

## **Quality Assessment Guidance – Visitor Attraction**

### **Includes: Museums, Castles, Historic House, Historic Attraction and Visitor Attraction**

ASVA Quality is a scheme designed to support the Scottish Visitor Attractions industry in providing high-quality and memorable experiences for visitors.

The design of this scheme and the associated assessment parameters is unique: We have incorporated extensive industry consultation, as well as a first-of-its kind visitor survey, to ensure that ASVA Quality looks at what matters most to both you and your visitors. Please use the following document in conjunction with the [Terms & Conditions](#) which covers commitments and statutory obligations.

### **How do we measure Quality**

One of our advisors will conduct a Quality assessment visit every year or every other year based on your membership option. Within the visit, they will evaluate each aspect of your attraction as an incognito visitor, based on visitor expectations of quality and best practices. During the assessment, your advisor will carefully evaluate key areas, always with the goal of helping you enhance and refine your attraction. You will then receive comprehensive feedback and advice to enhance quality standards even further!

The assessment is entirely objective—no judgments are made based on personal preferences.

The goal of the assessment is to enhance quality while preserving the unique character, style, and individuality of Scottish Attractions.

### **Scoring Breakdowns**

During your visit, your advisor will evaluate all aspects of your attraction and assign a score from **0 to 10** for each element assessed:

<b>0-5</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
<b>5-6</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>9-10</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

At the end of the visit, an overall percentage score is calculated for the attraction, as well as for each individual section. This percentage score relates to a Star rating and to

achieve a Quality Scheme Star rating, your attraction must achieve an overall percentage of 66% or above (2 Star band):

<b>No Grade Awarded</b>	<b>1 – 65%</b>
<b>2 Star Award</b>	<b>66 – 71%</b>
<b>3 Star Award</b>	<b>72 – 78%</b>
<b>4 Star Award</b>	<b>79 – 85%</b>
<b>5 Star Award</b>	<b>86 – 100%</b>

### **Scoring sections**

There are 6 possible key scoring areas which will contribute to your overall star award outcome, as per the diagram below. Note that where a scoring section or individual scoring element is not relevant to your attraction, this will not be scored and will **not** negatively impact your overall award potential.



**\*Staff Attitude / Efficiency / Knowledge** – staff interactions at any point during the visitor journey are incredibly important in ensuring a positive experience. As such, staff interactions will be assessed within the relevant main scoring areas (Arrival, Experience / Attraction, Food & Beverage, and Retail). Where there is a staff interaction via phone, email, or webchat prior to your assessment, this will be assessed within the Pre-Arrival booking section. Assessment of staff interactions across all areas of your attraction will include your advisor considering a range of factors around attitude and efficiency / knowledge, to arrive at an overall staff score per scoring section. Further information around what your advisor will look for within staff interactions is detailed later within this guidance.

**\*Cleanliness** – housekeeping and cleanliness standards across all areas of your attraction are also incredibly important in ensuring a positive experience. As such, cleanliness will be assessed within the relevant main scoring areas (Arrival, Experience/Attraction, Food & Beverage, Retail, and Toilets).

We know that not all attractions provide every service or facility as above. If a section is not applicable to your attraction, it will be excluded from the assessment process, and this does not negatively impact your overall score/Star rating.

## What the advisor assesses

This section provides a detailed overview of the factors your advisor will consider when awarding scores that contribute to your overall Star grading.

All assessments are conducted within the context of the specific attraction.

Expectations will vary based on the size and nature of the attraction; however, **the fundamental principles remain consistent** and regardless of whether your attraction is large or small, these core principles guide the assessment to ensure a memorable and satisfying visitor experience. Key themes should be in evidence such as excellent visitor service, engaging interpretation / storytelling, safe and enjoyable activities, and well-presented, clean facilities.

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### **Cleanliness – assessed within each relevant section (Arrival, Experience/Attraction, Food & Beverage, Retail & Toilets)**

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A **clean and well-maintained environment is essential** to delivering a high-quality visitor experience. Attention to detail and consistency in cleanliness standards reflect the professionalism and dedication of your attraction.

- Bin provision, usage, and any litter evident around the attraction.
- Evidence of regular and effective cleaning schedules. Evidence of regular checks in all areas throughout the day.
- Evidence of attention to detail, including touchpoints
- Cleanliness of windows and window fixtures
- Cleanliness of internal floors and tidiness of internal spaces
- F&B areas - crockery, cutlery, cutlery containers, drinking glasses, and drink dispensers' cleanliness and hygiene. Cleanliness of food display/service areas and seating areas.
- Retail - The advisor will evaluate general cleanliness, including dusting of retail displays, merchandise, clean flooring, clean counter tops, door handles, card machines etc.
- The cleanliness of toilet facilities is a key area for visitors - Walls, floors, handles, sanitary ware, taps, wastes, extractor fans, toilet brushes, and waste bins.

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### **Pre-Arrival**

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This section evaluates ease of use of the website, and the accuracy and clarity of information provided to visitors before their visit. This includes details shared through your **website, social media channels, and any printed materials** such as leaflets or brochures.

- Depth and accuracy of visitor information
- Functionality and ease of use of website and/or app
- Booking procedures (if applicable) and ease of use
- Accessibility of website and provision of Access & Inclusion guidance for attraction
- How to find you
- Foreign language provision

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## **Arrival**

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This section assesses the **overall visitor experience upon arrival**.

Key considerations include:

### ***First Impressions / ‘Kerb Appeal / Car Park’***

- Roads, car parks, accessible parking bays, paths, grounds, and steps.
- Quality and condition of surfacing, and ease of navigation.
- Lighting provision
- Buildings maintenance, quality, and ‘Kerb Appeal.’

### ***External Signage***

Includes assessment of initial signage externally on and around the building.

- Range of information including opening times, pricing, and indication of on-site facilities such as cafes or toilets
- Quality and condition of signage

### ***Design & Flow / Ease of Use***

When assessing ‘Ease of Use’ within the arrival area, it is important to **consider the needs of all visitors - including pushchairs and wheelchair users**.

Key questions include:

- Is the Arrival area **easily navigable** for all visitors, including those with mobility aids?

- How is the **flow of visitors managed**? Are there effective operational management arrangements in place, such as separate arrival points for groups etc which help create a comfortable and accessible arrival experience for all visitors.

### ***Visitor Information/Signage (Internal arrival areas)***

Includes internal signage within the arrival / reception area (provision, quality, and condition), and any orientation tools used by the attraction upon arrival, including:

- Directional waymarking in arrival / reception area.
- Site maps (static, digital, or handout), 'You are here' tools
- Staff guidance and support in commencing the experience
- Branding and Quality of signage
- Clarity of signage to direct visitors to the welcome desk/tickets, toilets etc.
- Clarity of pricing information at entry point/welcome desk.
- Use of clear fonts and accessible colours/use of pictograms
- Orientation of site offered (all formats assessed)

### ***Internal Decor, Fixture & Fittings***

- The quality and condition of all decorative elements are assessed.
- The quality and condition of all fixtures and fittings are assessed, includes lighting and heating.

### ***Staff Welcome / Attitude / Efficiency***

- Quality of the staff welcome to the attraction. Staff should have a friendly demeanour and show genuine enthusiasm for the attraction. Pro-activity in engaging their visitors and anticipating their needs. Ensure visitors feel valued in all areas of the attraction from arrival through to departure.
- Queue Management
- Staff efficiency of the admissions process is smooth and demonstrates awareness of the needs of the visitor.
- Ticket or receipt should be offered, along with comprehensive scene setting for the rest of the visit and orientation of the site given. Suggest any must see's, tour times or similar, and any temporary closures. Consider upselling (booking for lunch perhaps). Excellent knowledge of all areas of the attraction demonstrated.
- **Visitors tell us** that the arrival interaction is where proactivity is most important to them, to set them up with all relevant information for enjoying the attraction at their own pace.

### ***Staff Appearance***

Staff are the ‘face’ of your attraction and therefore should be well presented and wear appropriate clothing and present themselves in a manner that aligns with the image you wish to project.

- While staff are not necessarily required to wear uniforms, **visitors tell us** that staff should be easily identifiable and distinguishable from visitors in a busy attraction setting.
- **85% of visitors surveyed told us** that the quality and style of staff uniforms had either ‘major impact’ or ‘some impact’ on their impressions of the overall attraction.

### ***Access and Inclusion***

An assessment of all provisions in place to ensure the attraction is accessible and inclusive to all, catering to a variety of requirements. Considerations such as (but not limited to):

- Foreign language provision
- Accessibility of physical spaces, particularly for wheelchair/buggy users.
- Social inclusion policies
- Partner with local transport authorities to create access routes. Readily available accessible parking conveniently located.
- Accessible facilities
- Any community or youth activities / policies

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## **Experience / Attraction**

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This section assesses key aspects of the main experience within the attraction. This includes all elements within the main exhibition or activity areas and connecting areas such as corridors. A hugely important aspect of the main experience will be the interpretation and storytelling aspect, and how this is delivered. Consider that today’s visitors are increasingly informed and discerning, often comparing their experiences with those offered by top international attractions. As a result, attractions should deliver a well-rounded, engaging, and up-to-date offering to truly satisfy and inspire.

### ***Design & Flow / Ease of Use***

**Visitors tell us** they do not want to feel that they are ‘doing it wrong.’ **48% of visitors surveyed told us** that they wanted the freedom to be able to self-navigate their experience, meaning that the design and flow is of vital importance.

This scoring element will include an evaluation of how the attraction works for visitors/the volume and movement of visitors throughout the experience. Have you done all that you can to assist in the movement of visitors?

- Assessment of the design of the space, and any visitor flow management measures in place (including review of any pinch points)
- Known bottleneck exhibitions may be timed entry / booking only; however, use of this technique should be limited as **only 6% of visitors** surveyed showed positivity towards this method.
- Ensure layouts are coherent, with clear positioning and sequence of displays or exhibits - **Visitors tell us** if the layout is confusing this negatively impacts their visit.
- Capacity management

#### ***Visitor Information/Signage***

- The advisor will look at the use of directional signs, finger post signs, orientation boards, plans and display boards.
- Route through the main experience should be clear in terms of signage and/or verbal guidance.
- With the benefit of all the above a visitor can view all areas of the experience and feels comfortable that all areas have been viewed. **Visitors tell us** that clear signage is valued, it allows visitors to orientate themselves and feel in control of their experience
- An assessment of how practical and effective the positioning of signage is. Signs should be well-maintained, durable, and consistently updated with accurate information and directions. Signs should be easy to read, a clear font, and sharp contrast between text and background.
- Temporary or handwritten signs should be avoided if they create a poor impression.

#### ***Interpretation/Storytelling/Visitor Engagement***

The success of any attraction hinges on the uniqueness and appeal of the story it tells.

**Visitors consistently express** that an engaging, original, and memorable narrative is critical to their overall experience.

They are drawn to stories that stand out, offering perspectives or themes they have not encountered before. In addition to content, the structure of the story matters—clear, compelling progression keeps visitors engaged from beginning to end.

**Visitors also highlight** the value of a diverse mix of media and exhibits. A variety of storytelling formats—interactive displays, multimedia, artifacts, and immersive environments—enhances the experience, catering to different learning styles and maintaining interest throughout. Assessment includes:

- Consideration of value for money
- Do the exhibits excite, stimulate interest, educate, and provide engagement?
- Range and quality of formats and methods of interpretation
- Depth of information within interpretation, and adaptability
- The advisor will look at the relevance of the information and how this flows around the attraction. Is it shown in a logical order to engage the visitor? — Information should be easy to read and understand. For example, a suitable font size should be used, and the information should be written in an engaging style
- Interactive and Immersive Technologies - Digital innovation and how well this has been implemented
- Dynamic and Temporary Exhibitions
- Augmented Reality and Emotional Storytelling
- Condition and working order of all interpretation

#### ***Décor, Fixtures & Fittings***

- The quality and condition of all decorative elements are assessed.
- The quality and condition of all fixtures and fittings are assessed, includes lighting and heating.

#### ***Staff Attitude / Efficiency / Knowledge***

- Staff should be visible within the attraction/experience area, with a strong presence. They should demonstrate an awareness of varying visitor needs and abilities and should tailor engagement to suit the visitor. A key staff skill should be in reading the level of proactivity that each visitor wants or needs. **Visitors surveyed** gave a wide mix of responses in the level of proactivity they wanted from staff in the main experience, highlighting that this aspect is highly individualised and down to preference of each visitor (so long as proactivity was experienced on arrival).
- Any relevant additional information should be offered, to compliment the interpretive elements in place – aid the visitor in engaging with all that is on offer,



adding value for the visitor, be open and receptive to visitor enquiries/engagement.

- Where possible, staff should offer a final departure engagement or presence, creating a lasting positive final impression of the attraction for visitors. Further onward journey and area Tourism advice may be offered.
- As standard, staff should present a positive demeanour and show genuine enthusiasm for the attraction.

### ***Staff Appearance***

Staff are the ‘face’ of your attraction and therefore should be well presented and wear appropriate clothing and present themselves in a manner that aligns with the image you wish to project. **85% of visitors tell us** that staff appearance/quality of outfits being worn is an important marker for their overall impression of the attraction.

- While staff are not necessarily required to wear uniforms, they should be easily identifiable and distinguishable from visitors in a busy attraction setting. This might be accomplished by staff simply all wearing the same colour (uniform in look) and using branded name badges. Can your staff/volunteers be easily spotted as such by visitors?

### ***Access and Inclusion***

Your advisor will assess how inclusive the attractions is and/or what plans are in place to move forward with this. Not all actions are appropriate for all attractions, but some considerations should be:

- Inclusion across all visitor types and requirements
- Staff accessibility and EDI training and confidence
- Foreign language provision.
- Accessibility & comfort for a range of needs
- Digital inclusion / Wi-Fi availability on-site
- Sensory friendly designs
- Cultural and social outreach policies and activities
- Youth & Education Outreach

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## **Food & Beverage**

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The advisor will make every effort to assess all F&B outlets if an attraction has more than one, including any pop-up vans or similar.

**Visitors tell us** having a Food & Beverage offer on site is important to their experience. (73% deemed it either extremely important, or very important).

### ***Design & Flow / Ease of Use / Visitor Information & Signage***

How the F&B outlet works for visitors / the volume and movement of visitors throughout the space, at the counter or within the seating area. Have you done all that you can to assist in the movement of visitors?

- Signage letting visitors know if it is counter or table service
- Queue management
- Can the visitor manoeuvre comfortably around the facility, including between seating?
- Counter service should have a logical layout
- Counter or a section of the counter should be accessible to people of short stature, wheelchair users and children.
- Items on self-service counters should be clearly visible, priced and within the visitors reach

### ***Menu Presentation***

- Menus should be available online, to allow visitors to view the offer and make the choice to eat with you. **57% of visitors surveyed told us** that viewing an appealing menu online makes them more likely to choose to visit the attraction.
- Positioning and availability of menus throughout the attraction
- Availability and positioning of specials boards
- Quality of presentation, and branding. The quality and condition of whichever method you have chosen will be assessed.
- Any printed menus should be clean and well presented.
- Accessibility of your menus – clear font, large print available, Braille

### ***Quality, Range & Presentation of food & drink***

- The variety and range of the produce on offer, are you catering to all tastes and budgets?
- Range of diets catered for – vegetarian, vegan, gluten free etc.
- The quality of the produce available, look at local produce and highlighting these.
- The level of culinary skill demonstrated, care and flare taken in presentation of dishes, serving temperatures, and crockery used to create visual appeal to enhance your visitor's experience.
- Display and freshness of items in chill/display cabinets.

- Self-service hot food is well presented, freshly prepared and regularly topped up.

#### ***Staff Attitude / Efficiency / Knowledge***

- Any service transaction should be efficient and smooth for the visitor. Queue management should be pro-active. Staff should be flexible and adapt to visitors' requests/needs. Comprehensive knowledge of the menu and F&B area should be demonstrated, with cross selling or upselling considered – leading to increased revenue stream. Receipts should be offered. In self-service/counter, condiments/cutlery/water/glasses etc should all be pointed out. Satisfaction checks should be made with diners, and tables cleared promptly and efficiently.
- There should be adequate staff presence to ensure a smooth catering service for visitors.
- All F&B staff should present a positive demeanour, and show genuine enthusiasm for the catering service, as well as the wider attraction.

#### ***Staff Appearance***

As with other areas within the attraction and mentioned under other sections above:

- In addition, within catering staff should wear clean aprons, branded would be worthwhile, to ensure a cohesive link with the attraction, long hair tied back and suitable footwear for a food environment.

#### ***Décor, Fixtures & Fittings***

- Floors, walls, windows, fixtures, fittings, crockery, table appointment, heating, lighting & ventilation – all assessed for quality and condition.

#### ***Access and Inclusion***

- Do your menus cater to a range of dietary requirements?
- Are allergens clearly identified, and are staff sufficiently trained in providing accurate information to customers.
- Are there sufficient procedures in place to prevent cross-contamination of allergens.
- Is the F&B space easy to navigate for those with mobility aids or pushchairs?
- Provision for babies and toddlers – e.g. highchairs and ability to warm bottles
- Menus should have appropriate text to background contrast, and attractions should consider large print options.

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## Retail

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### ***Design & Flow/Ease of Use***

- How does the retail area work for visitors/the volume and movement of visitors throughout the space, at the sales desk, browsing the merchandise.
- Have you done all that you can to assist in the movement of visitors?
- Use of retail space: single purpose or multi use space.

### ***Merchandise - Range, Quality & Presentation***

- Range of merchandise via expectation
- Appropriateness to the attraction & quality of the offering. **Visitors surveyed tell us** that souvenirs and items linked to the attraction are a key focus of what they are looking for.
- Quality & Condition of displays and sales materials used.
- Consideration given to placement of products to ensure all visitors can browse.
- Eye catching presentation to draw visitors in.

### ***Staff Attitude / Efficiency / Knowledge***

- Staff should be clearly available for assistance if required and should be skilled in reading each visitor to determine the appropriate level of proactivity in offering browsing support. Multi-buy offers or cross selling opportunities should be highlighted by staff.
- Knowledge of the retail area and merchandise, queue management, smooth and efficient transaction, unprompted additional services offered – bag, gift wrap (if appropriate), VAT reclaim, onward postal service, receipt offered.
- Staff should present a positive demeanour, and show genuine enthusiasm for the retail offering, as well as the wider attraction.

### ***Staff Appearance***

Staff are the ‘face’ of your attraction and therefore should be well presented and wear appropriate clothing and present themselves in a manner that aligns with the image you wish to project.

- While staff are not necessarily required to wear uniforms, retail staff should be easily identifiable and distinguishable from visitors in a busy retail setting this particularly important when they are out on the shop floor.
- **85% of visitors tell us** that staff appearance/quality of outfits being worn is an important marker for their overall impression of the attraction.

### ***Décor, Fixtures & Fittings***

- Windows, doors, walls, flooring, sales desk, heating & lighting, and any non-display fixtures & fittings – all assessed for quality and condition.

### ***Access and Inclusion***

- Retail spaces should be easily navigated by those with mobility aids or pushchairs.
- Consider the height of your service desk, and accessibility of card machines, presentation of merchandise etc for wheelchair users.
- POS materials should have appropriate text to background contrast.

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## **Toilets**

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### **A Key Part of the Visitor Experience**

While not every attraction provides toilet facilities, those that do should recognise the considerable influence toilets have on a visitor's overall experience.

- **First Impressions Count:** For many visitors, the toilet is their first stop. A poorly maintained, understocked, or unclean facility can set a negative tone for the rest of their visit—and may discourage them from visiting the café or returning to the attraction altogether.
- **Maintain High Standards:** Cleanliness, freshness, and consistent restocking are essential. Toilets should be checked regularly throughout the day to ensure soap, hand towels, and toilet paper are always available.
- **Accessibility Matters:** Accessible toilets should be high-quality, thoughtfully designed spaces that fully meet a range of needs. They should never feel like an afterthought or be noticeably inferior to standard WCs.

The advisor will look at:

### ***Location /Design & Flow/ Ease of use of toilet facilities***

- Where the facilities are located
- How many locations toilets are located throughout the attraction.
- How the facilities work for the visitor in terms of ease of movement within cubicles, at basins and dryers, are there hooks and shelving for visitor belongings.

### ***Décor, fixtures & Fittings***

- Assessing all décor, fixtures & fittings for the quality, condition and appropriateness of the wall décor and flooring and general maintenance of the facility.
- When looking at fixtures and fittings, the advisor will consider more than just the toilets and washbasins. They will also look at the door locks, soap dispensers, bins, mirrors, hand dryers, paper towel dispensers, cubicles etc.

#### ***Access & Inclusion / Provision***

- Accessible toilets availability, baby change availability, lowered facilities for children, Changing Places, gender neutral facilities.
- Facilities should meet demand. **73% of visitors surveyed told us** that sufficient numbers and availability of toilets within an attraction was either extremely important or very important to the experience.