

Quality Assurance (QA) Project for the South London Simulation Network (SLSN): Peer Reviewer Guide

What is the quality assurance project for the SLSN?

- The quality assurance project is part of the 'Improving Patient Safety through Simulation and a Quality Assurance Cascade System' Health Education South London (HESL) bid 2014/15.
- It is intended as a quality assurance process to enable us to learn from best simulation practices including course delivery, course design and operational and governance processes.
- It is designed to support the development of the SLSN and is a **peer led** review process which is **voluntary** on the part of both the centres and peer reviewers.

How has the quality assurance process been developed?

Stages in development of the QA process:

- Stage 1: *Literature Search Findings (Completed)*
- Stage 2: *Development of QA Framework & QA Tool (Completed)*
- Stage 3: *Phase 1: Peer Review Visits and QA Update (Completed)*
- Stage 3: *Phase 2: Review of QA tool and QA process at QA subgroup meeting (May). Findings presented to SLSN to integrate learning into broader course delivery and governance. (Completed)*
- Stage 4: *Biennial Reviews and embedding the framework – the Future (Ongoing)*

What were the results of the literature review on quality assurance and simulation?

- The literature review revealed a lack of reported quality assurance mechanisms, methods or standards in relation to simulation training.
- There was a body of literature outlining the concept of 'quality' and these themes and texts (Table 1) were then utilised for development of the tool and framework.

Table 1: Themes from Literature review on quality assurance in Simulation

Simulation centre/programme	Course Design	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission statement and governance • Regular auditing & reporting mechanisms • Financial accountability • Research activity & faculty development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario - learning needs analysis, curriculum mapping, standardised design, multi-professional faculty • Feedback / questionnaires • Standardised documents • Training of standardised patients • Maintenance of AV equipment & manikins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards for technicians • Trainers / Faculty – expected standards, MSF, self-assess, peer assess • Participant / delegate trainer assessment • Appraisal & faculty development

Frequently asked questions:

What is the QA Tool?

The QA “Peer Reviewer Observation Tool” is **Appendix B** in the QA Framework Document. The main features of the QA tool are:

- It has 21 domains encompassing all aspects of a course from pre-course administration to post-course evaluation.
- Tick box format.
- Areas to add notes or explanations.
- For all types of courses (N.B. not all aspects may be relevant).
- Data gathering tool rather than evaluative.

How do I complete the QA Tool?

You should:

- Use the tool in paper format or electronic (laptop/tablet)
- Complete some data prior to the course e.g. pre course admin/emails
- Complete the rest on the day whilst observing the course
- Make extra notes if appropriate
- Email to the course lead along with Appendix C “Quality Improvement Summary Report” within a few days of the visit.

What is the Quality Improvement Summary Report?

- This document is **Appendix C** in the QA Framework document.
- It is completed by the peer reviewer after their course visit.
- It summarises the findings of the QA Tool under five main headings.
- It should be completed electronically and then emailed to the Course Lead a few days after the peer review visit has taken place.

What happens to the QA Tool and Summary Report once sent to the course lead?

- It is entirely up to the course lead on what they do with the feedback given by peer reviewer.
- The documents belong to that centre and they can do with it as they see fit.
- Ideally the QA Tool and Summary report should be included in course review and course governance meetings for each simulation centre.
- The reports also form part of the “evidence” provided as part of the biennial QA process.

How can I go about being a peer reviewer?

- This is a voluntary role which we aim to centralise through the SLSN website.
- Simulation centres throughout the network will volunteer courses that they would like to be peer reviewed.
- Peer review visits will be advertised via email through the network, on the SLSN website or on centre’s own websites.
- The peer reviewer should volunteer and liaise with the relevant centre to attend on the required date.

What are the benefits of being a peer reviewer?

Feedback from previous peer reviewers has been very positive. The benefits highlighted by them are as follows:

1. Opportunity to observe courses at other centres – share ideas, styles/approaches.
2. Observe courses from a critical perspective with the guidance of the QA tool
3. Highlights recommended quality standards and acts as a benchmark for your own courses and teaching
4. Assists in personal, faculty and centre development.

What is expected of me as a peer reviewer?

Prior to the peer review visit you should:

- Confirm with the relevant centre your attendance as a peer reviewer on the specified date.
- Ensure you receive pre-course information e.g. delegate email and a faculty email prior to attending the course.
- Familiarise yourself with the pre course material, QA Tool and Summary Report prior to your visit.
- Print off the QA Tool to take with you or have your laptop/tablet ready for use on the day.

On the day of the course you should:

- Attend the faculty pre-course briefing.
- Introduce yourself and explain your role as a peer reviewer.
- Emphasise the following – you are an **observer**, it is a **voluntary** and **peer-led**.
- Arrange at least one “debrief of the debrief” at a convenient point in the day.

At the end of the course you should:

- Attend the post course briefing and give any verbal feedback then.
- Give any “debrief of the debrief” feedback.

A few days after the peer review visit you should:

- Complete the QA tool and Summary Report electronically and email to the course lead.

Are there any potential pitfalls to be aware of?

- It can be difficult to remain purely as an observer but try to do so as much as possible.
- Remember that this is a voluntary process and you are a guest of the centre and course lead – the process needs to remain collaborative, transparent and supportive.
- Feedback needs to be given sensitively as it can be difficult to receive criticism about dearly loved courses!
- Feedback should be given as suggestions and recommendations rather than absolutes i.e. “Please consider....” rather than “You should...”
- Complete the QA Tool and Summary Report as soon as you can - details can be forgotten if left too long.
- Read over your reports before you send them with a critical eye to ensure feedback is fair, sensitive and appropriate. Ask yourself “How would I feel if I received this for my course?”

What happens if I have any major causes for concern after observing a course?

- Any concerns should be addressed to the course lead.
- If you do not feel this is appropriate then concerns should be taken up with the specific simulation centre’s director.