Management chart, administration and governance

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Ofqual RQF 2

The Learning Machine Ltd (TLM)

Aims

- **To provide qualifications that encourage up to date learning methods supported by low cost, robust, external quality assurance**
- **To enable the inclusion of new participants into formal qualifications by reducing administrative overheads for assessors and maximising rewards for learners**
- **To reduce the cost of accreditation while maintaining standards where ever there is a demand**

RQF 2.D

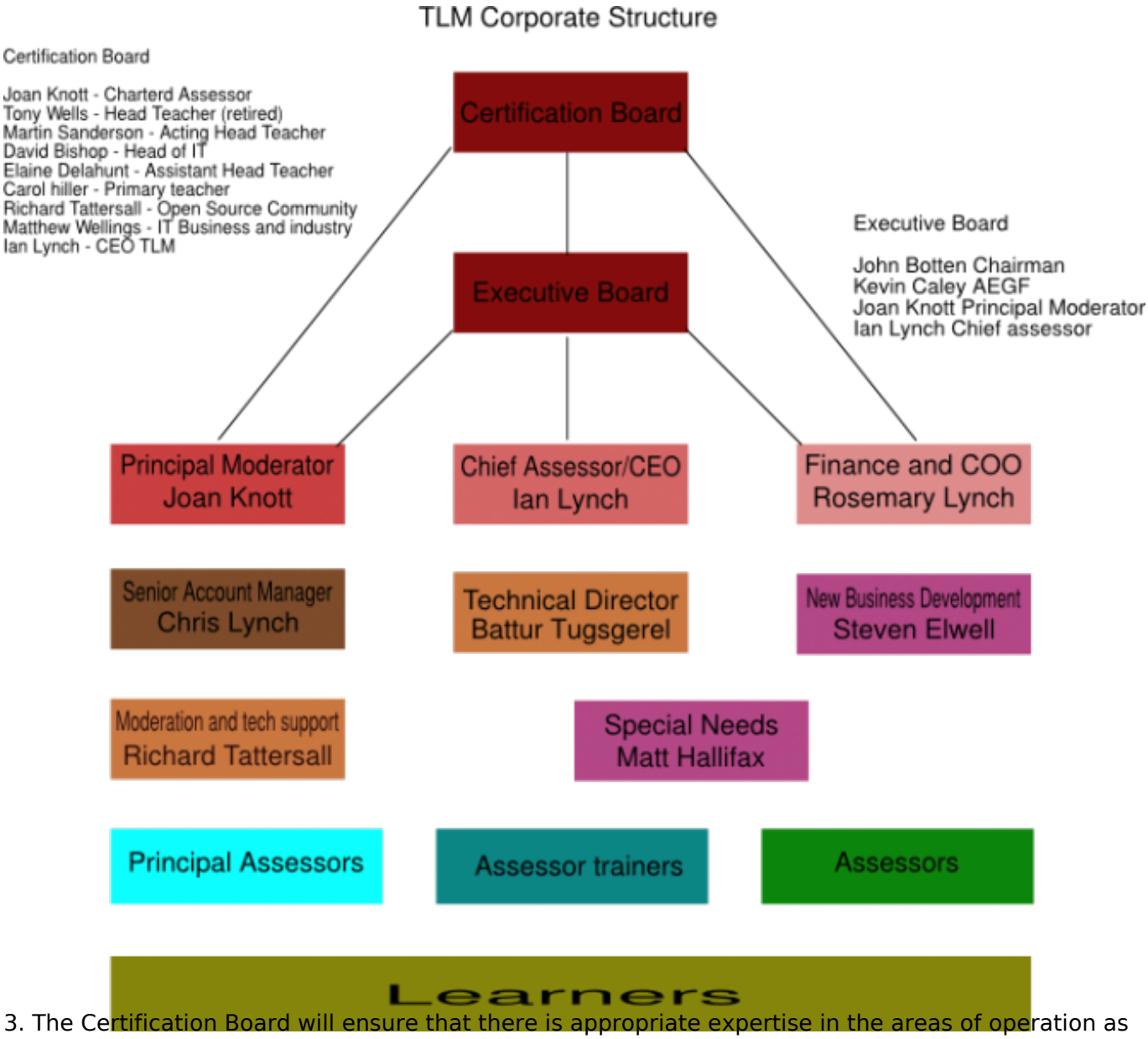
Governance and administration of regulated functions

1. The current organisational structure is shown below. It involves two main committees, the Certification Board and the Executive Board. The Certification Board will approve any major changes to the certification or regulated functions. Members of the Certification Board have been involved in the development of the INGOT certificates through consultation, proof reading, trials in their schools and feedback from colleagues in the industry. As the project has moved out of the pilot phase and qualifications and units are approved for inclusion in the RQF, the role of the Certification Board will include overseeing proposals for new certificates and qualifications in new areas. It delegates responsibility for market research to the Principal Moderator and Chief Assessor. The PM and CA and other directors of TLM will use extensive contacts through the education training and business sectors to ensure that proposals for new qualifications meet the organisational aims and fully meet the QCF regulatory requirements before they are submitted for accreditation. The Certification Board is an independent body with a constitution focused entirely on Awarding Organisation functions. It provides a key means of providing a clear distinction between the awarding organisation function and any other functions provided by members of the executive. **(QCF 5.1)**

2. The Executive Board is responsible for the commercial viability of TLM and supporting market research. Both Boards are compact but made up of people with relevant skills, knowledge and education/industry experience to represent the interests of those being certificated and to ensure the management of resources is sound. There is some overlap in membership to aid communications but the Certification Board is independent of commercial interest since the constitution (See Annexe 2) requires a voting majority that has no commercial interest in The Learning Machine Ltd. There is separation of the functions of each board to make clear the distinction between the development of qualifications and their integrity and the commercial interests of The Learning Machine Ltd as a business. The Learning Machine Ltd is effectively a service provider to the Certification Board and the community that it represents. The Certification Board holds the company administration to account for the quality and standards of the certification acting as an independent arbiter in disputes and appeals. It is primarily concerned with quality assurance, validity, appeals and disciplinary action and acts as the committee to make decisions in these areas. Principal Assessor, Chief Assessor and Chief Operations Officer report to the Executive Board. Other members of staff report to their relevant line managers as indicated in the diagram.

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Organisation Chart



3. The Certification Board will ensure that there is appropriate expertise in the areas of operation as an Awarding Organisation **(QCF 5.2a)**, eg through involvement in the appointment of senior staff. The Certification Board will ensure the validity and integrity of the awards and hold the company to account for ensuring that the Quality Assurance procedures are effective and that expertise is used appropriately in the assessment and awarding process of units and qualifications. **(QCF 5.2c)** The Certification Board will meet physically once a year to receive the Chief Assessor's report and consider any proposed changes, actions to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Arrangements, issues arising from quality assurance such as serious complaints about standards and any disciplinary action required by the programme. At least two thirds of the Certification Board members must be in attendance at each of these meetings. In between physical meetings there will be regular communication by E-mail, IRC and voice conferencing as well as meetings between the Chair, CEO and other groupings as required. The constitution for the Certification Board is provided here [2]. There is no hierarchy to this board apart from the Chairman who will convene meetings and enable all to participate fully acting as the single point of accountability for the Certification Board. A Deputy Chair is elected in case the Chair is unavailable at a particular time. The Chief Executive will be responsible for converting the decisions made by the Certification Board into action through the Executive Board and company administration. The CEO is the main point of accountability for the executive function of the organisation. He is directly accountable to the The Executive Board for ensuring that the under-pinning resources are available to sustain qualifications by ensuring that

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TLM is financially viable. The Executive Board is the legal entity required by UK law to act as a private limited company and as such its main function is to ensure sound day to day management and administration and sound fiscal policy.

Ownership

4. The Learning Machine Ltd is a private limited company. Its share holding is as follows. Ian Lynch, 27%; Rosemary Lynch, 27%; Advantage Early Growth Fund, 10%; Chris Lynch, 5%; Ben Lynch, 5%; John Botten, 5%; Colin Lynch, 1.5%; Chris Baldwin, 1.5%; Joan Knott, 2%; Matthew Lawrence.1%.Beer and partners have a 5% option running from January 2009 for 7 years. 10% is set aside for employee share options.

5. The Certification Board is made up of volunteers who are representative of the wider community and users of TLM qualifications together with the Chief Assessor and Principal Moderator. The INGOT community and on-line courses sites provide free resources for the community supported by TLM and community contributions. For example, it provides a free Virtual Learning Platform that is supervised for general community use as well as supporting TLM qualifications. The long term aim is to develop this as a fully managed community learning resource that is free for use by anyone in the world in the style of Wikipedia. The Certification site is only available to those registered for TLM qualifications and has appropriate security for that function. Where possible all TLM digital resources are licensed for free use.

QCF 2.1b

Points of accountability

6. The single point of accountability for maintaining the quality of all relevant regulated functions is Ian Lynch, currently Chief Assessor and Chief Executive. As the company grows it is envisaged that tese posts will be separated to two different individuals.

QCF 2.1c

Management structures used to control the delivery of relevant regulated functions.

7. The Executive Board manages TLM's administration serving the day to day executive functions including training Assessors and Assessor Trainers, sampling work for moderation and providing general support for the Academies and Centres. (Academies are assessment centres that have a whole organisation commitment to the Learning Machine Certification Programme). The Executive Board is responsible for company legal issues suchas filing accounts with company's house, paying tax and employment legislation. The key decisions about management are made by the Chief Executive in consultation with Board members, particularly the Chairman, and other members of the team. There are weekly staff meetings and monthly Board meetings. The Chief Executive is in regular contact with the members of the Certification Board so that communications between Certification and Executive Boards is clear and unambiguous. There are no additional committees or management structures within TLM at this time.

Assessment centres

8. Assessment is delegated to trained assessors through a system of centres. (More detail here [3]). Assessors are assigned to an Account Manager at TLM. Each centre has a Principal Assessor who acts as the single point of accountability for standards in the centre. Principal Assessors are assessor trainers and can train suitably capable colleagues as assessors.The assessment centres are provided with external quality assurance by TLM with TLM subject to independent quality assurance by the regulators. This then provides the overview of the management structures used to control the delivery of the regulated functions of the organisation.

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QCF 2.2

Conflicts of interest and restrictive practices

9. The separation of the Certification Board and the Executive board is designed to mitigate against conflicts of interest. The Certification Board has a majority with no financial interest in certification and is representative of the community where the qualifications are targeted. There are appeals procedures for individual candidates as well as centres and academies that route back to the Certification Board and independent external expertise. **No moderators or verifiers will act in the assessor role and no assessors will take part in moderation or verification ensuring that decisions are never solely made by anyone with an individual personal interest in the outcome.**

QCF 2.3

Contribution of other organisations to the regulated function

10. There are currently three authorised moderators of TLM qualifications outside the UK. These are Inkululeko Technologies in South Africa, the National Center for Open Source Education in the USA and INGOT Asia in India. In all cases extensive training has been provided. Further support is provided directly using internet communications and the web site. The prime priority is that quality assurance for any certificates bearing the UK regulators logos is fully up to the standards observed by The Learning Machine in the UK. At present all such certification is carried out in English. As the programme grows abroad, The Learning Machine will appoint regional moderators in the target country or countries who will be responsible for ensuring standards are consistent in that country and that quality assurance is maintained in keeping with The Learning Machine policy for the UK. where the country requires languages other than English to be supported, the Languages Policy will be invoked.

11. Centres that are schools acting as Academies might offer certification to partner schools and in their wider community. This facility is designed to fit the DCSF Specialist Schools and Academies programme whereby families of schools work co-operatively and also in federations. In such a situation, the Academy/Centre and Principal Assessor is focussed on one school and certification is done in the partner schools using accredited assessors accountable to the Principal Assessor. The Academy name or centre will appear on the certificate. Such arrangements are limited typically to one secondary school and up to 5 partner primary schools but other arrangements will be considered provided that they are manageable and quality assurance can be guaranteed.

Resources

QCF 2.4

12. Management planning provides a financial contingency and the organisation has no borrowing. The hosting of all documentation, awarded certificates and operating infrastructure using free and open source software and free data formats reduces risk of unavailability of client data as well as reducing costs. Basic maintenance of the resources is designed to be low cost and is based on a service model such that demand will pay for supply. Future development depends on growth of the customer base and will not be initiated without specific funds being available to sustain it.

QCF 2.5

13. The entire human resources strategy and business plan is based on matching the account manager support to the demand from paying Centres and Academies. If the number of Centres/Academies increases so will the income to sustain them, if it decreases, there will be time to reduce staffing accordingly.

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14. The personnel have all gone through team building management training to determine role preferences. All personnel are trained in the principles of the certification and all company members have a professional background in ICT for business and/or education at graduate level. There is also expertise in the centres with over 600 assessors trained at the time of writing. As things stand there are several people who could take over the role of Chief Assessor should the need arise and appropriate risk analysis has taken place with regard to the loss of key personnel.

15. The company has an established staff appraisal system with Rosemary Lynch providing the appraisal of Chris Lynch and Richard Tattersall. Ian Lynch the appraisal of Steven Elwell, Matt Hallifax, Rosemary Lynch and Daniel Carrera. Chris Lynch carries out the appraisal of Ian Lynch. On a day to day basis, Rosemary Lynch manages financial and administrative issues, Ian Lynch, Chris Lynch, Richard Tattersall, Steve Elwell and Matt Hallifax manage the contacts with the Centres, providing support and training. This is perfectly manageable at present but given the indicated growth there will be a need to appoint new account managers and these will be provided with training to Assessor Trainer level as well as in the administrative procedures associated with moderation and verification.

QCF 2.6

16. The technical strategy is supported by external hosting with 4 daily backups supplemented by in-house back ups. In addition there is code tracking for The INGOTs certification site source code and templates using the Darcs source code manager (http://darcs.net [4]). Darcs provides a full code history covering all changes made to the source code. The history record includes:

- The change set (files added or removed, and lines of code changed).
- Time stamp for the change.
- Identity of the programmer who made the change.
- Description of the change.

17. This system allows us to go back in time as needed. If a bug is discovered we can return to a previous version. All technologies are documented to reduce dependency on individuals.

18. The technical strategy provides a robust method to ensure that all requirements for operating in the QCF are supported for current and future demands within low levels of resource that are therefore sustainable even in the event of a downturn in business.

QCF 2.7

Self-evaluation and continuous improvement

19. TLM operates a bi-annual review to assess its procedures aimed at making improvements based on up to date evidence.

20. The procedure is to review practice against the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework and summarise strengths and areas for development. Information is gathered from the minutes of meetings, staff meetings and formal and informal customer feedback. Actions resulting in areas for development are classified as urgent, important or urgent and important. Urgent actions need to be prioritised before important actions, urgent and important is the highest

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priority.

Lines of responsibility

21. Rosemary Lynch is responsible for compiling the evidence for the evaluation. Ian Lynch is responsible for reviewing the evidence and presenting it to the Certification Board in the Chief Assessors annual report. Ian Lynch is responsible for ensuring actions identified are executed and these will be reported to the Certification and Executive Boards.

Reporting

22. The actions required as a result of evaluation are reported to all organisation members using the management section of the web site. Where an individual is responsible for a particular action, their initials will be against the action point and they will discuss the strategy for achieving improvement with the Chief Executive. Progress against these actions will be reported to the Certification and Executive Board through its standard meetings agendas as appropriate. Actions and outcomes will be reported to the regulators on request and/or through the self-evaluation process.

Policy and procedures for risk management

23. The over-arching goal is to provide external quality assurance for qualifications at low cost, reducing administrative overhead for assessors and maximising rewards for learners. The key risks have been prioritised as follows.

- Certificate fraud
- Unforeseen changes in the regulatory requirements
- Critical failure in technical systems
- Loss of key personnel
- Errors in assessment instruments
- Malpractice in centres

24. The documentation here referring to risk constitutes the risk register.

25. The overall single point of accountability for risk management is Ian Lynch. All employees and assessors are required to refer any unidentified risks to the Chief Assessor by e-mail in the first instance. There is further information about mitigating risk in other parts of this document eg the Quality Assurance section, the section about malpractice and procedures for making awards.

QCF 2.8

26. Users have opportunities to contribute to the review and evaluation procedures through the Certification Board, through a permanent on-line questionnaire, through discussion forums on the community web site, at the annual site visit by the Account Manager and through informal contacts with Account Managers during the moderation and verification process. Many improvements that have been made are a direct result of user input, including the provision of an on-line mark book, provision of facilities for language translations on the community web site, optional on-line testing for multiple choice tests, increasing data space for users, improved help and information links on the

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community web site. We will also poll learners from time to time by e-mail to find out their views.

QCF 2.9

27. TLM is committed to co-operating with providing information to the regulators as required. Most of this information is readily available to all directly from the community web site.

QCF 2.10

28. TLM provides full access to its premises for the regulators

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Source URL: https://theingots.org/community/QCF2.1-2.10_5.1_5.2a_5.2c

Links
[1] https://theingots.org/community/node/5485
[2] https://theingots.org/community/node/5487
[3] http://www.theingots.org/community/node/5488
[4] http://darcs.net/

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