

# Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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## About Internships Work

Internships Work is a programme funded by the Department for Education, which will double the current supported internship provision in England by enabling 4500 young adults, aged 16-24 with additional needs, to benefit from a supported internship per year by 2025. It is designed to support more young people with additional needs to have greater choice and control over their future, opening up opportunities that prepare them for adult life and independent living.

## 1. General FAQs:

### 1.1. Who developed the SIQAF?

The Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework was originally developed in 2017 by the Education and Training Foundation and other key stakeholders. As part of the Internships Work programme, the Department for Education funded BASE to trial and amend the original version on 12 providers. With feedback from those providers and the reviewers the finalised SIQAF was agreed and published in April 2023.

### 1.2. What is the SIQAF?

Aligned to the Supported Internships guidance, the Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework is a tool to be used to determine the quality and success of your SI programme. It is designed to be read and used in conjunction with the Supported Internship Guidance. It will highlight your strengths and should be used as an annual continuous improvement tool. It has been designed to support reflection and self-assessment, which will support your quality assurance and improvement journey. It acts as a scaffold to support the effectiveness of the SI and as a catalyst for driving change and improving provision, so there is an expectation for reviews to lead to an action plan.

### 1.3. Can I use the SIQAF as a self-assessment tool?

The SIQAF is designed to be used as a self-assessment tool. It should be introduced annually as part of your governance structure. Once a self-assessment has been completed your partnership will have produced an action plan. This action plan can then be reviewed and amended at your next annual review.

### 1.4. Is the SIQAF model specific?

The SIQAF is designed to be used on all forms of Supported Internship. It has been tried and tested on programmes that use one large scale host employer as well as programmes that use multiple smaller community-based employers. As such, no specific model of Supported Internship should score higher on the SIQAF. The scoring should only reflect the quality of that provision.

## 2. SIQAF Self-Assessment FAQ's:

### 2.1. Why should I use the SIQAF as a self-assessment tool?

Supported Internships are designed to support young adults with disabilities into employment, the better quality the Supported Internship provision the more young people will successfully transition from education into employment.

The self-assessment supports the development of an action plan that can be used ongoing to guide continuous improvement efforts.

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## 2.2. What are the top ten reasons for completing a SIQAF self-assessment?

1. To support you to get more young people jobs in your local area.
2. To support your delivery partnership to understand what a quality Supported Internship looks like.
3. It is a simple and easy to use tool.
4. To identify and separate areas that are working well and those that require improvement, to focus your partnerships attentions for improvement.
5. It develops a SMART action plan to use throughout the year.
6. To provide evidence to advertise the quality of your programme to potential interns, parent/carers, commissioners, and employers.
7. To provide evidence of the quality of your programme during your Ofsted inspection.
8. It is a tool that can be used to improve your partnerships communication.
9. It will encourage collaborative working as a team/partnership with one common goal.
10. It can be used as a guide when developing your (new) SI provision.

## 2.3. How do I get all of the delivery partners involved in completing the self-assessment?

Delivering Supported Internships can be challenging, especially as there can be multiple partners involved with competing challenges and ideas. The SIQAF self-assessment is a neutral document that should reinforce that continuous improvement in Supported Internship delivery is the responsibility of the whole partnership.

All partners should be involved in completing the SIQAF. Where a partner is reluctant to engage in the process you may wish to consider a peer review. This process may highlight the absence of a partner and its impact on delivery. See Peer Review FAQ section for more information.

## 2.4. Who should complete the SIQAF self-assessment?

The SIQAF self-assessment is designed to be completed by the whole Supported Internship partnership. This will include the education provider, local authority and any key employers and may include a Supported Employment agency and any other key partners involved in the delivery of your programme.

Whilst there may be a requirement for a coordinator or operational member of staff to gather some of the evidence required for the self-assessment, the whole partnership should be involved in the final scoring and generation of actions for improvement.

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**Doubling supported internship**  
provision in England.



## 2.5. Will doing a SIQAF self-assessment impact my Ofsted inspection?

During an inspection, Ofsted will ask you for your SIQAF self-assessment as part of your evidence. Programmes that have completed a self-assessment prior to their Ofsted inspection have found that it helps them evidence the quality of their provision and the plans they have for continuous improvement.

## 2.6. What will happen with my self-assessment score and action plan?

Whilst the Department for Education have funded the development of the SIQAF they are not requiring programmes/providers to share their self-assessment, scoring or action plans. These are designed to support your own partnership to focus on improving the quality of your provision.

Because the scores do not get shared wider than your own partnership (unless otherwise agreed) it should encourage an open and honest approach to discussions allowing partners to identify areas for improvement without fear of external judgement.

If you are planning on having a peer review your self-assessment and resulting action plan will need to be shared with the BASE Internships Work project manager and your peer reviewers, but it will not be shared wider than this.

## 2.7. Do I have to do a self-assessment?

SIQAF Self-assessments are currently voluntary but we hope you see all of the benefits of completing them from improving your partnership working to increasing the number of young people transitioning to employment at the end of your programme.

## 3. Peer Review FAQ's:

### 3.1. What is a SIQAF Peer Review?

As part of the Internships Work programme the Department for Education are funding 200 peer reviews by March 25. This is a process where two peer reviewers come and visit your programme over two days. They review your self-assessment and supporting evidence, interview key stakeholders and observe key activities with the aim of validating your self-assessment score and then providing you with lots of good practice examples, advice and guidance to enhance your action plan.

### 3.2. Do I need to pay for a Peer Review?

No. All peer reviews are being funded by the Department for Education via the Internships Work programme.

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### 3.3. How do I know if I need one peer review or more?

You should have one peer review for one programme. It can be difficult to determine how many programmes you are running.

If you need more support to understand how many programmes you are running, please contact [...]

### 3.4. Who will be reviewing my programme as part of the peer review?

At least two reviewers will be assigned to complete your peer review. One of the reviewers will always be a lead reviewer. Lead reviewers are paid associates of either BASE or DFN Project SEARCH with experience of reviewing Supported Internship programmes.

The other reviewer(s) will be volunteers who work within the sector. They could be in operational or strategic roles but will have experience of delivering supported internships and will have an interest in continuous improvement.

All reviewers have received training by BASE in order to undertake a review.

### 3.5. How do you choose the peer reviewers?

Peer reviewers are chosen on availability and location. We aim to allocate reviewers from within your region but not from your immediate local area. We don't want to create an environment of competition, having neighbouring providers reviewing each other but we do want to support creation of regional communities of practice. We will endeavour to choose reviewers who have no conflicts of interest with the programmes they are reviewing.

Where neighbouring providers or local authority areas would like to review each other to support creating a local culture of peer reviewing, we can facilitate this. Even in this circumstance, all reviewers would need to be trained BASE before completing a review and a lead reviewer would still need to be assigned.

### 3.6. What will happen during a peer review?

Your peer reviewers will spend two days with you at your programme site completing the following activities:

Interviews with:	Other activities:
Interns	Reviewing documentation and evidence
Graduates	Observation of training room (if applicable)
Parents/Carers	Observation of interns on placement
Tutor	Feedback preparation
Job Coach(es)	Feedback
Line Managers of Tutor/Job Coach(es)	
Follow-along service lead(s)	
Managers and Mentors in the business(es)	

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Business Lead(s)	
Local Authority Lead(ers)	
Steering Group Members	

**3.7. Can I book a peer review if we are a new programme?**

Yes, you can. All programmes can book a peer review, however, new programmes will not be able to score highly in the results section. This is because the job outcomes used in the results section will be from previous academic years. For a new programme you will not have previous years to use to calculate these job outcomes. As long as a new programme is happy that they may not score highly in the results section yet, there is no reason why they cannot book and receive a peer review.

**3.8. Can I book more than one peer review?**

Yes. There is no limit on the number of peer reviews a programme can have. We encourage programmes to have a peer review in academic year 2023/4 and then to book another for 2024/25. By completing two reviews a programme can take the good practice examples from the first review, concentrate their efforts on improving before getting an improved score from a second peer review. Both of these reviews would be free as part of the Internships Work programme.

**3.9. What do I need to do to prepare for a peer review?**

In advance of your review, you will be provided with some supporting resources. These will include a how to guide, a process map, a sample schedule, and a fact checker.

In advance of your review, you will need to have completed your self-assessment as a partnership. This will need to be submitted to the project manager two weeks in advance of the review date alongside the completed schedule and fact checker.

The sample schedule outlines the activities that the peer reviewers would undertake. You will need to shape this schedule to meet your partnerships configuration and availability. Interviews can be face to face, over the phone or via teams.

**3.10. Can I combine a DFN Project SEARCH Continuous Improvement Review with a SIQAF Peer Review.**

Yes, BASE and DFN Project SEARCH have worked together to ensure that programmes can combine the continuous improvement review and the Peer Review. In this instance you will have two lead reviewers, one from DFN Project SEARCH who will focus on completing the CIR and another from BASE, who will focus on completing the Peer Review. The process for this will be the same but you will receive two documents as a result. If you are completing both, be mindful that the CIR is model specific and will look to confirm that your programme is

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delivering according to Project SEARCH model fidelity whilst the Peer Review will compare your programme against the SIQAF.

You will need to complete a self-assessment in advance of this combined review.

### **3.11. What will happen to my peer review score?**

As with a completed self-assessment your peer review score will not be shared wider than your partnership, your peer reviewers, and the BASE Internships Work Project Manager. Your Peer review score is for you and your partnership for the purposes of continuous improvement.

You may wish to celebrate your score by sharing it in your marketing materials or wider, this is entirely you and your programmes prerogative. We love to see programmes celebrating their success!

### **3.12. Will I get a kitemark?**

There is currently no quality kitemark programme operating for the SIQAF through Internships Work. Whilst you will not at this stage receive a quality kitemark for your score you can advertise your score in whichever way you wish.

### **3.13. Do I have to do a peer review of my programme?**

There is currently no requirement that you complete a peer review. The peer review process is designed to be supportive to help you and your partnership focus on quality improvements in your programme delivery and to help more young people with disabilities transition from education to employment through quality supported internships.

### **3.14. How do I book a peer review?**

To book your peer review contact us at [info@base-uk.org](mailto:info@base-uk.org).

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