored and where elevated/increasing numbers are identified/reported contact will be made by DSA QAG with the centre manager and will also be raised by DSA QAG at audit.

Any issues of non-compliance reported by the auditor, for example ISR not pre-authorised or appropriately justified in the needs assessment report, may result in funding bodies declining to authorise future ISR assessments. Any additional occurrences identified may impact on the main centre's accreditation.

Appendix 4: Management Information Key Performance.

The following Quality Assurance Framework KPIs will be reported by assessment centres on a monthly basis by the 8th working day of the month.

Timetable of KPI deadlines available here http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/Members-Log-In/ac-kpi-documentation.html

QAF Ref	Description	Standard
1.1.5	Needs assessment appointment given on initial contact (providing funding body confirmation letter in place).	Immediate
1.1.6	No of appointments withheld until medical & funding body evidence provided	Immediate
1.1.7	Confirmation of appointment letter sent to the student immediately on scheduling the appointment.	1 day
1.1.8	Letter requesting medical and funding body evidence	1 day
1.1.10	Needs assessment appointment time frame.	15 days
1.4.7	Draft report issued to student.	10 days
1.4.9	Agreed amendments processed.	3 days
1.4.10	Final report issued to funding body.	1 day Opt in 10 day Opt out
1.4.11	Final report issued to student.	Opt in - 1 day email/ 3 days post Opt out - 10 days for opt out

Note: In each KPI standard, "days" refers to working days.

Appendix 5: Complaints Procedure

Assessment centres will have a documented complaints procedure which will be published on their website and available in other accessible formats. As a minimum the document will:

1. State the assessment centre's complaints policy.
2. Explain that complaints will be handled in a professional and non-confrontational manner.
3. Explain how students/customers can complain and identify the stages in the complaints process.
4. Explain who will listen to the complaint.
5. Explain the method by which the organisation will respond.
6. Provide the timeframe within which the organisation will respond to the complaint.
7. Explain the options for the student/customer if they remain dissatisfied after the assessment centre's initial response and wish to escalate their complaint.
8. Identify a third party to whom the customer may complain.
9. Identify the ultimate point of appeal if the student/customer remains dissatisfied.

Assessment centres will also maintain a complaint log which will include:

1. The student's/customer's name and account reference.
2. Date of the complaint.
3. A flag to indicate if the complaint is "open" or resolved.
4. Nature of the complaint.
5. Record (including dates) of the assessment centre's response and any actions taken.
6. Record of subsequent correspondence or discussions with the student/customer.

Appendix 6: Health & Safety Policy and Procedure

Assessment centres will have a documented health & safety procedure which will include as a minimum:

1. A health and safety policy statement which will state:

   - The centre's objectives and commitments in relation to health & safety
   - The centre's responsibilities
   - The relevant health and safety legislation

2. Specific Procedures in relation to:

   - Fire precautions
   - First aid
   - Signs and notices
   - Workplace welfare e.g.
     - Access & egress
     - Ventilation
     - Lighting
     - Temperature
     - Sanitary facilities
     - Cleanliness
     - Facilities for rest and eating
   - Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)
     The minimum frequency for PAT testing is 1 year for items that are moved regularly, for example laptops and 2 years for all other relevant equipment. For centres based in HE Institutions PAT testing is to be in accordance with the individual institution's PAT testing policy and procedures, which must be available for audit.
   - Risk assessments, including:
     - Lone working
     - Residential visits
     - Access to, and usage of, centre facilities by disabled customers.

The health and safety policy and procedures will apply to outreach facilities as well as the main assessment centre.

Information on Health and Safety link www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.pdf

Appendix 7: Statistical Return

ACCREDITED CENTRE – DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE (DSA)

STATISTICAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR _____

Centre Name	
Centre Address	
Centre Manager	
Telephone	
Fax	
Email	

ANNUAL STATISTICAL RETURN – SECTION A

- Please provide accurate information
- The statistics supplied may be analysed by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) for future DSA policy.

UCAS Code	HESA Code	Disability or special needs/support required	Number assessed from (start date) to (end date)	
A	00	No Known Disability		
B	53	Student has Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome		
C	58	Student is blind/partially sighted		
D	57	Student is deaf/hard of hearing		
E	54	Student has unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy		
F	55	Student has mental health condition, such as depression		
G	51	Student has specific difficulty, e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D		
H	56	Student is a wheelchair user/has mobility difficulties		
I	96	Student has a disability or special need not listed above		
J	08	Student has two or more of the above disabilities/special needs		
		TOTAL B		

Please record all students assessed **once** only [i.e. in one UCAS code box only: for example if student has dyslexia plus a hearing impairment they should be recorded once as code J] to ensure total numbers are accurate.

Total numbers recorded in sections "A" should equal sections "B"

ANNUAL STATISTICAL RETURN – SECTION B

- Please provide accurate information

Number of Students Assessed by Study Mode and Funding Body	(start date) to (end date)						
	Undergraduate Full Time	Undergraduate Part Time	Postgraduate Full Time	Postgraduate Part Time	Undergraduate Full Time "Top up"	Undergraduate Part Time "Top Up"	Postgraduate Full Time "Top up"	Postgraduate Part Time "Top Up"
Student Finance England								
Student Finance Wales								
Scottish Awards Agency (SAAS)								
Northern Ireland Education Library Board								
Open University								
Other(s) e.g. NHS.								
TOTAL B								

Appendix 8: Staff Competency Framework

The following document outlines the knowledge, skills, behaviours and qualifications/experience as a necessary minimum requirement of assessors undertaking needs assessments for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) students.

Staff Competencies			
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**	**Qualifications and Experience**
Relevant Legislation	Well Organised	Personal Conduct	Relevant professional development
Specific Impairments	Written Communication	Professional Conduct	Evidence of induction and approval procedures
DSA legislation and guidance	Oral Communication	Responsibility towards Customers	Evidence of CPD
DSA schemes	Interpersonal Skills	Sensitive, Flexible, Responsive	Standard needs assessment report format and methodology
Higher Education Sector	Investigative / Research Skills		Adherence to centre guidelines & policies
Teaching and learning mechanisms	Negotiation Skills		On-going assistive technology updates
Assistive Technologies	Analytical Skills		Providing assistive technology recommendation rationale
Recognised AT providers	Report Writing Skills		Adherence to legislation & guidance: BIS guidance
Support strategies for non-diagnostic/medical help	Diplomacy		Identifying needs specific impairments
Non-DSA support mechanisms			Undertaking assessment observations
Access to learning funds			Provide concise reports recommending the need and strategy solution
Equality and Diversity			Continued development through attendance of Assessor training days
Understanding of QAF requirements			
Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour	Qualifications and Experience

How competencies are measured			
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**	**Qualifications and Experience**
Interview	Training new assessor process	Interview	Interview
Appraisal review	Observations	Observations	New assessor training procedures
CPD Folder	QA feedback	Feedback from internal departments within the centre	CPD folder
	Survey feedback	Survey feedback	Appraisal review
	Appraisal review	Appraisal review	
How competencies are documented			
CV and evidence of written work	Training log	Observation document	CV & written evidence
Appraisal form	Observation document	Survey results	Training log
CPD folder	Appraisal form	Appraisal form	CPD folder
	Survey results		Appraisal form

Appendix 9: AT Provider Standard Quotation Template

1. Quotation Document 2: AT Provider Quotation

1.1 Background Information

Assessment Centre Information

Assessment Centre	
Assessor Name	
Assessor/Assessment Centre Email	
Assessment Centre Reference Number	
Student Name	

AT Provider Information

AT Provider Company	
AT Provider Address	
AT Provider Contact Name	
AT Provider Contact Tel No.	
AT Provider Quote ID Number	
DSA-QAG Accreditation Certificate Number	
Date of Quotation	

Length of Course Remaining		
Total Maintenance & Support Period		
Insurance Period		

				Cost	
1.2 Laptop Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.3 Desktop Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

		Cost	
1.4 Software Description	**Please confirm the method of delivery required:** Physical media, electronic download or mix of both.	Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.5 Printer/Scanner Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.6 Digital Recorder Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.7 Ergonomic Equipment & Input Devices Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.8 Equipment for Hearing Impaired Clients Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.9 Equipment for Visually Impaired Clients Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	
1.10 Additional Items Description				Ex VAT	Inc VAT

				Cost	

1.11 Delivery, Set Up & Familiarisation	**Enter X below**		**Enter X below**	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
Standard Delivery & On Site Assembly (1.5 hours)		Delivery, setup and familiarisation			
Extended Delivery & On Site Assembly (up to 2 hours)		Courier with setup and familiarisation on the same day by an engineer			
		Courier delivery, with setup and familiarisation at a later date			
				Ex VAT	**Inc VAT**
Total Cost of Equipment Quote					

				Cost	

1.12 Health Check	**Enter X below**		**Enter X below**	**Ex VAT**	**Inc VAT**
Health Check		Conducted on-site			
Health Check		Conducted remotely			

				Cost	

1.13 Assistive Technology Training Description	**Onsite**	**Remote**	**No. of Sessions (In 2 hour blocks*)**	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
				Ex VAT	**Inc VAT**
Total Cost of Training Quote					

Appendix 10: Accessibility Guidelines

The following guide has been compiled in order to aid current, but mainly new centres, in establishing best practise for their website.

With regards to the QAF, point 1.1.2, centres websites are reviewed by the auditor to check the following criteria –

- the site is accessible
  - o usability
  - o layout
  - o font size (facility to change size)
- displays directional information and maps
- displays current waiting times
- displays opening hours and contact details
- displays the QAF KPI maximum waiting times for an appointment
- displays a statement stating assessments may be conducted at alternative locations to meet the student's needs (if applicable, to the centre)

Please note that the points below are general guidance and are not to be interpreted as a comprehensive listing of all W3C criteria.

For a complete overview and breakdown of all W3C guidelines, please refer to the following web link; http://www.w3.org/WAI/guid-tech.html.

- Accessibility tools should be placed at the top of the page, and in the same position on each page. If this is not possible then instructions on how the student can change the text site and font by using shortcut keys should be displayed on the home page.
- The user's style sheet choice should be maintained as they browse through the site.
- The use of accessibility tools should be intuitive and should have a text description/explanation.
- The user should be able to choose from a range of assistive style sheets. As a minimum the user should be able to:
  - o change the font size (some hard of sight users want to scale up text, others use screen magnifiers and want to shrink it down to mean less moving about)
  - o change the background colour
  - o choose a high contrast style
- Site should be accessible to screen readers, the site would be structured to assist this (the ability to skip repeated content on each page, such as navigation).
- Captions and other alterations for multimedia should be available (i.e. audio descriptive, sign language interpretation of audio, transcripts/captions of audio).
- If the site met all the WCAG requirements some examples of the benefits are...a customer would be able to navigate the site in a manner that suited them (i.e. mouse, keyboard, roller ball or joystick).
- All information that is conveyed graphically should be described in words, to allow screen readers or other assistive technologies to convey the same information.
- Users are given suitable help to avoid and correct mistakes (Pro-active help, i.e. tooltips. suggestions for correction on submitted forms, etc.).
- Large areas of information should be chopped into smaller sections etc.
- Site must ensure that content does not cause seizures (i.e. video, possible advertisements, dynamic features of web UI).
- Interoperable between different web browsers.
- Printer friendly.

Appendix 11: Assessment Centre & Outreach Centre Opening/Staffing Guidance

DSA-QAG does not hold a requirement for assessment centres or outreach centres to operate a strict 9-5 policy. It is, however, essential that assessment centres clearly stipulate on their website their operational hours and the operational hours of their outreach venues.

Assessment centres are required to operate administrative and contact facilities for students during standard office hours, however, not all assessment centres are able to offer needs assessments at all times. If this is the case, it must be clearly detailed on the centre's website when needs assessment are available.

An example is displayed below.

(Insert name of Assessment Centre)   Assessment Centre Opening Times

Day	Office Hours Personnel will be available to answer student calls and queries.	Needs Assessments Assessors are available to carry out needs assessments. **Note:** Below should list the time of the last appointment.
Monday	9am to 5pm	Closed
Tuesday	9am to 5pm	10am to 4pm
Wednesday	9am to 5pm	10am to 4pm
Thursday	9am to 5pm	10am to 4pm
Friday	9am to 5pm	10am to 4pm
Saturday	Closed	10am to 12pm
Sunday	Closed	Closed

(Insert name of Outreach Centre)   Outreach Centre Opening Times

Day	Office Hours Personnel will be available to answer student calls and queries.	Needs Assessments Assessors are available to carry out needs assessments. **Note:** Below should list the time of the last appointment
Monday	9am to 5pm	Closed
Tuesday	9am to 5pm	Closed
Wednesday	9am to 5pm	Closed
Thursday	9am to 5pm	10am to 4pm
Friday	9am to 5pm	10am to 4pm
Saturday	Closed	Closed
Sunday	Closed	Closed

Appendix 12: DSA-QAG Directional Information Guidance

DSA-QAG has undertaken research into the requirements for signage and the alternative methods of providing students with directions. Discussions with British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and Royal National Institute for Blind (RNIB) highlighted several factors to take into consideration when producing directional information, a summary of which can be found below.

DSA-QAG has produced this document to provide assessment centres with guidance, and to allow a degree of flexibility.

RNIB also highlighted the usefulness of staff availability at train stations to ensure the student exits the station at the correct exit; it may be appropriate to contact your local train/bus station and ensure they are aware of your location.

For particularly complicated instructions, for example finding a specific room in a large complex, it may be appropriate to have a member of staff meet the student at a central, easy to find location and escort them to the office.

- Avoid using 'left' and 'right' where possible. Instead, use landmarks to identify the route.
- Student may wish to use text-reading software so ensure written directions are compatible.
- Include the building address and postcode on all directions or maps as a student may wish to navigate using GPS.
- Use cream or pastel paper, justify text to the left, leaving a jagged edge on the right, avoid capital letters mid-sentence, 12 or 14 point text.

Note: The above information was provided as guidance by BDA and RNIB. For further information, please contact BDA or RNIB direct.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that directions are produced in the student's preferred format.

Appendix 13: Centre Manager Competency Framework

The following document outlines the knowledge, skills, behaviours and qualifications/experience as a necessary minimum requirement for a centre manager undertaking needs assessments for DSA students.

Centre Manager Competencies			
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**	**Qualifications and Experience**
Relevant Legislation	Well Organised	Personal Conduct	Relevant professional development
Specific Impairments	Written Communication	Professional Conduct	Evidence of induction and approval procedures
DSA legislation and guidance	Oral Communication	Responsibility towards Customers	Instigating and evidencing their own CPD
DSA schemes	Interpersonal Skills	Sensitive, Flexible, Responsive	Staff development and training of all centre staff and assessors
Higher Education Sector	Investigative / Research Skills		Overseeing all quality assurance in accordance with BIS Guidance and the spirit of the DSA
Teaching and learning mechanisms	Negotiation Skills		Reviewing and quality assuring reports
Assistive Technologies	Analytical Skills		Organising appropriate support
Recognised AT Provider	Report Writing Skills		Assessing individuals across a range of disabilities and specific learning
Non-DSA support mechanisms	Diplomacy		Qualified to degree level or equivalent
Access to learning funds			Ability to make appropriate student support recommendations
Equality and Diversity			
Understanding of QAF requirements			

Appendix 14: Telephone Assessment Guidance

It is accepted that it is most beneficial for a student to attend an accredited assessment centre (or related outreach) for their needs assessment (NA). However, there are circumstances where this may not be possible, for disability related reasons.

In these circumstances the following should be adhered to, in order of preference:

   i.   Assessment at an accredited assessment centre or related outreach
   ii.   The assessor to visit the student's institution with appropriate mobile equipment
   iii. The assessor to visit the student's home with appropriate mobile equipment
   iv.   Telephone assessment

When a telephone assessment is the only option, the student should be informed that, in the future, if they feel capable, they are entitled to a face to face review.

Please note: Authorisation is required before conducting a telephone assessment and must be in place before the appointment is confirmed.

The centre manager/assessor must contact the SFE, DSA Team direct and on receipt of authorisation, and record in the NAR, the funding body contact name and date of authorisation within the 'assessment location' section. The assessor should fully justify why options i to iii were not appropriate, in section A-1. Not being able to offer a mobile assessment (options ii or iii), is not sufficient justification for a telephone assessment.

Note: Assessment centres unable to offer mobile assessments are not authorised to perform telephone assessments. They should direct students who cannot be seen under criteria (i) to a centre where all options are on offer.

Assuming the student has been seen face to face at least once, it would be acceptable to provide a review or 'top-up' by telephone, when appropriate.

There is a special circumstance where it is possible that the student becomes aware of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) when already studying abroad. In these circumstances any centre could perform a telephone assessment, with an obligation to follow up with a face to face review on their return.

For Audit Purposes
DSA-QAG will review a sample check of telephone assessments conducted by the assessment centre against those recorded in the centre and SFE's Telephone Assessment database.

Templates

The undernoted templates are available for download from the DSA QAG website via
http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/templates.html

Template 1: Pre-Assessment Form
Template 2: Observation Criteria
Template 3: Use of Equipment and Consent
Template 4: Consent for Sensitive Personal Data Processing
Template 5(a): Assessor Requirements
Template 5(b): Specialist Equipment Supplier Quote Template
Template 5(c): Assistive Technology Training Quote Template
Template 6: Register of Interest (Employee) Declaration
Template 7: Asset Management Record
Template 8: Register of Interest (Organisational) Declaration

Note: All templates within the QAF have been designed to capture the minimum, mandatory information from students-

- Centres are welcome to adapt and edit these templates for their own use; it is essential that the centre does **not** remove any of the original fields or questions to ensure that all mandatory data is still captured.

- Centres may prefer to merge templates to reduce the number of student signatures required.

- DSA-QAG will provide centres with Word versions of document to enable customisation.

Template 1: Pre-Assessment – Sample 1

STUDENT DETAILS

Name:	Date of Birth
Home Address:	Term Address (if known):
Mobile: Tel: Email:	

COURSE DETAILS (* delete as appropriate)

Full/Part Time*	FT	PT	Year of Study	
Post/Under Graduate*	PG	UG	Course Ends	

INSTITUTION DETAILS

Disability Team Named Contact (if known) Tel: Email:	Course Leader Named Contact: (if known) Tel: Email:

DISABILITY DETAILS

1. What are the main study difficulties caused by your disability/condition? 2. What has been most helpful to you in previous study? 3. If you have been previously assessed for DSA funding, please give the date and details. Please attach a copy of the report, if available.

Please use additional pages, if necessary.

Template 1: Pre-Assessment – Sample 2

Please return this form to: Admin@ACCESS-CENTRE.AC/CO.UK or Fax to: XXXXXXXXX; Post:

Student Name	

University/College Named contact		Email: Telephone:	

Disability	

Impact on Study… ✓					
Handwriting		Typing		Mobility	
Reading speed		Reading accuracy		Reading comprehension	
Concentration		Processing speed		Short-term memory	
Spelling		Grammar		Structure in writing	
Time management		Organisation		Note taking	
Mood		Motivation		Confidence	
Physical health		Energy levels		Coordination	
Vision		Hearing		Communication	

Other comments

Helpful support in previous study?

Have you been previously awarded DSA funding? If yes*, please give date and details.

Please forward a copy a copy of the report, if available.

Template 2: Observation Criteria

Name of Assessor: Name of Student:

Assessment Centre Name: Student Ref:

Location: Date of Observation:

Start Time of Observation:

End Time of Observation:

Access & Facilities:

Assessment Room

The environment of the assessment room was suitable for the student's needs	**Yes** / No
Appropriate resources and equipment were available for demonstration and client evaluation	**Yes** / No
The specific access requirements of the student were met	**Yes** / No

The Assessment Interview:

Student Arrival and Induction (Welcome):

The Assessor:	
Greeted the student	**Yes** / No
Offered the student refreshments	**Yes** / No
Used the student's name	**Yes** / No
Clearly explained the Health & Safety considerations (WC's, fire exits, etc.)	**Yes** / No
Escorted the student to the meeting room or greeted them on arrival at the room (if escorted by a receptionist)	**Yes** / No
Made the student feel at ease	**Yes** / No
Ensured the student was comfortable	**Yes** / No
Was friendly	**Yes** / No
Checked the student had agreed to the assessment observation and this was documented	**Yes** / No
Checked they had the correct information on the student's file	**Yes** / No
Clearly explained the assessment interview process	**Yes** / No
Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the student's disability, based on the diagnostic/medical evidence	**Yes** / No
Managed any third parties appropriately	**Yes** / No
Comments:	

The Assessment Interview (continued):

Conducting the Assessment:

The Assessor:	
Checked the personal details of the student	**Yes** / No
Discussed the background of the student's disability	**Yes** / No
Was well prepared	**Yes** / No
Led a discussion which was student focused	**Yes** / No
Enabled the student to identify and describe the recent & current experience in relation to their disability	**Yes** / No
Listened and responded to the student's skilfully	**Yes** / No
Used open and closed questions appropriately	**Yes** / No
Adopted positive body language	**Yes** / No
Ensured the student understood and was encouraged to engaged with the assessment process	**Yes** / No
Asked the student about any existing technology possessed and discussed suitability for course needs	**Yes** / No
Explained the different delivery of equipment options	**Yes** / No
Discussed the students preferred format for software recommended	**Yes** / No
Explained the equipment upgrade process	**Yes** / No
Explored a range of support strategies and reached an outcome in consultation with the student	**Yes** / No
Took notes without interfering with the interaction	**Yes** / No
Allowed for student feedback	**Yes** / No
Gave the student an opportunity to take a break during the interview	**Yes** / No
Had a structured approach to the interview	**Yes** / No
Demonstrated knowledge of the student's disability throughout the interview	**Yes** / No
Communicated in a style appropriate to the student's disability	**Yes** / No

Comments:

_____

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Post Assessment

Evidence of report, notes and discussion with the assessor, if required.

Ensured that recommendations for institutional support, special arrangements etc. were knowledge-based, relevant and practicable.	Yes / No
The report showed research and knowledge with the host institution & course, where applicable.	Yes / No

Comments:_____

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Assessor signature: **Date:**

Name of observer: **Date:**
        Position:

Template 3: Use of Equipment and Consent

Disabled Students' Allowance - Needs Assessment Consent Form

Student's name: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Assessor's Name: _____ Location: _____

Nature of student's disability: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Duration: _____

1. After your assessment has been completed, your assessor will write a report outlining the recommendations he or she has made based on what is discussed during your assessment. A copy of your report will be sent to you and to your funding body at the same time.

If you would prefer to see a draft copy of your report before it is sent to your funding body, please tick the box below. (Please note that requesting a draft copy of your report will add approximately 5 days to the waiting time before you receive your recommendations.)

☐

By ticking this box you are undertaking to respond within 5 days of the draft report being sent to you. In the event we do not hear from you the report will be sent to your funding authority.

2. If the disability officer at your institution has a copy of your report they can help to put in place strategies to assist you while you are studying. We cannot send them a copy without your consent.

If you consent to a copy of your report being sent to your disability advisor, please tick the box below.

☐

3. The assessment centre will be subject to quality audit and this will be undertaken by DSA-QAG representatives. This will require confidential random checks on assessment reports. Reports will not be retained by the auditor once the audit is completed. **If you consent to a copy of your report being used in this way, please tick the box below.**

☐

Strategies Demonstrated	Solutions Recommended	Considered but not Recommended
Special Equipment and General Allowance (DSA)		
Computer Platform and Type		
Research		
Scanning OCR		
Text to Speech		
Using an ISP		
Extra Books and Photocopying		
Concept Mapping		
Other		
Composition		
Typing Tutor		
Speech to Text		
Concept Mapping for structure		
Other		
Proofreading		
Text to speech		
Homophone detection		
Advanced Spellchecking		
Using Hard copy – word spacing – font type and format		
Other		
Note-taking		

Spider notes		
Recording lectures		
Other		
Time Management		
Electronic calendar		
Other		
Access to ICT		
Variety of Chairs assessed		
Accessories for ergonomic workstation		

Please note that an assessment is a bid for public funding and as such, all recommendations are provisional pending approval from this centre's quality assurance and the funding body concerned.

Students Signature:	
Date:	
Assessment Finish Time:	

Assessors Signature:	
Date:	

Template 4: Consent for Sensitive Personal Data Processing

Dear [Name]

In addition to the normal data processing carried out by the [Name of assessment centre] ("the centre") the transfer of a copy of your needs assessment report to the Disabled Students Allowance Quality Assurance Group ("the auditor") may be required so that the auditor can audit the centre's internal processes for dealing with needs assessments. These audits play an important part of ensuring that the centre is complying with all relevant legislation, internal and external guidance. Such compliance is vital to the centre so it can properly assess the needs of those that require assistance.

The information that the centre is proposing to transfer to the auditor is a copy of your completed needs assessment form. As you will be aware, this includes the following information about you:

- ♦ identity and age;

- ♦ physical and/or mental health;

- ♦ living arrangements;

- ♦ higher education institution and course information.

This information includes personal data and sensitive personal data as defined under the Data Protection Act 1998. As the proposed transfer includes sensitive personal data (in this instance, health information about you), we require your consent before we are legally permitted to provide the auditor with your information, if selected as a student sample.

The personal data provided to the auditor would only be processed for the specific purpose of carrying out the audit of the centre. The data or needs assessment report information would not be retained by the auditor once the audit of the centre had been completed and accredited by DSA-QAG. This consent will be held by the centre for the duration of the audit process, alongside any other forms of consent you have provided to the centre in relation to other current data processing activities carried out by the centre in relation to your personal and sensitive personal data.

By signing this form you are giving your consent to the transfer of your personal and sensitive personal data set out above from the centre to the auditor and to the processing of this data by the auditor, for the purpose described above.

Student's Name	
Student's Signature	
Date	

Template 5(a): Assessor Requirements

. Quotation Document 1: Assessors Requirements

1.1 Background Information	Purchase/Rental (please delete as required)
Assessment Centre Information	
Assessment Centre	
Assessor Name	
Assessor/Assessment Centre Email	
Assessment Centre Reference Number	
Student Name	
Length of Course Remaining	
Total Maintenance & Support Period	
Insurance Period	
Date of Quotation Request	

1.2 Laptop	Yes / No
Type	Laptop or Apple Laptop
Model (specify)	
Operating System	
Speed, RAM, Size of Hard Drive & Processor Type	
Screen Size	
Laptop Package including:	**Type**
External Keyboard	
External Mouse	
Laptop Stand	
Surge protector 4 way	
4 way USB hub, powered	
4GB memory stick	
Additional Items to Package	**Type**
Carry Case (Specify Type)	
Speakers	
Gel wrist/mouse rest	
Additional Special Requirements	
	Yes / No

1.3 Desktop	
Type	PC or Apple
Model (specify)	
Operating System	
Speed, RAM, Size of Hard Drive & Processor Type	
Monitor Size	17" , 19", other
Desktop Package Including:	**Type**
Keyboard	
Mouse	
Surge Protector, 4 way	
Speakers (if not built in)	
Additional Items to Package	**Type**
Gel wrist/mouse rest	
Additional Special Requirements	

	Version & License Type
1.4 Software	**Please confirm the method of delivery: (Physical media, electronic download or mix of both)**

1.5 Printer / Scanner	**Yes / No**
Type	Printer/Scanner, Printer , Scanner
Outputs	Black & White, Colour
USB Cable	
Paper (Starter Pack)	
Additional Items to Package	
1.6 Digital Recorder	**Yes / No**
Type	
Digital Recorder Package Including:	
Directional microphone	
Charger	
Spare Rechargeable Batteries (x2)	
AC adaptor	

Additional Items to Package	
1.7 Ergonomic Equipment & Input Devices	**Type**
1.8 Equipment for Hearing Impaired Clients	**Type**
1.9 Equipment for Visually Impaired Clients	**Type**
1.10 Additional Items	**Type**

1.11 Delivery, Set Up & Familiarisation	**Enter X below**		**Enter X below**	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
Standard Delivery & On Site Assembly (1.5 hours)		Delivery, setup and familiarisation			
Extended Delivery & On Site Assembly (up to 2 hours)		Courier with setup and familiarisation on the same day by an engineer			
		Courier delivery, with setup and familiarisation at a later date			
				Ex VAT	**Inc VAT**
Total Cost of Equipment Quote					

	Cost

1.12 Health Check	Enter X below		Enter X below	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
Health Check		Conducted on-site			
Health Check		Conducted remotely			

Template 5(b): Specialist Equipment Supplier Quote Template

1. Quotation Document 3: Specialist Supplier Quote

1.1 Background Information

Assessment Centre Information

Assessment Centre	
Assessor Name	
Assessor Email	
Assessment Centre Reference Number	
Student Name	

Supplier Information

Supplier Company	
Supplier Address	
Supplier Contact Name	
Supplier Contact Tel No.	
Supplier Quote ID Number	
Date of Quotation	

1.2 Specialist Items	Supplier Description	Cost	
		Ex VAT	Inc VAT

	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
1.3 Total Cost of Specialist Quote		

Template 5(c): Assistive Technology Training Quote Template

1. Quotation Document 4: Assistive Technology Training

1.1 Background Information

Assessment Centre Information

Assessment Centre	
Assessor Name	
Assessor/Assessment Centre Email	
Assessment Centre Reference Number	
Student Name	

ATSP Information

ATSP Company	
ATSP Address	
ATSP Contact Name	
ATSP Contact Tel No.	
ATSP Quote ID Number	
Date of Quotation	

				Cost	
1.2 Assistive technology training required	**Onsite**	**Remote**	**No. of Sessions (In 2 hour blocks*)**	Ex VAT	Inc VAT

*If not in 2 hour blocks, please specify

	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
1.3 Total cost of AT training quote		

Template 6: Register of Interest (Employee)

This document allows assessment centre staff to officially declare any potential conflict of interest with other relevant bodies. This will be reviewed by the Disabled Students' Allowance auditors as part of the QA audit.

A conflict of interest is any situation in which an individual's personal interests or interests which they owe to another person, body or organisation arise simultaneously or appear to clash.

Conflicts of interest may come in a number of different forms, for example:
- payment to an employee for services provided through and by another organisation
- business / work being awarded where an employee could be seen to have or has a financial or a close personal interest / relationship to that other organisation or individual (relative, family member)

This declaration should be completed by all staff employed by the centre.

By signing this document you declare you currently have no conflict of interests that would affect your duties for the assessment centre, or that you have provided information in relation to any conflict of interest which may arise.

Staff are required to declare any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest as soon as practicable to their manager and complete this form, which should be held on file.

Name			
Signature			
Date			
Conflict of Interest Declaration	☐ Yes ☐ No		
If you have answered YES to the conflict of interest declaration, please provide details below with the names and details of any individual with a connection to you, stating the nature of the connection:			
Describe what steps/processes/measures are in place to ensure that undue advantage is not given to the organisation(s)/individual(s):			
Name of Practitioner:			
Manager:			

Template 7: Asset Management Record

Asset Management Record

Delete this and replace with your own name / logo					Location:			
					Report Number :			
					Report Date:			

Date Received	Purchase Order Number	Description	Make	Model	Serial Number	Mandatory	Location	Asset Tag	PAT Required Yes/No

Template 8: Register of Interest (Organisational) Declaration

This declaration must be completed by all DSA-QAG assessment centres and suppliers.

Organisations administering public funds are obliged to ensure that the highest standards of financial propriety are maintained. The principle behind this declaration is to ensure:

- that student interests are safeguarded,
- that public funds are not misused, and
- that there is no self-promotion of services for personal or organisational gain

It is the explicit responsibility of any assessment centre/supplier to avoid any actions which may give rise to potential or actual conflict of interest. It is also the explicit responsibility of any assessment centre/supplier to notify DSA-QAG immediately should any such action take place.

Should you have any concerns or require assistance in completing the declaration, please contact DSA-QAG.

1.	**What is the name of the organisation submitting this form?**

2.	**Does your organisation provide services in more than one of the areas outlined in Appendix 1 attached or have links, either personal or commercial, with other organisations that provide services in one or more of the areas?**

No ☐ 			**Yes** ☐

If your answer to the question above is no, please complete the signatory boxes below – you do not need to complete any further part of this form. Please now send the form to the address given on the covering letter.

If the answer is yes, do not complete the section below and please go to question 3.

Signature	
Date	

Please print name	
Position in organisation	

3. **Please complete the box below with the names and details of any organisations with a connection to your organisation, stating the nature of the connection.**

This should include subsidiary or parent companies related to or connected to your organisation and **any organisations from which family members or friends might financially benefit.** Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

4. **Describe what steps/processes/measures are in place to ensure that undue advantage is not given to these organisations.**

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

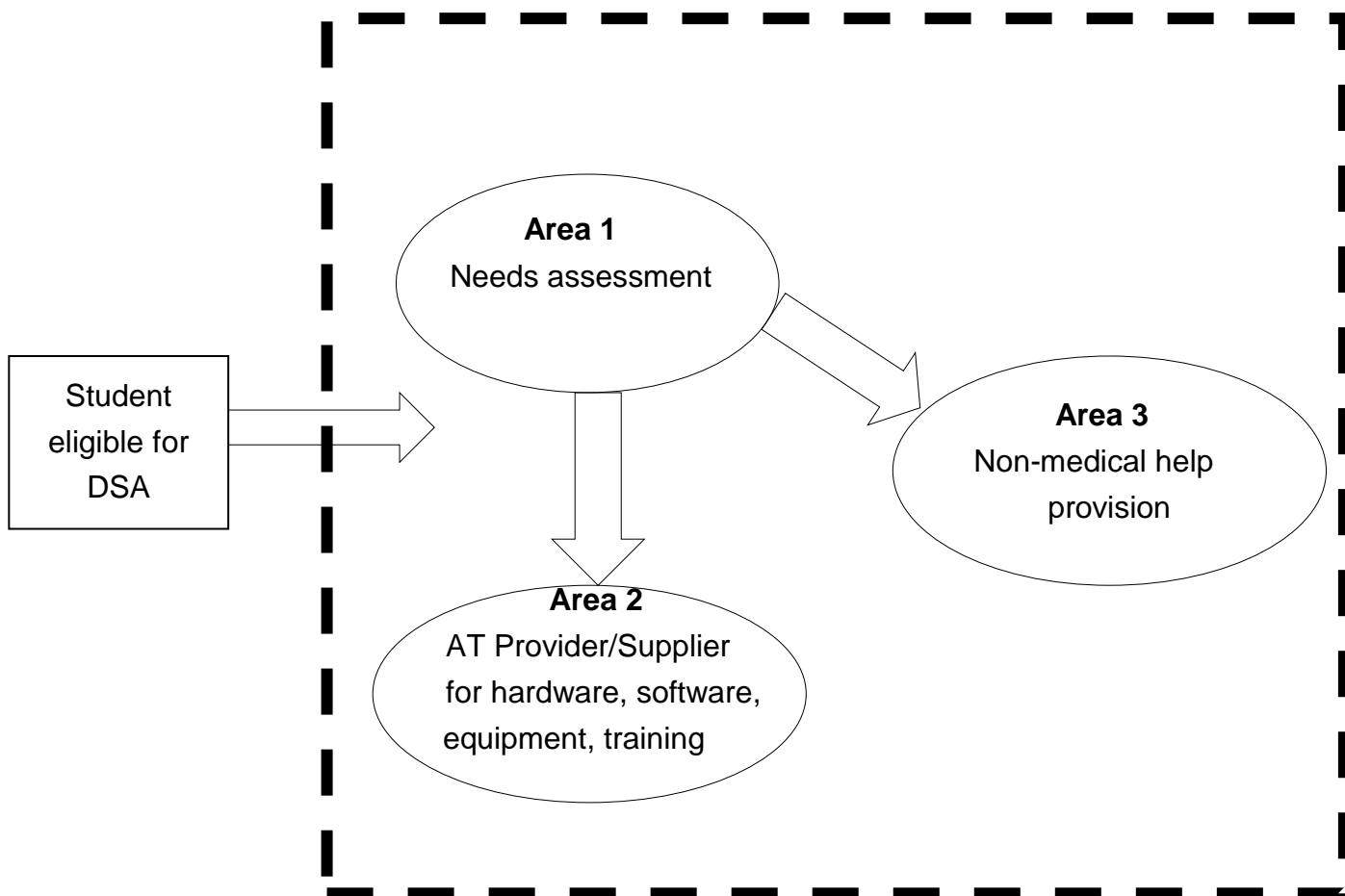Information can be submitted with this document to support the statement(s) provided at 3 and 4.

Please indicate that you have attached additional information to this form. ☐

5.   Please complete the box below

Signature	
Date	
Please print name	
Position in organisation	

Register of Interest (Organisational) Declaration –Appendix 1

DSA areas

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Student
eligible for
DSA
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→

Area 1
Needs assessment

→

Area 3
Non-medical help
provision

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Area 2
AT Provider/Supplier
for hardware, software,
equipment, training

Terms & Definitions

Term	Definition
AT provider	Assistive technology service provider
BIS	Department for Business Innovation & Skills
CQS	Comparable quote system - an online quote system developed by Central London Assessment Services, University of Westminster
NAR	Needs assessment report
NHS	National Health Service
NMH	Non - medical helper
OU	Open University
PAT	Refers to portable electrical equipment testing
QA	Quality assurance
SFE	Student Finance England
SFW	Student Finance Wales
W3C Webs	W3C stands for the World Wide Web Consortium and is working to make the Web accessible to all users (despite differences in culture, education, ability).