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*Cork Education and
Training Board*

QUALITY ASSURANCE

QA 6 CORK ETB POLICY ON THE ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish Cork ETB's philosophy on, and approach to, the assessment of learners in both formative and summative assessment. The corresponding procedures in Cork ETB's Assessment Framework addresses the practical implementation and administration of assessment by Cork ETB.

Through this policy and the corresponding assessment framework Cork ETB aims to ensure that there is fair and consistent assessment of learners in all Cork ETB colleges and centres and in all further education and training activities funded by Cork ETB.

SCOPE

This policy and the related procedures outlined in the assessment framework apply to all Cork ETB Further Education and Training in Cork ETB schools, colleges and centres and to all organisations funded by Cork ETB to provide Further Education and Training, whether accredited or unaccredited. The Assessment Process is the process of judging learner achievement in relation to the standards of knowledge, skill and competence so that the successful learner may receive an award. Where the Assessment Procedures of an awarding body differ from these, their procedures take precedent.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As per Cork ETB's Governance Structure for Quality Assurance our policies and procedures are implemented by all staff including Principals/Centre Managers, Assistant Managers, Administrative and support staff as well as teachers, tutors, instructors.

The Quality Assurance Unit supports this implementation and the Quality Assurance Steering Group oversees their work.

Role of the provider:

As the provider, Cork ETB is responsible for the development and implementation of policies and procedures for the fair and consistent assessment of learners. The provider is responsible for:

- developing best practice assessment policies and procedures
- agreeing their assessment policies and procedures
- implementing their quality assured assessment policy and procedures
- applying the Quality Assurance requirements of QQI and other awarding bodies
- ensuring appropriate assessment personnel are in place
- establishing an Authentication Process to include;
 - internal verification
 - external authentication, including setting criteria for the selection and appointment of external authenticators
- establishing a Results Approval Process
- establishing an Appeals Process

Role of the Assessor:

The role of the assessor is to evaluate learner evidence and make the assessment decision/judgment on whether the outcomes of knowledge, skill or competence, as outlined in the Award Specification, are achieved. The assessor must determine that the evidence is valid, reliable and sufficient to make the assessment decision.

The assessor is a qualified practitioner who has responsibility for the assessment of learners. This may be the teacher, trainer, tutor, instructor or nominated third party e.g. First Aid. The assessor can also be a workplace supervisor, manager or team leader and guidelines will be provided by Cork ETB. Whatever the context of the assessment, assessors need to have the appropriate assessment skills.

These should include:

- subject matter/technical expertise; the assessor must be proficient in the subject/technical area in which they are assessing

- knowledge of and proficiency of the award standards (learning outcomes) being assessed
- knowledge of the provider's assessment procedures
- familiarity with QQI or other awarding bodies assessment policy and guidelines

The specific responsibilities of the assessor include:

- implementing the provider's assessment procedures across all assessment activities
- providing opportunities for learners to generate appropriate evidence
- designing assessment instruments
- devising marking schemes and grading criteria
- reviewing and judging learner evidence
- making the assessment decision
- providing information and feedback to learners.

In addition, and as part of the application for validation providers must ensure that the programme structure, content and assessment arrangements meet the requirements of the named Award Specification to which the programme is designed to lead.

Role of the Learner:

Learners are responsible for ensuring that they have made themselves familiar with Cork ETB Assessment Procedures. Learner responsibilities are outlined in detail QA 6.1a/b Learner Contract Regarding Assessment.

POLICY

Cork ETB is committed to a transparent, consistent, accessible and fair process of assessment of learners. Cork ETB considers assessment an essential element of

the learning process, as a mechanism to facilitate learner access, transfer and progression in terms of labour market needs and the National Framework of Qualifications.

Cork ETB Guiding Principles

Cork ETB will always act in the best interests of learners. The following principles underpin our strategic thinking, planning, decision-making and our everyday actions as we strive to deliver our services:

- Prioritising the needs of learners
- Being customer focused
- Acting with professional integrity
- Doing the right thing
- Treating people with dignity and respect
- Being fair, open and accountable
- Ensuring value for money
- Operating to the highest ethical, professional, moral and legal standards

Key Principles in relation to Cork ETB's Policy on Assessment of Learners

The following principles underpin Cork ETB's Policy on Assessment of Learners:

1. Validity – assessments must measure what they are intended to measure i.e. the knowledge, skills or competency required for the award. The assessment must be fit for purpose and allow the learner to produce evidence, which can be measured against the standard and facilitate reliable assessment decisions by the assessors. Assessments should cover a representative sample of the content that to be assessed and should give an indication of future performance.
2. Reliability – assessments must be accurate and consistent over time i.e. produces consistent information about the knowledge, skills or abilities being

assessed across the range of assessors applying the assessment, in different situations and contexts, with different groups of learners.

3. Fair – assessments must be accessible to and provide equal opportunity for all learners who are potentially able to meet the standard required. There should be consistency in the how assessments are carried out across the service. In order to ensure fairness and equality of opportunity for all learners it may be necessary to introduce reasonable accommodations or to defer assessment due to extenuating circumstances, without undermining the integrity of the assessment process.
4. Transparency – This is essential to ensure clarity and understanding by all stakeholders. It will include clear and unambiguous definitions and requirements with regard to fairness, consistency, validity and reliability.
5. Quality – quality of assessment relates to the reliability, adherence to the standards set for the award and the level, the practicality of implementing the assessments and adherence to agreed policies and procedures in managing assessment.

Cork ETB aim to ensure a clear understanding by staff and learners of the fair and consistent assessment approach by the development of this policy and related procedures in our Assessment Framework, which are summarised in the Assessor Handbook and Learner Assessment Handbook.

The procedures outlined in our assessment framework aim to ensure that:

- Learners are provided with information on the assessment procedures and schedules
- Our assessments are internally verified as fair and consistent
- Our assessments are externally authenticated as consistent with national standards
- Staff have a planned, co-ordinated, team-based approach to the delivery of its programmes
- Reasonable and appropriate accommodation is available to all learners with specific needs for assessment on programmes provided

- We develop a co-ordinated approach to assessment that ensures appropriate methodologies and consistent standards are maintained and reviewed
- We are regularly reviewing assessment policies and procedures to ensure compliance with national standards and requirements
- Assessments carried out by third parties (e.g. contracted trainers, employers through work experience) conform to Cork ETB assessment standards
- Individual feedback is provided to learners on their assessment
- We store all information, examination materials, answer papers and appeals information in a suitable and secure environment until at least the end of the assessment process
- We maintain final examination and assessment results securely indefinitely

This is the framework of Assessment Procedures for Cork ETB. Some of the procedures are developed and others are currently being developed:-

QA 6.1. Cork ETB Information to Learners Procedure
QA 6.2 Cork ETB Coordinated Planning of Assessment Procedure
QA 6.3 Cork ETB Assessment Design Procedure
QA 6.4 Cork ETB Implementation of Assessment Activities Procedure
QA 6.5 Cork ETB Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
QA 6.6 Cork ETB Reasonable Accommodation in assessment of learners with specific needs Procedure
QA 6.7 Cork ETB Extenuating Circumstances in Assessment Procedure
QA 6.8 Cork ETB Repeats and Resubmission of Assignments Procedure
QA 6.9 Cork ETB Security of Assessment Material Procedure
QA 6.10 Cork ETB Assessment Malpractice Procedure
QA 6.11 Cork ETB Consistency between Assessors Procedure
QA 6.12 Cork ETB Assessment performed by third parties Procedure
QA 6.13 Cork ETB Consistency with national standards Procedure

QA 6.14 Cork ETB Internal Verification Procedure
QA 6.15 Cork ETB External Authentication Procedure
QA 6.16 Cork ETB Feedback to Learners Procedure
QA 6.17 Cork ETB Issuing of results and certification to learners Procedure
QA 6.18 Cork ETB Learner Appeals Procedure
QA 6.19 Cork ETB Results Approval Procedure
QA 6.20 Cork ETB Return of Certification Data to QQI Procedure
QA 6.21 Cork ETB Corrective Action Procedure

DOCUMENT DETAILS

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