



A2A Training

Common Approach to Standards and Assessment (CASS) Policy

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Owner: Quality Team

Approved by: Louise Warren

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1. Process overview (centre approval and ongoing QA)

A2A Training operates a centre network model under CASS, similar to an awarding body approach, while retaining responsibility for quality, moderation and certification decisions.

1.1 At-a-glance process

Step 1: Enquiry and information pack

A2A issues the application form, evidence checklist, and guidance.

Step 2: Application submitted (Word document)

Centre returns the completed approval form and all required evidence by email.

Step 3: Desktop review (remote)

A2A reviews governance, staffing competence, policies/procedures, conflicts of interest controls, and readiness.

Step 4: SLT interview (remote)

A2A conducts a structured interview with the centre's SLT to confirm oversight, resources, and independence.

Step 5: Decision and RAG rating

A2A confirms outcome (approve / approve with actions / not approved) and assigns an initial RAG rating.

Step 6: Onboarding and standardisation

Centre induction, assessment briefing, and standardisation for assessors and IQAs.

Step 7: Delivery begins

Centre delivers within scope and agreed assessment model (hybrid or 100% A2A).

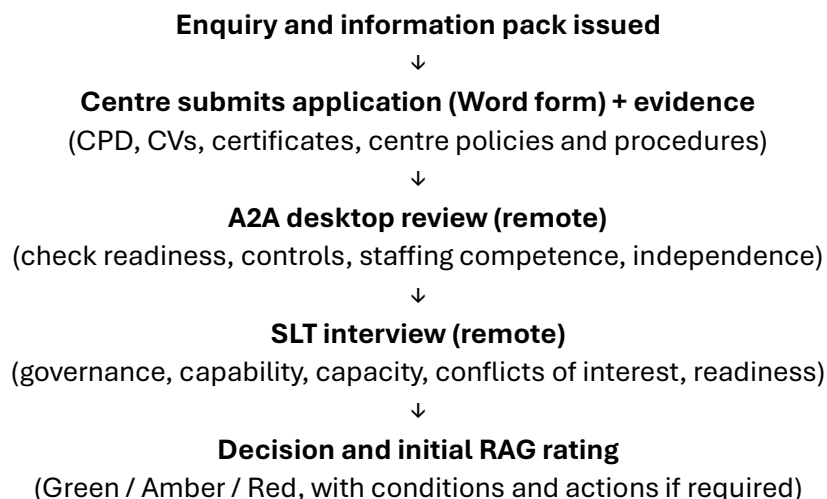
Step 8: Ongoing monitoring and RAG changes

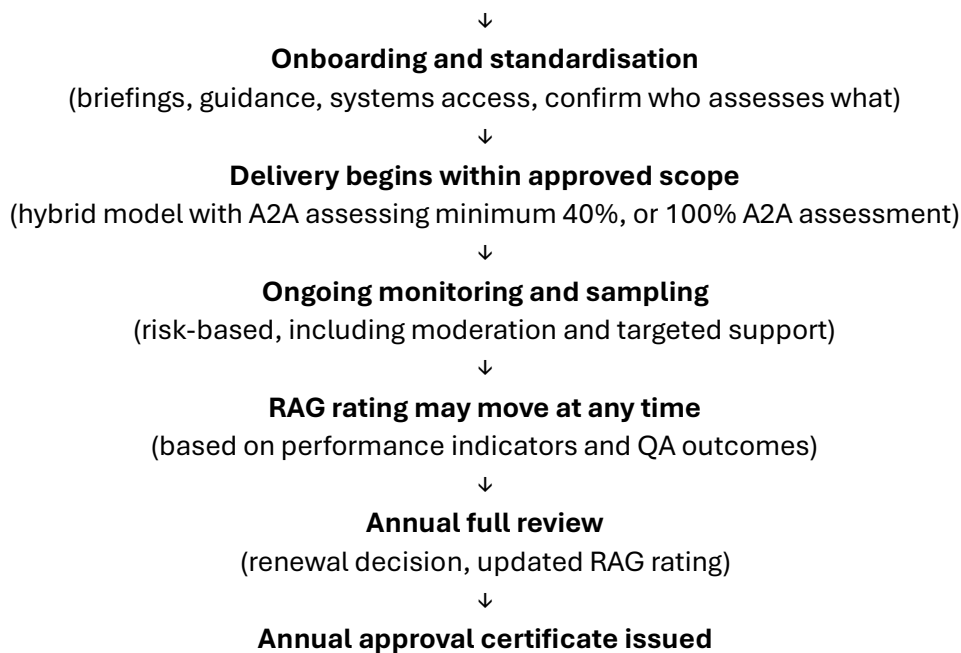
A2A monitors performance and may move the centre's RAG rating at any point.

Step 9: Annual full review and renewal certificate

Annual planned review with an updated RAG rating and issue of an annual approval certificate.

1.2 Centre approval and quality assurance flow





1.3 Remote approval position

All approvals and reviews are completed remotely unless otherwise specified (for example, where health and safety requirements require an on-site activity).

2. Our commitment to centres

A2A is committed to working collaboratively with centres to deliver assessment that is fair, consistent, and manageable. We will:

- Be clear and transparent about requirements, evidence expectations, roles and responsibilities, and what good looks like.
- Provide timely guidance and support so centres understand the assessment model and can plan resources confidently.
- Apply quality assurance proportionately using a risk-based approach, focusing monitoring where it is most needed.
- Standardise to protect consistency to ensure assessors and IQAs apply requirements and decision rules consistently.
- Give constructive feedback through sampling outcomes and reviews, with clear actions and realistic timescales.
- Treat centres fairly and consistently, using the same approval criteria and QA approach across the centre network.
- Use RAG ratings transparently, explaining the rationale and what is needed to improve or maintain a rating.

- Protect assessment integrity, including robust conflict of interest controls and prompt action where risks are identified.
 - Maintain a remote-first approach wherever appropriate, with on-site activity only where needed.
 - Keep focus on learner experience, supporting processes that are calm, clear and respectful for apprentices and employers.
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3. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how A2A Training approves and quality assures centres delivering assessment under CASS to ensure assessment is valid, reliable, fair, consistent and compliant. It applies to all A2A Training staff and all centres approved to deliver assessment activity under A2A Training oversight.

4. Our CASS model (hybrid and 100% A2A)

4.1 Hybrid assessment model

A2A TRAINING will assess **at least 40%** of the assessment. Assessment materials, requirements and decision rules are designed by A2A Training. The centre may assess agreed components where permitted and where competence and controls are evidenced.

4.2 100% A2A Training assessment model

A2A Training can deliver all assessment activity (EPA style). This option reduces centre staffing and policy requirements for assessment delivery, while still requiring core compliance processes (for example safeguarding, data protection).

4.3 Systems

A2A Training will confirm which system is used for each standard and centre. Current options include ACE360 or EPA Pro (as applicable).

5. Centre approval requirements

A centre must demonstrate it has:

- Appropriate governance and SLT oversight
- Competent assessment and IQA staffing (or a plan to meet requirements)
- Suitable policies and procedures (section 6)
- Robust conflict of interest controls (section 7)
- Secure record keeping and data management (section 11)
- Capacity to engage with monitoring, sampling and standardisation (section 8)

A2A Training may approve by specific standards, levels, pathways, occupational areas, and delivery model.

6. Staffing requirements and competence

6.1 Evidence required for staff involved in assessment/IQA

Centres must provide:

- CVs for all relevant staff
- Certificates for qualifications held
- CPD records
- Job descriptions or role profiles (recommended)

6.2 Minimum expectations

- Assessors: CAVA (or equivalent) or working towards with an agreed timescale
- IQAs: IQA qualification (or equivalent) or working towards with an agreed timescale
- EPA qualification: recommended for those supporting or delivering apprenticeship assessment decisions
- Occupational competence: staff must be qualified and experienced in the vocational area they assess

A2A Training will validate suitability during the approval review and may require additional evidence or standardisation.

7. Centre policies and procedures (minimum set)

Centres must provide current versions of the following (as applicable to scope):

- Safeguarding
- Prevent
- Health and safety (including risk assessment approach)
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- GDPR and confidentiality
- Complaints and appeals
- Malpractice and maladministration
- Conflicts of interest
- Reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- Assessment and IQA procedures (including authentication, learner ID checks, evidence storage, internal sampling, and record keeping)

Where a policy is in development, the centre must provide a completion date and interim controls.

8. Conflicts of interest (COI)

Centres must identify, record and manage actual, potential and perceived COI, including where staff have trained/coached an apprentice, hold personal relationships, or face commercial pressures that could influence judgement. Minimum controls include:

- COI declarations for staff involved in assessment/IQA
- A process for assigning independent staff or escalating to A2A Training
- A2A Training notification of COI that may affect assessment integrity

A2A Training may increase sampling, require A2A Training to assess relevant components, or restrict centre delivery where COI controls are insufficient.

9. Quality assurance: monitoring, sampling and standardisation

9.1 Monitoring principles

A2A Training applies a risk-based approach focused on:

- Validity and reliability of decisions
- Consistency between assessors/centres
- Quality of assessment records and evidence
- Timeliness and responsiveness
- Compliance with reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- Control of malpractice/maladministration and COI

9.2 Sampling approach

Sampling levels will reflect:

- RAG rating
- staff experience, turnover and training
- standard complexity and assessment model
- historic outcomes and trends
- complaints/appeals or incident triggers

9.3 Standardisation

Centres must participate in A2A Training standardisation activity. A2A Training will provide requirements and may require attendance before delivery starts and at defined intervals.

10. RAG rating and interventions

10.1 RAG definitions

Green: low risk, strong compliance, consistent outcomes and timely completion of actions.

Amber: developing or variable performance, targeted support and increased monitoring required.

Red: high risk to assessment integrity, restrictions and intensive monitoring required.

10.2 Moving RAG ratings

A2A Training can move a rating at any point based on performance indicators, including:

- sampling outcomes and action completion
- quality of records and evidence
- complaints/appeals trends
- malpractice/maladministration investigations
- staff competence concerns or turnover
- missed deadlines and poor responsiveness

10.3 Interventions (non-exhaustive)

A2A Training may:

- require improvement actions with deadlines
- increase sampling and moderation
- mandate re-standardisation
- restrict centre assessment components
- suspend or withdraw approval where required

11. Remote approval approach and on-site exceptions

Approvals are completed remotely unless otherwise specified, for example where health and safety requirements justify an on-site check. A2A Training will confirm scope and arrangements in writing.

12. Records, data protection and retention

Centres must:

- store assessment information securely, with controlled access
- retain information for the required period (as specified by A2A Training and regulation/contract)
- provide records promptly on request for sampling, audit or investigation

- comply with GDPR and confidentiality requirements
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13. Complaints, appeals, malpractice and maladministration

Centres must operate transparent processes for complaints and appeals and notify A2A Training promptly where issues relate to assessment integrity, outcomes, or certification. A2A Training will investigate malpractice/maladministration concerns that fall under its responsibility.

14. Certification and annual approval certificate

Once approved, the centre will receive an **annual approval certificate**. Continued approval is dependent on ongoing compliance and completion of annual review.

15. Fees

Fees are available **upon request** and will be confirmed in writing.

16. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Centre Approval evidence checklist (one page)
 - Appendix 2: RAG rating indicators (detailed)
 - Appendix 3: COI declaration template (optional)
 - Appendix 4: Glossary
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16. Appendices

Appendix 1: Centre Approval Evidence Checklist

A2A Training Centre Approval Checklist (CASS)

Return by email to: info@a2atraining.co.uk

Application

- Completed Centre Approval Application Form

Staffing evidence (all staff involved in assessment/IQA)

- CVs
- Qualification certificates (CAVA/IQA/EPA where held)
- CPD records (minimum last 12 months)
- Roles and responsibilities list (recommended)

Centre policies and procedures (attach copies)

- Safeguarding
- Prevent
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Data protection and confidentiality (GDPR)
- Complaints
- Appeals
- Malpractice and maladministration
- Conflicts of interest
- Reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- Assessment and IQA procedures (authentication, ID checks, record keeping)

SLT interview

- Named SLT attendees and preferred interview slots included
-

Appendix 2: RAG rating indicators (detailed)

Green indicators

- Documentation complete and current, strong governance
- Staff competence evidenced with up-to-date CPD
- Sampling outcomes consistent
- Actions completed on time
- Low complaint/appeal risk indicators

Amber indicators

- New delivery team or recent turnover
- Minor policy/procedure improvements needed
- Some variability in sampling outcomes
- Occasional late submissions or responsiveness concerns
- Targeted actions required

Red indicators

- Repeated non-compliance or significant gaps
 - Evidence quality or authenticity concerns
 - Actions overdue or repeated issues
 - High complaint/appeal volume or serious themes
 - Malpractice/maladministration concerns or active investigation
 - Independence/COI controls insufficient
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Appendix 3: Forms

Appendix 3a: Conflict of Interest (COI) Declaration

A2A TRAINING: CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) DECLARATION

Document ref: A2A-CASS-FRM-002 | Version: 1.0

Centre name: _____

Name: _____

Role: (Assessor / IQA / Centre Lead / Admin / Other) _____

Standard(s)/Occupational area(s): _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

A. Declaration (tick all that apply)

- I have no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest []
- I do have a conflict of interest (complete B) []

B. Details of conflict

Apprentice/cohort reference: _____

Nature of conflict (tick):

- Previously trained/coached []
- Line management relationship []
- Personal relationship []
- Financial interest []
- Employer relationship affecting independence []
- Other: []

Please provide details:

C. Proposed mitigation

- Re-assign assessor/IQA []
- A2A TRAINING to assess affected component(s) []
- Increased sampling/moderation []
- Additional sign-off controls []
- Other []

Mitigation details:

D. Signatures

Declared by		Signature		Date	
Centre Lead		Signature		Date	
A2A Approval		Signature		Date	

Appendix 3b: Centre Annual Review and RAG Reassessment

A2A TRAINING: CENTRE ANNUAL REVIEW AND RAG REASSESSMENT (CASS)

Document ref: A2A-CASS-FRM-003 | Version: 1.0

Centre name: _____

Review period: // ____ to // ____

Review date: // ____

A2A reviewer: _____

1. Centre profile

Standards/areas in scope: _____

Delivery model: ☐ Hybrid ☐ 100% A2A ☐ Mixed

Volume since last review (apprentices assessed): _____

2. Staffing and competence

Any staffing changes affecting assessment/IQA? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list and attach CVs/certs/CPD: _____

Confirm evidence on file: ☐ CVs ☐ Certs ☐ CPD (last 12 months)

3. Policies and procedures

Confirm reviewed/updated within last 12 months (tick):

☐ Safeguarding ☐ Prevent ☐ H&S ☐ EDI ☐ GDPR

☐ Complaints ☐ Appeals ☐ Malpractice ☐ COI ☐ RA/SC

☐ Assessment and IQA procedures

Changes since last review:

4. QA outcomes (A2A)

Timeliness: ☐ Good ☐ Variable ☐ Poor

Sampling: ☐ Consistent ☐ Minor issues ☐ Significant issues

Actions: ☐ On time ☐ Some late ☐ Overdue

Complaints/appeals: ☐ None ☐ Minor ☐ Significant

Malpractice/maladministration: ☐ None ☐ Open/Investigated

Notes:

5. RAG decision (A2A)

Previous RAG: ☐ G ☐ A ☐ R

New RAG: ☐ G ☐ A ☐ R

Rationale:

6. Actions

Action	Owner	Deadline	Evidence required

7. Outcome

Renew and issue annual certificate []

Renew with conditions []

Restrict scope []

Suspend/withdraw []

Sign-off:

A2A Reviewer		Signature		Date	
Centre Lead		Signature		Date	

Appendix 4: Glossary

AAO (Assessment Organisation)

The organisation responsible for approving centres, setting and designing assessment requirements, quality assuring delivery, and making certification decisions.

Appeal

A request for a formal review of an assessment decision or outcome, usually after an internal stage has been completed.

Apprentice

The learner undertaking an apprenticeship programme and completing assessment requirements.

Assessment

A process of evaluating an apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours against defined criteria and decision rules.

Assessment Decision Rules

Rules stating what evidence is required, how it is judged, and how outcomes are determined.

Assessment Plan

A plan setting out assessment components, timings, methods and responsibilities.

Authentication

The process of confirming evidence is the apprentice's own work and is valid for assessment.

CASS (Common Approach to Standards and Assessment)

A model allowing on-programme assessment to contribute to the final outcome, with approved training providers acting as centres delivering assessment under an assessment organisation's oversight.

Centre

An approved training provider authorised by A2A TRAINING to deliver assessment activity within an agreed scope.

Centre Approval

The checks completed by A2A TRAINING before authorising a centre.

Certification

The confirmation and award process that records apprentice achievement and final outcome.

COI (Conflict of Interest)

A situation where impartiality could be compromised or reasonably perceived to be compromised.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development)

Learning activities evidencing that staff maintain and develop vocational competence and assessment practice.

EPA (End-Point Assessment)

A model where assessment occurs at the end of the apprenticeship programme.

EPA Pro / ACE360

Examples of platforms that may be used to manage evidence, records and assessment processes (as applicable).

IQA (Internal Quality Assurance)

The centre's internal process to check assessment decisions and evidence for consistency and compliance.

Maladministration

Unintentional non-compliance or mistakes that could affect integrity.

Malpractice

Intentional or negligent actions that compromise assessment integrity.

Moderation

A process to confirm assessment decisions are consistent and aligned to requirements.

Monitoring

Ongoing oversight of centre performance through review of data, evidence, sampling outcomes and responsiveness.

On-programme Assessment

Assessment activity completed during the apprenticeship programme which may contribute to final outcomes under CASS.

Professional Discussion

A structured discussion used as an assessment method to explore competence and evidence.

QA (Quality Assurance)

Planned activities that ensure assessment is consistent, fair and compliant.

RAG Rating

A risk rating system: Red (high), Amber (medium), Green (low).

Reasonable Adjustments

Changes made to reduce the impact of a disability or difficulty without changing the standard.

Special Consideration

An adjustment due to factors outside the apprentice's control, applied in line with rules.

Sampling

Reviewing a proportion of assessment decisions and evidence to confirm quality and compliance.

SLT (Senior Leadership Team)

Centre leaders responsible for governance, resourcing and accountability.

Standardisation

Activities ensuring assessors and IQAs interpret and apply requirements consistently.

Synoptic Assessment

Assessment that considers overall competence across the standard.

Scope

The standards/areas and delivery model a centre is approved to deliver.

Document control

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Approved by
1.0	02/12/2025	Sam Barnfield	Policy created	
