

Accident Investigation Training Course - A Credible Claim For New Qualifications - Alm Newark

A lack of industry regulation and standardisation was prevalent, an enterprise working within the insurance fraud market has sought to fill the gap though creating a national vocational qualification. Accident Fraud & Insurance claims Investigation

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A CREDIBLE CLAIM FOR NEW QUALIFICATIONS

Via the new Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF), DnA Group has become both an awarding organisation and a provider of a new national qualification in Fraud and Claims Investigation.

Fraudulent insurance claims are already huge and they are on the increase. Since most of us make an insurance claim for one thing or another; be it a car accident, a burglary or a personal injury, it should receive a fair and thorough assessment from the insurance company or legal team. Working in the midst of these two highly regulated professions are a number of often self employed fraud or claims investigators, who conduct a pivotal role of assessing whether the claim is bone fide or not.

DnA Group's training arm, ALM Training, is highly regarded among insurance and legal institutions in providing the 'gold standard' in investigator training. However, up to now, the only organisation setting the standard of this practice was the company who trained the investigators; ALM Training. There is no specific sector skills council (SSC) or a national standard specified. In effect the QCF has provided a way to create independent recognition.

Lin Hyde, qualifications and accreditations director at DnA Awards, explains:

"We have long wanted a national vocational qualification in our field of training and have approached several awarding organisations, but none have been able to help because there just hasn't been the right infrastructure in place.

"When I heard about the QCF I knew this would be a great opportunity for us to create national recognition for our training and a method of maintaining standards. The profession is expanding as demand increases from insurance companies and lawyers who need claim investigators of the highest order. The QCF, therefore, directly improves the opportunities for investigators to become better qualified and, ultimately, gain more opportunities of employment."

Robust Standards Maintained

Under the new QCF, employers can apply to become an awarding organisation. This is a first in the world of vocational qualifications. An important reason why DnA Group wanted to be recognised as an awarding organisation as well as a provider of the qualification is that it wanted to keep an element of control over the high standards that it has become reputed for.

This is a level 4 Award, equivalent to first year of a degree, and both deep knowledge and technical experience is required by the awarding organisation in order to properly and accurately assess learners.

One particular element of the insurance and legal industry has undergone considerable reform after serious malpractice was being reported by less scrupulous claims organisations. This was the 'personal injury, no win no fee' cases, which preyed on vulnerable people to make false or spurious claims. While this has been mostly 'cleaned up', this national qualification in Fraud and Claims Investigation effectively works as another layer of quality assurance in this instance.

Learners who have an investigative background, such as former police officers for example, often don't expect to learn much from the training. However, in reality the reverse is true; there is a huge amount of information to take on i.e. how to conduct an interview, report writing and other specific skills that claims investigators require. Of course claimants are often monitored within the framework of civil law rather than criminal law, but this also demonstrates the high standards of the training criteria.

The learners themselves come from all walks of life: retired police; redundant people from different careers; and insurers are sometimes trained too, as this helps with their career development. The MoD's master drivers for the British Army's Land Accident Investigation Team are also trained by ALM. This is

essential preparation for when the army is off on exercise and an accident occurs, especially if someone is injured, as they're better equipped to write the report and avoid ambiguities.

Industry Practices & Benefits

One might argue that this is just a self serving exercise, but DnA Group is passionate about this work because fraud is not a victimless crime, as many who commit it like to think it is. Ultimately, everyone else has to pay for the resulting hike in insurance premiums and those fraudulent no win no fee cases can be extremely costly if the claimant didn't read the small print.

"We hope this will grow and we can employ more people to carry out the training. We also hope that we will have a sector skills council responsible for our area of work, as this is an integral part of both the paralegal and insurance professions."

Accreditation & Qualification

The first learners are expected to take this qualification in September 2009. This has been a thorough but fairly quick process. From making the decision in January 2009, DnA Awards became accredited as an awarding organisation in May. The qualification units were approved by the regulator, Ofqual, in August 2009.

Training takes six to eight weeks and for the learner it means completing assignments, tutorials, practical exercises and essays. There is no examination but assignments are set for both theoretical and practical work.

For those who have gone through the 'old' training they can gain conversion to the national qualifications at no expense by completing the essays, and there is no need to retake the practical assignments.

To find out more about the QCF go to www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf.

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For further information contact Steven Brassey at the QCDA press office on 0207 509 5381 or email steven.brassey@qcda.org.uk

About QCF

The QCF is the new framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The framework is at the heart of a major reform of the qualifications system designed to make the whole system simpler to understand and use and more inclusive of qualifications from a wider range of providers. The overall intention is to make both the system and the qualifications offered far more relevant to the needs of employers and more flexible and accessible for learners.

About DnA Group

It provides qualified investigators and investigation services to the insurance and legal services sector. It is a multi faceted company of like minded businesses that compliment each other through their own specialist area of expertise to form a dynamic integration and fusion of services that delivers the skill of high value knowledge and insight.

ALM Training aims to:

- ? develop courses which are relevant to both Insurance & Personal Injury claims/accident investigation and processes.
- ? deliver the most comprehensive Insurance & Personal Injury Claims/accident investigation training in the UK and to be at the forefront of developing and standardising industry best practice.
- ? provide continuing support industries updates and facilitate further development of students throughout their career.

<http://www.dnagroup.org>

About QCDA

QCDA is the government agency for the development of curriculum, delivery of assessments and reform of qualifications. We work with the education, skills and business communities to develop effective and innovative ways to help children and adults to progress, achieve their full potential and to demonstrate that achievement to others.

www.qcda.gov.uk

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ALM Training are leading the field in UK Accident Investigation training courses.

Dean Hyde, managing director of DnA Group, remarks:

"This is not a big money spinner for us. The claims investigation industry falls outside of the many SSCs and authorities that satellite it (even the Financial Services Authority are involved in some cases), so we were motivated through shoring up our position in a highly standardised arena; not seeing 'Pound signs'. The QCF provides us with the ability to demonstrate that this is a responsible and robust profession and can stand up to rigorous probing by any watchdog.

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