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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simulation centre/programme</th>
<th>Course Design</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mission statement and governance</td>
<td>• Scenario - learning needs analysis, curriculum mapping, standardised design, multi-professional faculty</td>
<td>• Standards for technicians</td>
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<td>• Regular auditing &amp; reporting mechanisms</td>
<td>• Feedback / questionnaires</td>
<td>• Trainers / Faculty – expected standards, MSF, self-assess, peer assess</td>
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<td>• Financial accountability</td>
<td>• Standardised documents</td>
<td>• Participant / delegate trainer assessment</td>
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<td>• Research activity &amp; faculty development</td>
<td>• Training of standardised patients</td>
<td>• Appraisal &amp; faculty development</td>
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<td>• Maintenance of AV equipment &amp; manikins</td>
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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.