

RTAS Rules V1.0 table of amendments

Following provider feedback regarding the RTAS Rules V1.0, a table of amendments has been approved by Network Rail. The table of amendments provide the changes which have been accepted to the Rules and are the interim arrangements prior to republication of the RTAS Rules.

The RTAS Rules are planned to be republished in line with the table of amendments and updates to NR/L2/CTM/202 – Quality Assurance in Training and Assessment in the first quarter of 2019.

Action Plans and submissions

NSAR has received questions throughout 2018 around the Assurance Visit process and the purpose of an action plan.

Q: How do the objectives of the Assurance Visit get set?

A: These expectations are set within the Quality Assurance Framework, the RTAS Rules and Network Rail standards. Any areas of provision which do not fully meet these requirements will be added to an action plan for the provider to enhance the areas identified

Q: How are action plans dealt with, including dates?

A: Action plan requirements are outlined in the **RTAS Rules v1.0 clauses 6.4.4** and **6.4.5**. Timescales are set and communicated during closing meetings, documented on the action plan and outlined in communications from the Quality Assurance Manager. The RTAS Rules v1.0 table of amendments clarifies further timescales and mandated activities, in summary:

- Action Plans are formally submitted to the provider by the QAM no later than 10 days after the 2 day visit has ended
- The provider is to advise within 5 days of receipt the proposed actions to resolve areas of non-conformance
- The provider will, normally, be set completion dates within 4 weeks [where an area of non-conformance indicates more time is required, this is reflected within the action plan]
- Evidence of non-conformance action implementation must be submitted to the QA Manager, within the dates documented on the plan, in order for them to endorse action completion

- The action plan is not closed until all evidence has been received, action plan endorsed and communicated formally to the provider as closed by the QA Manager

Q: What rules and procedures must non-sentinel providers follow?

A: The RTAS Rules apply to all Assured Providers and not only Sentinel providers. The RTAS Rules v1.0 table of amendments includes this detail.

Q: How do the two Assurance Visits come together into one process?

A: The two day Assurance Visit is compliance based in line with the RTAS Rules and Network Rail Standards including NR/L2/CTM/202- Quality Assurance in Training and Assessment.

Quality of Provision observations are generated by a separate visit which considers the **quality** of documentation against the NSAR Quality Assurance Framework, including an observation of training/assessment delivery.

Both visits together determine the overall grading of the Quality Assurance Visit [subject to NSAR Chief Operating Officer endorsement]. An Assurance Grading cannot be fully determined without both visits concluding and reports combined.

Skills Backbone system changes

NSAR is investing in a replacement for the current Skills Backbone. The new system will provide an enhanced and intuitive software system which aims to provide on-line NSAR QA functions reducing paper, increased NSAR Assurance management information and a swifter and easier to use system for our training providers. The new system will launch around March/April 2019.

The system change will take place before the end of the CPD year and each trainer, assessor, administrator and manager will need to take some time to familiarise themselves with the new system. Support materials will be provided nearer the time.

In order to ensure a smooth transition, NSAR asks trainer/assessors to submit the full years CPD portfolio by the end of February 2019, where possible. The new system will inherit the information uploaded and will enable an extended period of review for, both, provider and NSAR to make sure that submissions meet RTAS requirements.

The CPD year will not be extended beyond 30 June 2019.

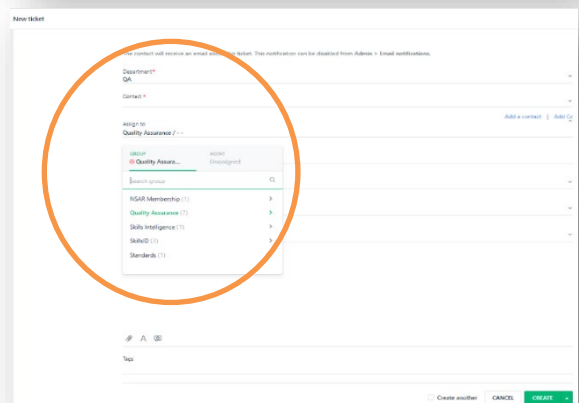
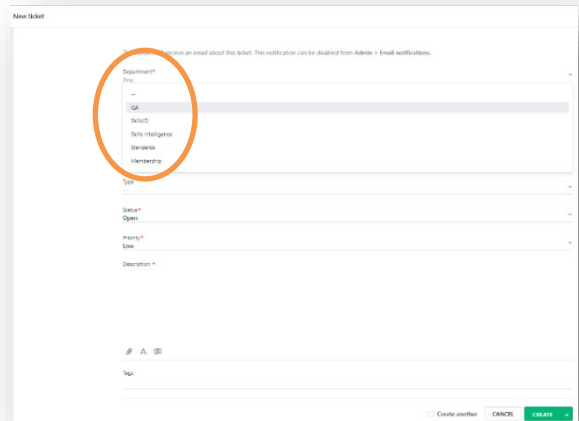
Please keep an eye out for system specific information including appeals for User Acceptance Testing volunteers in the coming months.

Freshdesk submissions

NSARs new helpdesk **Freshdesk** has been live for several weeks now and is proving to be successful.

We have noted that there have been several **Freshdesk** submissions with delayed response times. Following investigation, we have identified that calls have not been allocated to QA or the query has been allocated to another NSAR department such as 'Membership' or 'Skills ID'. As a result these calls were not visible to the QA Team.

All providers are requested to ensure that when a call is submitted on **Freshdesk**, attention is paid to allocate the query to the QA Team. It can then be viewed, logged and allocated to the correct QA team member to respond to your query.



Assurance Visit programmes and reschedules

The **RTAS Rules v1.0, Clauses 6.4.2** and **6.4.3** outline Assurance Visit requirements.

In Briefing Note 8, published in December 2017, NSAR advised that Assurance Visits cannot be moved. Throughout 2018, NSAR has continued to receive requests to reschedule dates for Assurance Visits once the notification has been made and, on occasion, on more than one occasion.

Assurance Visit programmes are resourced and schedules confirmed at the end of the calendar year for the year ahead. NSAR have tried where

possible to accommodate reasonable change. However, when a visit is moved this causes significant disruption to the overall programme of visits impacting other providers. 2018 has seen significant impact on providers resulting from rescheduling for other providers.

The unavailability of personnel who manage the RTAS activities and relationships can largely be the responsibility of a few people within the training provider's organisation. We also understand that school holidays present an issue for some individuals, we would therefore remind Providers that they should take action now to review their succession planning to ensure that an Assurance Visit can take place at any time and as notified with 5 days' notice.

Any requests to reschedule an Assurance Visit will be escalated to NSAR Chief Operating Officer for authority and may be declined.

Appendix 2 Update – v5.0

Following release of the Helpdesk the Appendix 2 has been updated. Please check NSAR website for V5.0 and use with immediate effect

Grading Certificates

Providers are advised that grading certificates that have been issued over the last 12 months are not end dated.

In the interests of environmental awareness a new certificate will only be issued if the provider's grade has changed from their last assurance visit.

And finally ...

The QA Team extends a very warm welcome to NSAR's 6th Quality Assurance Manager, John O'Brien. John has a wealth of experience and has over 17 years' within the rail sector including more than 10 in staff development, training, education and assessment. John is already out and about meeting providers. From early 2019, same as the rest of the QA Team, John will take on his own area of providers day to day and serve wider parts of the UK from time to time.



NSAR Contact Information

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|------------------------|-------------------------------|
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<https://nsar.freshdesk.com/a/dashboard/default>