NSAR - Briefing Note 27

Welcome

It has been a busy start to 2023 for NSAR and Providers, and as we hurtle towards sunnier skies and warmer weather, we welcome five new Assured Providers to the RTAS Assurance community. Congratulations and Welcome!

Your RTAS QA Team was restructured in January 2023 to provide specialised support on Compliance, Delivery Assurance and Investigations, Reporting & QA Projects, delivering one service to Assured Providers.

Eligibility for PTS recertification training [RTAS 5.11.2 (i)]

We continue to be asked what evidence can be accepted as confirmation that an individual is eligible to attend the course. In particular, we are asked whether entries in paper or the electronic logbook in Sentinel of other competences used on the MI, such as COSS, DCCR, and AC. We confirm that competence used on the MI can be used as evidence of eligibility because PTS is being used at the same time.

Assured Providers are reminded that line manager or Sponsor declarations / emails in any form **cannot** be used. The evidence must be physical use of competence on the MI recorded in either paper logbooks or Sentinel electronic logbooks.

Skills Backbone: Regular Reviews

NSAR uses Provider and Individual details in Skills Backbone to contact you. We ask that you regularly review all of the details on your Provider and Individual Skills Backbone portals to keep the information current.   This allows you to always receive information that we send to Assured Providers and, where relevant, Assured Positions.

In addition, please remove Practical Sites Assured Providers currently approved to use that are no longer used by the Provider. Please raise a Freshdesk ticket to request removal where necessary.

Delegate Swipe in/out on Training Events: Forgotten / Lost / Stolen Sentinel Cards [RTAS 5.12.11]

If a learner arrives at a Training event stating that they cannot show their Sentinel card because they have forgotten it or it has been lost or stolen, meaning that the learner cannot be 'swiped in' to the training event, in that case, a check of the Sentinel database needs to be completed. You must complete a basic card or web check to verify that the individual's Sentinel record is valid. The database should show that a new card has been requested, and another form of photographic ID must be provided to satisfy the trainer that they have confirmed their identity.

We recommend you do <u>not</u> use the 'forgotten card' function on Sentinel to swipe the learner into the event as this reduces the number of instances that it is permitted for an individual when working.

Training providers should retain records within their course admin packs including the copy of ID presented that was not the Sentinel Card.

Track Induction Pre-Requisites clarification [RTAS 5.11.2 (i) & (vi)]

When the Track Induction training materials V5.0 were published, the prerequisites no longer explicitly detailed that Fire Awareness is required. The lesson plan lists the pre-requisites as follows:

- Company Induction Module
- Personal Track Safety
- Manual Handling
- Emergency First Aid

Fire Awareness is completed during a Company Induction; therefore, evidence of Fire Awareness is still required.

From 1st July 2023, Track Induction Courses verified by QA Managers must include evidence of the delegate holding current Fire Awareness certification. Any instances where Fire Awareness certification is not retained from that date will be marked as a significant non-conformance to the prerequisites necessary for delivering Track Induction training.

IWA upskilling amendment

You were notified of the following change to upskilling processes confirmed by Network Rail on 6th April 2023 and with immediate effect.

When upskilling to COSS Trainer or Assessor, IWA capability will be awarded at the same time as awarding COSS training or assessment capability as applicable to the upskilling completed, i.e. delivery of training or delivery of workplace assessment under mentorship.

Stand-alone IWA upskilling processes are only required if an Assured Trainer/Assessor does not intend to progress to COSS capability for some time.

Retrospective reviews will not be done automatically by NSAR. Any trainer/assessor holding COSS training capability that has not been awarded IWA training capability must apply for the capability via Skills Backbone. QAMs willcheck Skills Fade before adding IWA capability [Ref: RTAS Clause 4.2.40].

New Trainer/Assessor Registration & Application

We are witnessing an increasing number of Trainer & Assessors entering the Rail industry , particularly RTAS Assurance approved via NSAR. However, recent applications have have shown that Providers are regularly providing limited guidance and support to their new employees. This has led to unnecessary delays to Providers and new trainer/assessors.

Becoming an RTAS Assured Trainer/Assessor for the first time can be a daunting process and is governed by the RTAS Rules to maintain a consistent delivery quality, to underpin the industry's safety.

NSAR supports applicants in this process; however, the level of support from the Assured Provider is vital for the new applicant's information to meet the requirements.

For the new trainer, this may be the first time they have been asked to complete an in-depth application, evidence their experience and qualifications and articulate their 'Professional Development Needs'. They need the support and guidance of their Provider. Paying attention to the application's requirements and responding to feedback from NSAR is crucial to success. By providing comprehensive support and guidance to the new trainer, you are supporting the investment you are making in your quality of provision.

NSAR is investing in Skills Backbone to improve the current application process so that they are submitted to Assured Providers before they are submitted to NSAR. Assured Providers will be able to be involved in the process of new trainers/assessors joining your organisation. In the interim, we recommend that you review the documents and question responses before the new trainer submits their application to NSAR. It may help you to identify development opportunities for your employee ..

How to achieve a successful application for Trainer/Assessor in the Skills Backbone:

1. Plan your application.

2. Prepare copies of your certificates and qualifications in pdf format.

3. Prepare a current curriculum vitae [CV] to reflect your current employment, a reverse chronological summary of employment history (including role title, duration and experience/responsibilities), list your qualifications and education and include references and a personal statement.

4. Sponsor prepares their 'Letter of Support' stating their support for the employee, whether they are applying for Trainer and/or Assessor and listing the course the plan to develop to deliver.

5. Read each question carefully and prepare to respond to each point/requirement. Consider how you will 'explain your personal training style and how you can adapt it to accommodate learner's needs.'. What will your plan for your 'Professional Development Needs' be?

6. Double check all items have been addressed and evidence uploaded in Skills Backbone in an accessible format, e.g., pdf, word etc.

7. Once submitted, the system will raise a Freshdesk ticket on your behalf; tickets have a 5-day SLA, so be patient. You will receive a notification in Skills Backbone and an email response from Freshdesk with the outcome of the application review, and it will close the ticket.

8. If your application is set to 'More Information Required', the feedback and actions required will be detailed in the Freshdesk ticket.

9. Action the feedback by returning to your Skills Backbone account and amend your application; double check you have addressed all points fully before submitting. Remember that this will raise a new ticket and be subject to another 5-day SLA.

Gathering Feedback after Assurance Visits

As part of our continuous improvement and quality improvement plan, we are reviewing how we gather feedback following Assurance Visits and plan to replace the current paper forms with an electronic form via MS Forms. The most notable change at this time is that the MS Forms will allow Assured Providers to provide feedback anonymously. Look out for the announcement of going live in the next month.

Skills Backbone: System enhancements under development

We regularly hear from you about how you could be better supported by Skills Backbone. We thank you for your continued feedback, and we can share that we are currently developing Skills Backbone again to further enhance the support we can give you. Enhancements include:

- Online booking and payment of First-Time Observations
- New Trainer/Assessor Registration & Application process changes
- New Provider Application changes
- Workplace Assessment completion counts [supporting RTAS Clause 4.5.1]
- QAM System administration improvements

NSAR Provider Forums

Training Provider Forums are planned for the below dates. We will continue to make these events remote delivery by MS Teams as this increases the volume of people that can attend due to time and costs.

- 26th June 2023
- 4th September 2023
- 27th November 2023

26th June 2023 will include a guest speaker from Network Rail to brief you about updates to standard NR/L2/OHS/019 Safety of People at Work on or Near the Line. The updated standard is planned for publication in June and carries a compliance date of September 2023.

We will issue emails separately from accreditationadmin@nsar.co.uk for you to secure your place on each date. Please wait for this separate contact.

Welcome to the team!

As part of our restructuring, we welcome Barry Smith, NSAR's Head of Assessment and Skills, to lead the Delivery QA Team.

We are pleased to welcome the arrival of our new QA Compliance Operations Manager, Steven Morley. Steven joins the QA team with extensive experience in Quality Assurance of Training and within the rail sector. He joined to lead the Compliance QA Team on Monday, 15th May 2023 and will soon be out and about at Training Centre with QA Managers.

We also welcome Brian Colebrook, QA Manager, Compliance on Tuesday, 30th May 2023. Brian also brings several years of experience in Quality Assurance of various sector training and assessment. He will be out and about with our existing QA Managers in the coming months.

Your dedicated QA Manager will contact you in the coming weeks to establish a new or confirm the continuation of their working relationship with you.

Communication & Getting in Touch

Contact us by using Freshdesk, https://nsar.freshdesk.com.

Freshdesk is a Helpdesk support tool, and tickets raised have an SLA of 5 days; however, if your request is urgent, you can set its priority as urgent. Please make sure that your communication/ enquiry is best suited to NSAR and not another channel.

We work to make sure that we meet your needs, and adhering to the below will allow us to process your query efficiently.   Make sure you add 'Quality Assurance' as the department your query relates to so that it reaches us without delay.

- Please don't close your Freshdesk ticket; by closing your ticket, elements of your query may be missed, and we may continue trying to resolve something that you no longer need us to.

- Please don't respond to a closed ticket; if your query has been closed, but you still have questions, please raise a new ticket, and reference the previous ticket number so we can respond efficiently.

- Please avoid raising duplicate tickets from the same account or multiple people from within the same Provider asking the same question; this can confuse and add time to resolving the query.