



QUALITY ASSURANCE & IMPROVEMENT POLICY

2023 - 2024

Mission statement

Marine Society College works with its partners to offer a range of learning experiences suited to the needs and abilities of aspiring and serving seafarers.

The vision for Marine Society College is to empower current and aspiring seafarers to get to where they want to, through learning and self-development. This is captured in the tagline;

“WHETHER YOU’RE AN ASPIRING OR SERVING SEAFARER, WE’RE HERE TO HELP YOU REALISE YOUR AMBITIONS AND SUPPORT YOU ALONG THE WAY”

To realise this vision, we have developed a Quality Assurance and Improvement system that ensures aspiring and serving seafarers receive a wide-ranging programme of student-centred and employment-focused learning and a support infrastructure that promotes and sustains a culture of continuous learning, professional and personal development thereby serving to maximise opportunities for enhancing individual performance, growth and employability.

Learner Context

The lifestyle of a seafarer is unique and different from that of most other adult distance learners. Seafarers are often away from home for long, indeterminate periods and maintaining contact with a learner presents challenges both for the learner and the Marine Society College. These challenges vary from seafarer to seafarer depending upon the nature of their work, geographical location, and the physical conditions at the place of employment (usually a ship or offshore installation, but sometimes a military camp or base in a foreign country). These challenges are many and varied and change over time, often at short notice.

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the MSC and Sea Cadets, (MSSC) quality processes and systems to ensure that all of our learners receive a positive learning experience, maximising their progress and learning outcomes with the MSSC and their progression thereafter as a result. This will be achieved through a process of continuous self-assessment leading to quality improvement and quality provision for learners.

Scope

Quality assurance is a system to support performance according to specified standards and a way of securing and maintaining quality improvement activities, which lead to ongoing quality services for our stakeholders. It includes all activities that contribute to the successful outcomes of our learners.

The policy includes all employees, trustees and partners including subcontractors. The Director of Maritime Training and Development has overall responsibility for the development and

implementation of this policy. The Head of Seafarer Learning and Welfare is responsible for ensuring delivery of quality assurance processes and in maintaining and updating the policy annually or as needed. The postholder works closely in supporting, training and mentoring the Seafarer Education team to ensure ongoing quality improvement.

In 2021/22, Marine Society learner groups include;

- Apprentices
- Adult Sea Cadet volunteers
- Adult learners incl serving seafarers

Aims

- To further develop robust self-assessment to act as a vehicle leading to quality improvement and refine our system of monitoring, review and action planning within a developing self-critical culture.
- To remain Ofsted grade Good or better across all of our provision
- To respond to the views of our learners, young people and partners to create ongoing improvement
- To provide a clear and transparent policy with accountability at its centre.

Objectives

How will our objectives be realised?

- We will develop further our self-assessment processes and consider the scope of the Self-Assessment Report, (SAR) to include other activities of Marine Society College e.g. IAG, scholarships and bursaries, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, apprenticeships, coming ashore programme and Learn@Sea courses.
- We will align our goals and processes with the resulting provision arising from the Management Review & Five Year Strategy and we will take into account the views of learners gained from surveys and feedback.
- We will continue to operate our cycle of assessment using our Development and Quality Assurance Plans and the reviewing process, which charts progress made against targets. Targets will be adjusted accordingly to secure ongoing improvements.
- We will use external evaluation – Ofsted, & Matrix – to inform our QA processes and to verify our own self evaluation
- We will continue to raise standards for learners
 - by improving Teaching, Learning and Assessment by holding subcontractors to account
 - by improving Leadership and Management as per our Development Plans
 - by improving Learner Outcomes as per our Development Plans
 - by improving Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare by working with our partner employers and subcontractors

- by monitoring learners` progress and by providing support and challenge as appropriate
- by ensuring all aspects of our Safeguarding policy is implemented
- We will manage the quality of subcontractors` provision by reviewing their performance against the Contract/MoU on a regular basis as set out in the Improvement Plan
- We will keep under review responses from seafarers and plan for curriculum developments as appropriate and practicable
- We will continue to provide a high level of IAG as set out in the IAG Plan, incorporating the recommendations from the latest Matrix Assessments and annual continuous improvement checks.

What supportive mechanisms will we use to ensure our actions are successfully implemented and have the desired impact?

- We will continue to promote relevant and up to date CPD for our Seafarer Education team and for the subcontractors` staff and tutors
- We will continue to monitor staff performance against strategic goals and to use robust performance management processes
- We will continue to analyse learner data and give consideration to learner and stakeholder views, which will be used throughout the year to check progress against KPIs and direct necessary remedial action;
- Data analysis and taking account of stakeholder views will continue to inform self-assessment, planning and target setting contributing to the Annual Self -Assessment, Review and Quality Development Plans.

Monitoring Processes

- Interaction with learners is both systematic and regular throughout their time on programme
- Potential learners receive IAG from the initial enquiry stage
- Learners receive detailed information about the courses available, a Learner Handbook and guidance for distance learning study. They are also contacted by the Academic Administrator and provided with enrolment information from the subcontractors
- Learners are also given the Learner Agreement to sign and return to MSC
- Learners undergo diagnostic testing to help them choose appropriate level courses
- Learners are allocated personal tutors and negotiate with their tutor an Individual Learning Plan, which includes deadlines for submission of work
- During the course the learner receives regular contact from MSC giving advice and support based on the information supplied by their tutors and the level of progress that data indicates

- Learners are encouraged to keep MSC informed of any change in circumstances so that appropriate support and guidance can be given.

Evaluation

- Feedback from end of course evaluation is analysed to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement
- Quality meetings are held regularly with partners to review systems and processes.
- Partner providers are provided with a regularly updated seafarer-empathy document which sets out the main challenges facing a seafarer learner and which offers a guide to best practice in delivering learning in the maritime context. Partners make that document available to all personnel involved in the learning process.
- The college follows a self-assessment process to produce an annual self-assessment report (SAR) and associated quality improvement plan (QIP).
- MSC is a fully integrated part of the MSSC and its overall Vision and Strategy with associated five-year plan, reviewed annually, with supporting annual plans. Progress against these plans is monitored by Trustees (quarterly), CEO and Management Team (monthly).

Year	Version	Updated on	Updated by	Review date
2023-24	1	22 Sept 2023	Head of Seafarer Learning and Welfare	September 2024