



CIMSPA Standards
Professionalism
Advocacy

Quality Assurance Strategy: 2020 and beyond

CIMSPA's approach to managing
and monitoring education partners.



**This strategy explains
CIMSPA's approach
to **managing** and
monitoring its education
partners, and their
endorsed products and
services through quality
assurance. It should be
read in conjunction with
CIMSPA's Quality Policy.**



Introducing CIMSPA

The scope

CIMSPA is the professional body for the sport and physical activity workforce. One of CIMSPA's key roles is to provide support to all CIMSPA members to ensure they receive excellent education and training to facilitate a fulfilling career in the sport and physical activity sector.

To fulfil the above, CIMSPA will monitor all education partners to confirm they continually provide a high quality experience for CIMSPA members and all their customers when delivering endorsed products and services, and meet the requirements of our professional standards and codes of conduct.

This quality assurance activity will be risk-based, conducted annually and - where our monitoring finds a partner failing to fully meet these requirements - CIMSPA will act to support the education partner to improve or, if needed, sanctions may be applied. This would always be a last resort, as it is CIMSPA's aim to work collaboratively, and in a supportive way. However, the purpose of this specific endeavour is the relentless and rigorous pursuit of quality.

Additional information

Further information on sanctions, disciplinary proceedings and appeals processes and policies can be found [here](#).

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Policy aims and scope

The aim of this policy is to explain the effective, consistent and fair procedures that will be followed by CIMSPA when conducting quality assurance activities for the following partnership categories:

- CIMSPA training provider partners (and their endorsed products – regulated qualifications/unregulated CPD mapped to our professional standards)
- CIMSPA awarding organisation partners (and their endorsed products – regulated qualifications/unregulated CPD mapped to our professional standards)
- CIMSPA higher education partners (and their endorsed products where our professional standards are embedded)
- CIMSPA employer partners offering products and services mapped to our professional standards.

The Charter and the Charities Commission: our obligations

As a registered charity and a professional association with a royal charter, CIMSPA is obliged to meet its obligations under both these auspices.

The Royal Charter states the following in relation to CIMSPA's role and responsibilities, and specifically for the purposes of this strategy:

"In furtherance of the objects of the Institute but not otherwise, the Institute shall have the following powers:

- A. *to endorse and promote programmes of education and training and continual professional development with recognised standards of achievement to support the systematic development and accreditation of members;*

- B. *to establish, promote and regulate standards of competence, good practice, conduct and ethics and to issue codes of professional conduct and statements of good practice;*
- C. *to establish, develop and maintain links and to exchange information with other bodies and organisations at local, national and international level."*

Of the nine charitable responsibilities, the following help focus our quality assurance activities.

Fiduciary Nature of Trusteeship:

High standards of trust and confidence.

Duty to Promote Charitable Purposes:

Contained within the Charter and Statutes.

Public Benefit:

Operate for the benefit of the public.

Duty to Act in Good Faith:

Act with genuine honest intention or motives.

Duty to Act Within Powers:

Contained within the Charter and Statutes.

Quality Assurance: our approach

Avoiding burden

CIMSPA recognises its education partners work within a complex system, with regulatory obligations in many cases, all of which place additional necessary burden on day to day activities. It is therefore CIMSPA's intention to observe and apply, where appropriate, the Hampton principles of regulatory burden, those being summarised as follows:

- **Proportionate** – CIMSPA will only request information and evidence relating to activity and products which are mapped to professional standards, partnership agreement particulars, and code of conduct obligations
- **Accountable** – CIMSPA is accountable in its conduct and approach to its board of trustees, the membership body, its partners and the wider public in all its activities; CIMSPA partners and members are accountable with regard to any action that may breach our codes of conduct
- **Consistent** – CIMSPA is committed to a consistent approach to its quality assurance activities, adhering to all agreed and published processes, and being consistent in its application and monitoring of its codes of good practice
- **Transparent** – with consistency comes transparency: this strategy aims to describe its approach to quality assurance activity in full. There should be no additional discreet activities which would not be known or understood by all parties who fall in scope of this strategy

- **Targeted** – quality assurance activities will be focused on maintaining high quality training and education delivery, ensuring partners are delivering what was agreed within the endorsement. In practice this means that CIMSPA will only request information that is relevant in the sport and physical activity sector.

In practice this also means, wherever possible, we will aim to reference other stakeholder or agency evidence where it aligns to our own objectives in relation to quality assurance requirements. To do this we will seek to exploit both our own, and our partners' existing relationships with such external agencies¹ under the terms of our partnership contract, and both parties' undertaking to share relevant information and evidence in an appropriate way.

This will avoid different organisations asking for the same evidence for the same reasons on multiple occasions.

¹ By these we currently mean Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Ofqual, Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE), Office for Students (OfS), Ofsted)

A constructive and useful partnership

CIMSPA's overarching aim under this policy, and our stakeholders' expectations of us, is the professionalisation of the workforce. A set of employer-led professional standards embedding the highest quality skills, knowledge and behaviours of all those employed across our sector should be everyone's aspiration.

To achieve this, CIMSPA works in partnership with organisations who share our vision, and align to our objectives via the endorsement of products which embed our Professional Standards.

We aim to be supportive and collaborative in our approach, and expect the same mindset from our partners who share this vision, and who wish to continually improve the quality of their provision.

Partner relationships should be strategic in nature, respectful and on a business to business footing. Our intention is to avoid the need to involve ourselves in our partners' day to day operational activities.

Our quality assurance approach will therefore be evidence-based when seeking to determine the quality of endorsed provision, products and services of our partners.

This strategy sets out the type of evidence we require for these activities.

What is quality assurance?

Quality Assurance is the planned and systematic review process of a CIMSPA partner, or their endorsed product, to help determine whether or not our Professional Standard/s and endorsement requirements are being met, maintained and enhanced.

Approach to risk

- Assessment of risk against identified standardised factors, such as (but not limited to)
- Whether an endorsed product is regulated or not (a regulated endorsed qualification carries a lower risk, due to the additional scrutiny already placed on such a product)

- Number of endorsed products (the higher the number, the higher the possible risk)
- Level of activity relating to endorsed products within a given period: higher levels carry increased risk
- Number of participants enrolled on an endorsed programme within a review period (higher numbers of participation, increased risk)
- Length of time in partnership and track record (partners new to CIMSPA carry a higher risk)
- Customer/member/participant feedback
- Complaints (level of risk affected by frequency, thematic or category, and number upheld when treated through the formal process)
- Previous quality assurance outcomes, including compliance with action plans and/or agreed remedial activity (level of risk is affected by the partner's willingness and ability to comply within agreed and reasonable timeframes)
- Acknowledgment and recognition of risk and compliance ratings conferred by third parties (CIMSPA will consider and, where appropriate, act upon high risk ratings applied by awarding organisations to their approved providers who are also CIMSPA-endorsed partners, where the reasons for this status relate to the application, delivery and assessment of a CIMSPA professional standard, or any issue relating to CIMSPA's code of conduct).
- Specified outcomes and remedial or improvement action plans following completion of a quality assurance review – these will relate only to the descriptions listed above and will:
 - Be agreed by both parties
 - Be timebound for completion by the partner
 - Carry an appropriate risk rating according to the outcome and type of action required
 - Have the opportunity to be appealed against where CIMSPA has not followed its own published processes aligned to this strategy.



The process

Our annual report and renewal objectives are to confirm partnership contractual terms have been met by both sides, and all quality assurance activity will be conducted on an annual basis in conjunction with our partnership annual report and renewal procedures.

The annual reporting activity encompasses the following:

- A review of endorsed qualifications and other products, and any updates or changes by either party which may veer away from current professional standards against which the endorsement lies
- Member data relating to participation and number of graduating students (HEIs only)
- Any available progression data following completion of endorsed regulated qualifications (into CIMSPA sector's workforce)
- Participation in opportunities to contribute to CIMSPA's activity (for example via membership of its standards development events, attendance at conference etc.)
- Feedback from participants/members/students

Separate, but allied to this report, we will request the following evidence for quality assurance purposes, which must relate to in-year activity (i.e. it must be current and relevant):

- Plans relating to products in development for the year, which may embed CIMSPA professional standards
- Certification numbers for endorsed products
- Any recent or upcoming plans to amend endorsed qualifications or products which may impact CIMSPA professional standards
- Information relating to relevant complaints, regulatory audit outcomes, malpractice investigations (any of which relate directly to CIMSPA professional standards and/or code of conduct).

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Additional items

Timelines

Contract renewal

- **Awarding organisations and higher education institutions**
 - Annual report activity commences three months prior to the contract renewal date, with a partnership meeting and report review opportunity occurring during this window. Increasingly these will all eventually take place towards the end of the calendar year. The report will include information on in-year quality assurance activity (which will have occurred as a separate activity and accompanying report during the previous 12 months)
- **Training providers and employer partners**
 - Contract renewal will occur in a similar lead-in approach but will vary across the months, depending on the expiry dates of endorsed products.

Additional quality assurance activity and requirements

CIMSPA will contact all partners in scope during the year to request and obtain further evidence of activity relating to endorsed products. This will either be specific, or more general evidence relating to the above reporting requirements, and will take the form of the following:

- **Sampling** – a request to review written evidence relating to endorsed products. This may be specific to the programme delivery, student-centred (such as feedback)
- **Observation** – a request to view a (possibly recorded) session or live assessment of skills relating to the accuracy of delivery against professional standard requirements
- **Interview** – a request to directly interview participants or students to obtain an accurate picture of their experience attending and completing a CIMSPA-endorsed programme
- **Report** – a request to view an awarding organisation in-year external quality assurance report to review and compare risk and compliance ratings of activity which directly relates to CIMSPA professional standards (delivery, assessment and learner experience), where doing this helps
 - Avoid duplication of effort in obtaining relevant information
 - Assist in the investigation of a complaint
 - Provide evidence to help determine an appropriate risk rating where this relates to any code of conduct issue or potential breach.

The team

CIMSPA quality assurance colleagues who are appointed to undertake this important activity meet the following requirements:

- Have a proven track record of professional expertise within the sector
- Are considered as experts among their peers within the context of the professional standards they quality assure on behalf of CIMSPA
- Have integrity and are ambassadors upholding the values and obligations represented within the CIMSPA codes of practice
- Will declare any conflicts of interest prior to undertaking specific quality assurance activities (which will be monitored and recorded by CIMSPA)
- Are both trained and demonstrably competent in the specialist pursuit of quality assurance
- Conduct themselves professionally in accordance with the principles and requirements of this strategy

**Shaping a recognised
and respected sport and
physical activity sector
that everyone wants to
be part of.'**





E info@cimspa.co.uk

T 03438 360200

**Chartered Institute for the Management
of Sport and Physical Activity,**

SportPark,

Loughborough University,

3 Oakwood Drive,

Loughborough,

Leics. LE11 3QF

cimspa.co.uk

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