

A J Training Academy Limited



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Assessment Information

Assessment Type	Initial Assessment
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Janette Russon
Visit Date	03/02/2021
Client ID	C35104
Assessment Reference	PN200644
Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by	03/02/2022
Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by	03/02/2023
Accreditation Review onsite visit to be conducted by	03/02/2024

Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

A J Training Academy Limited (referred to as A J Training throughout this report) was incorporated in July 2020, based in Maryport, Cumbria to provide a range of training to the local area. At the time of the assessment, all of the training currently being delivered is based on a full cost model and centred predominantly around the Security Industry Authority (SIA) Door Supervisor licence.

During the assessment, A J Training outlined its future ambition as, to secure an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) direct contract and to engage with the local colleges in the Cumbria area to access a range of funding to support the organisation to expand and provide future learners with access a wider variety of training, for example, functional skills, beauty, and hospitality.

The organisation is still very new and relatively small consisting of a Director, Lead Trainer, and Apprentice Human Resources Administrator, supported by three external Trainers and Internal Quality Assurance associates. All of them bring a wealth of personal experience of working in the security sector in various settings, such as the military and personal protection services.

Learners generally find A J Training through word of mouth or via its Facebook page, which provides the initial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). Recently the adverts placed on Facebook provide IAG outlining that during the COVID-19 pandemic current Government guidelines indicate that individuals attached to the security sector are classified as critical workers. IAG is provided to confirm the next course dates, duration, cost, and how to engage. Once a potential learner makes contact with the service additional IAG is provided concerning identification requirements, what is included in the course delivery, the facility to pay by instalments, COVID-19 requirements, and venue adjustments. During the course, learners receive a range of IAG such as Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and Prevent, how to register with the SIA online, the impact of any previous convictions and the timescales required for these to be deemed as spent. Towards the end of their course learners are encouraged to think about their progression route, and they are offered an interview to engage with A J Training's sister organisation A J Security, or if more appropriate, due to the learner's home location, a warm introduction may be made to a more local employer. After completing the course, learners are kept up to date with follow-on courses and updates to current practices. For example, following lessons learnt from the Manchester Arena bombing all security staff will be required to hold a qualification in First Aid from April 2021.

It is recognised that 'real-life', very individual, effective IAG delivered around security sector requirements, and potential progression routes before and during courses contribute to their overall success rates of 89% and subsequent employment rates of 63%, with 88% of learners confirming their satisfaction with IAG received, levels that A J Training aims to maintain and improve.

Some learner comments include:

"The trainer was able to bring real-life scenarios into the classroom".

"The trainer opened my eyes and made me very conscious of how situations can quickly escalate".

"The training was much more personal than I expected".

"I have already recommended AJ Training".

"This has been the best course I have completed."

"I understand more about what I can and cannot do to protect myself as a door supervisor."

Staff talked about the initial time spent getting to know each learner, and the type of environment they would be most suited to working in, as having a direct influence on their current success rates. Staff described several different success measures where the IAG had contributed, and these were the learner's softer outcomes that included learners demonstrating more self-belief and confidence

overcoming initial struggles with anxiety. As part of the assessment, all learners who were interviewed confirmed that their confidence levels had improved considerably. Learners commented that they felt much more confident to de-escalate a potentially difficult situation in their day to day activities.

Some learner comments include:

“I feel much more confident dealing potential with conflict management”.

“Attending this course has supported me in my day job working in a school”.

“An excellent course, I feel so much more confident running my public house”.

“This experience has had a major impact on my life, I feel so much happier in myself, and feel much more employable”.

“I have implemented some of the conflict de-escalation techniques in my main role working with people with challenging behaviours”.

As mentioned previously, A J Training is a very new organisation, and due to the constraints imposed on organisations as a result of Covid-19, there has been limited opportunity to demonstrate continuous improvement; however, some progress has been made these include the introduction of more interactive role-play, and additional resources, for example, radio communications practice, how to use a body camera and first aid card games. Additional employment opportunities have been identified, for example, options to progress into Covid-19 marshalling roles.

Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- A J Training is a relatively small and new organisation, so it was considered a strength to have such a successful and informative Facebook page. Courses are advertised along with a range of IAG to support individuals considering or currently working in the security sector with information being updated regularly. This activity supports the organisation to reach a wide range of potential service users. (1.6)
- Partners interviewed as part of the assessment, described A J Training as a “*trusted partner*” commenting that all staff “*go above and beyond*”. Partners commented on individual staff members genuine “*passion for offering learners opportunities to succeed and progress into paid employment, to earn a living and improve their lives*”. Working in partnership with National Open College Network (NOCN) learners gain access to several accredited qualifications. A J Training’s sister organisation A J Security can provide real opportunities to progress into employment. These partnerships support the organisation to provide the best overall service to its learners. (1.8)

Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g., where the service is of a high quality, development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is, or to give insight into practices seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice, and guidance service is in any way lacking. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- During the assessment, the staff described regular informal team meetings to drive forward potential growth. Consideration could be given to introducing a more formal approach, such as developing a medium to long term Business plan. A Business Model Canvass <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoAOzMTLP5s> approach could help identify the organisation's value proposition, internal and external customers, and essential resources, partners, and stakeholders using a simplified one-page model. Completing this activity could help the organisation plan and manage its resources effectively and could be incredibly beneficial to any new staff coming on board. (1.2, 2.1)
- A J Training has already signed up to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Disability Confident Scheme and have also established that 26% of course participants have been females. Consideration could be given to updating the website, and social media feeds representing more female, ethnic, and disability images to reach out to more underrepresented groups. In addition, A J Training may wish to consider running specific courses aimed at engaging with these underrepresented groups more successfully, for example, scheduling an all-female course. (1.3, 1.6)
- At the time of the assessment, the organisation used learner success and progression rates to measure the effectiveness of the IAG being delivered. Consideration could be given to introducing some specific success measures; for example, some cohorts could benefit from introducing an outcome start approach or Soft Outcome Universal Learning (SOUL) measures <https://evaluatingimpact.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/soul-record.pdf>. This activity could support both staff and students to understand the success and impact of the IAG service delivery by actively targeting and measuring the progress made against a range of soft outcomes and capturing all of the student's achievements. (1.1, 1.5, 4.2)
- Staff complete regular, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities to keep up to date with changes in the security environment and ensure learners are provided with the most accurate information. Consideration could be given to reviewing all current documentation to ensure the most relevant terminology is included. For example, the learner workbook referred to the requirement to undergo a Criminal Record Check (CRB); this process has been replaced by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS). This activity could ensure that learners only received the most accurate IAG. (2.2)
- Job roles clearly outline the skills, knowledge, competencies and/or qualifications needed and all current staff bringing extensive experience to the organisation. During the assessment, it was discussed that consideration could be given to offering delivery staff the opportunity to enrol on an IAG qualification to support and enhance their existing skills for providing relevant Information, Advice or Guidance. (2.3)

- Existing quality assurance approaches, initiated by the awarding body NOCN, supply the opportunity to monitor the service to help inform improvements to the IAG provided. Consideration could be given to developing a Self-Assessment Report aligned against the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). In addition, the development of a quality calendar could provide more structured opportunities for specific feedback on the delivery of IAG and the sharing of best practice. (4.5)
- At the time of the assessment, A J Training had a functional website; the Director had already recognised that it requires some attention, for example, there is a left-hand bar that obstructs some of the text underneath. Consideration could also be given to making the website more interactive, particularly the link between A J Training and the potential progression routes to A J Security and employment opportunities. This additional activity could support learners to gain a better understanding of the IAG available. (4.7)

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals. These may include the Areas for Development above. <https://matrixstandard.com/assessment-journey/continuous-improvement-checks/>

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your* organisation's accreditation, please see the section Assessment Information for dates.

Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- The assessment was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19, using Zoom and telephone.
- Virtual interviews were held with five staff members, including the Director, Lead Trainer, Human Resources and two Associate Trainers/Internal Quality Assurance.
- Telephone interviews were held with six learners.
- Zoom interviews were held with two partner organisations.
- Document review including Policies, Handbooks, Learner Feedback, Facebook, and Website.
- The formal feedback session was held at the end of the assessment with the Director and Lead Trainer.

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
2. Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy The Growth Company that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
3. Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
4. Inform The Growth Company or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
5. Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
6. Inform The Growth Company of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrixStandard@growthco.uk.
7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
8. Inform The Growth Company of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
9. Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause The Growth Company and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
10. Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
11. Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by The Growth Company and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to be a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
12. Be aware that The Growth Company reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.