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BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear Examiner

Following last week's communication regarding the details of the Examiner online training programme consisting of the modules new entrants are undertaking, there have been mixed comments and observations and indeed, some confusion aired about the programme. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to clarify these matters.

From feedback received, it is clear to us, that the BSS needs to communicate in a more transparent and consistent manner.

Examiners indicate, that to help them deliver a confident and professional service to a consistent standard, they need one version of the truth which is easily absorbed and understood.

So, having recognised your frustrations we now having the opportunity and the means to deliver the same background knowledge, procedural instructions, critical support information and advice to every examiner and trainee, at the same time.

Everyone completing this training programme will have the opportunity to be fully equipped with the comprehensive knowledge required to undertake BSS Examinations as well as having consistent answers as to why a requirement may exist; why something is checked in the way that it is or 'how does that policy help me as an examiner'.

The lead-up discussions

The roll-out of the comprehensive online Examiner Training Programme was raised with all stakeholders at the BSS Advisory Committee (BSSAC) meeting in February 2021. This dialog had followed discussions on the subject of annual training with all examiners who attended the LPG Upgrade course at Evesham last Autumn.

The details of fees and time scheduling could not be agreed with the Examiner Group Representations at that February BSSAC meeting and so were referred to the BSS Management Committee in April.

But the principles that every examiner should be qualified and auditable to the same standard and that every Examiner should benefit from the same training, knowledge and information was agreed by all.

On the 24 March, the Examiner Newsletter advised examiners that the full online learning programme would be undertaken by all examiners over the next twelve months, subject to detailed discussion, and the likely fee would be £269 plus VAT.

The subject was raised at the BSSMC, supported by various papers included those put forward by BSS Examiner Representatives and additionally, with-top line information taken from the BSS Examiner survey in March this year which demonstrated that some Examiners felt there had been a big problem achieving consistent performance amongst examiners, and they would encourage the BSS to look into this.

The Management Committee heard that there was inconsistency in the approach of Examiners and there was a need to address training and quality issues.

I also advised the BSSMC meeting, that I would work with the Examiner reps to agree a timeline for the undertaking of the training programme.

My research indicates that an average Examiner undertakes 120 examinations a year. Furthermore, the Committee was advised that information from the UK Government website states training of this nature is an allowable business expense for sole traders (and companies) and that this could be claimed in one amount, if the tax-payer chooses to do so. The BSSMC agreed the cost of the proposed training at £269 was reasonable and furthermore, that the Examiners should pay for this training.

As promised, following the BSSMC, a meeting was convened with the chairs of the advising BSS Committees, the Examiner Group Representatives, the training deliverer (The Bratton Group) and myself, where we went through the programme proposals and reached an agreement to extend the completion schedule from 12 to 16 months as well as to place the more onerous modules into the quieter Autumn/Winter months and summer releases would comprise of modules less onerous in magnitude.

The Training Delivery

The technical knowledge units and questions have been written by competent advisors, expert professionals, BSS Examiners, the BSS QCA and relevant BSS officers.

These have been reviewed and checked by other examiners, whilst 40 trainees have been going through the modules and providing their feedback and comments.

The online system is provided by a Stratus Cloud Solutions, a North American company and it is embedded within the BSS Community (i.e. native to Salesforce) to provide a one-stop-shop to enable examiners to train and work in the same online environment.

Because the information is in the database, we can share the same words, diagrams and pictures in reference libraries and answers to queries in the Examiner Community. This is part of the key approach to providing all examiners with the 'consistent knowledge for all'.

Furthermore, The Bratton Group are trainers and change consultants supporting customers throughout the UK and in America. Their directors have a wealth of technical experience and they run a training centre accredited by the ILM, which is part of the City and Guilds Group.

Support

Back in the March newsletter, we acknowledged everyone would be incredibly busy this year, including the BSS office team. We also appreciate that many examiners are operating in their own environment, possibly isolated, perhaps feeling a little out on a limb?

With these pressures, I would encourage examiners to express their comments and observations, perhaps offering constructive feedback and or, improvement suggestions, my virtual door is always open.

However, this said, we will not tolerate rude, abusive or aggressive behaviours.

Respectful relationships between Professional Examiners, the BSS Office team, and our consultants must exist to ensure a truly collaborative and cohesive work environment for all.

So, if you have any support queries, questions, comments or if you need to raise a need for advice about the programme details or practice, please do not hesitate to contact The Bratton Group through its BSS support details, I can assure you they will pull out all the stops to support your endeavours – call on 07858 522374 or use the email address: bsscourses@thebrattongroup.co.uk

If you have a comment or suggestion on the policy or procedural aspects, please contact me directly, the channels are open, your constructive views and ideas are very welcome.

Meanwhile, stay safe and well.

With kind regards

Kevin Tyson

BSS Manager