

COLLINSTOWN PARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FURTHER EDUCATION ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

Collinstown Park Community College deliver a range of programmes leading to Awards made by the National Awarding Body QQI. Some Programmes also lead to awards from industry related bodies such as CompTIA, CISCO and Microsoft. To facilitate learners to develop relevant skills and competencies through our programmes, and to receive national recognition through an award, CPCC ensures that its approach to assessment, development, marking and grading is compatible with best practice in line with DDLETB and awarding body requirements.

This policy sets out CPCC's approach to fair and consistent assessment of Learners. It describes the principles that underpin assessment, and the roles and responsibility of all those involved in the process.

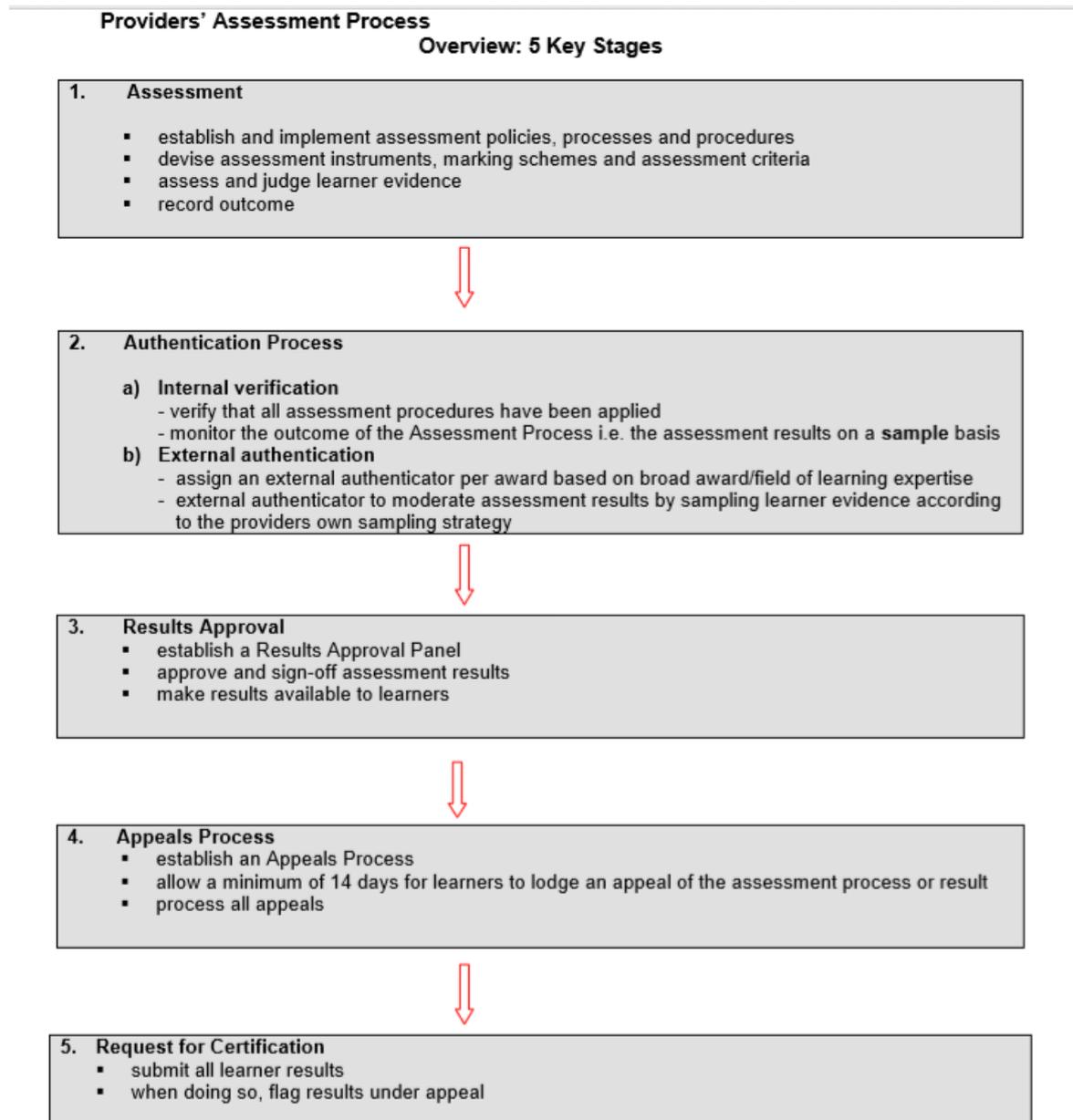
CPCC as a constituent of DDLETB is guided by the former Co Dublin VEC Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC. This agreement remains operational subject to a new QQI – DDLETB agreement. This policy will be replaced when the new agreement is ratified.

This policy is informed by the following:

- QQI: Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers: Revised 2013
- County Dublin VEC Quality Assurance Procedures for FETAC Assessment: February 2012
- DDLETB/County Dublin VEC Handbook For Teachers/Tutors of FETAC-accredited programmes: Assessment

Scope

This policy applies to all Further Education programmes delivered in CPCC that lead to an award made by QQI. Awards accredited by other awarding bodies may have additional requirements or regulations to those outlined in the policy. The QQI Assessment Process involves 5 key stages as outlined below. This Policy refers to stage 1 of the assessment process.



(QQI 2013:4)

Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles as set out in QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines

Fairness

A fair assessment provides equity of opportunity for learners. CPCC Further Education supports commitment to equality by striving to ensure that assessment arrangements are appropriate to the standards set out in the programme's learning outcomes and that the learner is given appropriate opportunity to succeed. Throughout the programme, the learner should be given adequate time and resources to prepare. This implies that learners are given information on expected performance criteria and assessment conditions and receive timely, constructive and appropriate feedback on their performance following assessment.

Consistency

The Assessment Process is carried out in line with DDLETB guidelines. Assessment conditions and procedures are consistent in approach, marking and grading, however learning outcomes across programmes may be assessed in different ways.

Validity

A valid assessment sets out to measure the standards of knowledge, skill or competence required for the award it; is fit for/appropriate to the purpose, it allows the learner to produce evidence which can be measured against the standards, it facilitates reliable assessment decisions by assessors and is accessible to all learners who are potentially able to achieve it. CPCC Internal Assessors ensure validity by utilising assessment techniques and applying assessment criteria specified in DDLETB programmes. The Validity of Assessment is monitored through DDLETB frameworks including the External Authentication process.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure. A reliable assessment produces reliable assessment decisions, is based on valid assessment techniques, ensures evidence is generated under consistently-applied conditions of assessment, ensure reliability of learner evidence, produces consistent decisions across the range of assessors with different groups of learners and is consistent over time. CPCC strives to ensure reliability through adherence to DDLETB programme requirements and the implementation of DDLETB Assessment procedures.

Quality

Quality will be assured through adherence to national award standards, DDLETB quality assurance assessment framework and guidelines, Self-evaluation and QQI Monitoring.

Transparency:

Transparent assessment is assured by the implementation of DDLETB quality Assuring Assessment Procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Course Coordinator:** Responsible for the coordination of the assessment process for a specific course group
2. **Exam Coordinator:** Responsible for coordination and scheduling of exams.
3. **QQI Coordinator:** Responsible for the overall organisation and co-ordination of the QQI assessment Process
4. **Internal Assessor-** responsible for designing, delivering and assessing the programme of learning - i.e. the Teacher/Tutor.

The Assessment process

Assessment Techniques

CPCC Further Education use appropriate assessment techniques as specified in the award specification and programme descriptor. Assessors ensure that all learning outcomes are assessed as required by in the programme descriptor. The following assessment techniques may be used

- Assignment
- Project
- Portfolio
- Skills Demonstration
- Examination
- Learner Record

Internal assessors will devise assessment techniques in line with DDLETB requirements as outlined in Co Dublin VEC Handbook for Teachers/Tutors of FETAC – accredited programmes.

Awards made by other bodies may have additional criteria.

Planning Assessment

Assessment is planned in accordance with DDLETB Co. Dublin VEC Quality Assurance Procedures for FETAC Assessment. This involves the following tasks: Course Coordinators devise a Coordinated Assessment Plan for each programme to include when assessment is to take place and deadlines for submission.

Course Coordinators and Teachers/Tutors will meet to plan integrated assessment where appropriate.

Teachers/Tutors (Internal Assessors) will design a Module Assessment Plan. Devise Assessment Instruments i.e. briefs for each piece of assessment to include

deadlines for submission. Devise marking schemes. Devise Specific methods of documentation and delivering feedback to learners.

All involved in planning and coordinating assessment activities will ensure that there is enough time for learners to produce the assessment evidence.

Information to Learners

All learners who are presenting for QQI or other accreditation must be provided with the following information regarding assessment.

- Assessment requirements and techniques
- Assessment schedule deadlines

Procedures regarding

- Reliability of Learner evidence and authorship statements
- Assessment malpractice
- Reasonable accommodation
- Compassionate Consideration
- Appeals process

Prior to assessment all learners should be given information on the assessment instrument/ technique being used for the award. This will involve where appropriate giving the learner:

- Module descriptor/ Learning outcomes
- Assignment briefs
- Assessment criteria
- Submission details

Learner Feedback

In order to optimise outcomes CPCC strives to deliver constructive and timely feedback to our learners. The method of giving feedback will vary according to the nature of the subject area. Feedback to learners can be oral or written, and can take place one-to-one or in a group/class setting. Evidence of learner feedback must be recorded and included in the Learner Assessment portfolio.

A minimum of one piece of written feedback evidenced in the learner portfolio is required for example;

- Written feedback on a completed assignment
- Written feedback on draft work for an assignment
- Written feedback on a skills demonstration
- Written feedback on skills developed prior to assessment,

The format of the feedback may include feedback given in person, by email or Edmodo, Teachers may use a checklist or template.

All assessments include verification that feedback was given to the learner. It is the learner's responsibility to be present when one-to-one or oral feedback is scheduled. Feedback is not given on assessments submitted after the deadline date.

Assessment Deadlines

All assessment activities are assigned a final due date.

Learners will be given a minimum of two weeks' notice of deadlines for completed assessments. Learners who are absent when notification of a deadline is given are responsible for informing themselves of the details.

Assignments will only be accepted by the subject Teacher/ Tutor during class time. Submission of assignments is recorded by the tutor and signed for by the student.

DDLETB Policy in relation to compassionate consideration allows students to apply for extensions to deadlines in exceptional circumstances.

In cases where the learner evidence is not furnished by the deadline and there are no extenuating circumstances or Compassionate Consideration: Learners forfeit the percentage of marks that apply to the specific assessment piece.

Late submission only applies in exceptional circumstances. In all cases students must discuss this with their class Teacher/ Tutor on or before the original deadline. The student will then be referred to the Further Education coordinator to apply for an extension to the deadline. The Further Education coordinator in consultation with the course Teacher/Tutor will consider each request on a case by case basis. If the application is approved the Further Education coordinator will furnish the student with and a Late Submission Form and a revised submission date. The assessment evidence must be submitted to the teacher/tutor by the revised date accompanied by the form identifying the reason for not meeting the deadline.

Students will not receive feedback on late work. Should the work be accepted it will only be marked when all other assessments for the specific module has been completed on time.

Learners may only request one late submission per module

Marking

Teachers/tutors (Internal Assessors) are required to mark and grade learner evidence for each technique. Assessors devise marking schemes for all techniques identifying the assessment criteria and a range of specific marks linked to each criterion. This is a more detailed breakdown of the marking scheme identified in the Individual Candidate Marking Sheet provided with the QQI module descriptor. Marking schemes should be guided by QQI Grading Criteria for awards at Level 5- 6 (appendix 1).

Marks may only be attributed to learner evidence generated in response to an assessment brief or an exam and must be in accordance with the marking scheme. Learner evidence presenting within 2% points of a grade band should be carefully reviewed by the assessor to ensure the correct grading criteria are present.

Reliability of Learner Evidence

To make sound judgements on learner's achievements of the award standards, Teachers/Tutors must be confident that all evidence produced by learners is original. Learners will be asked to sign an individual authorship statement testifying that their work is original. The Teacher/Tutor may also plan to use various methods to verify

reliability of the contribution of the learners, outlined in Co Dublin VEC Handbook for Teachers/Tutors of FETAC – accredited programmes

Assessment Malpractice

Acts of malpractice undermine the integrity of the assessment process. CPCC does not tolerate any acts of malpractice.

Examples of assessment malpractice are:

- Learner Plagiarism i.e. passing off someone else's work as the learner's own. This may involve direct plagiarism of another learner's work or getting another individual to do the assessment activity.
- Impersonation of another learner
- Fabrication of evidence
- Alteration of results
- Wrongly obtaining secure assessment material
- Any behaviour that undermines the integrity of the assessment process

All allegations of malpractice will be investigated in a timescale that does not disadvantage the learner.

Plagiarism:

In cases where an incident of plagiarism is suspected or reported, and depending on the extent, steps may include:

1. In the first instance; the Teacher/Tutor discusses the issue of plagiarism with the learner and advises on correct citation.
2. An investigation takes place by a management appointed committee; the learner is informed of the process and is afforded an opportunity to make a personal statement.
3. Where plagiarism is found to exist the learner will be informed of the outcome and the consequences may include (depending on the seriousness of the plagiarism):
 - Re-submission with a warning or
 - Exclusion from re-submitting the work or
 - Exclusion from the module or
 - Exclusion from the award

Reasonable Accommodation

Learners with permanent or long term conditions which they believe will significantly impair their performance in the assessment may apply for reasonable accommodation(s). Conditions could include visual and hearing difficulties, or specific learning difficulties.

Learners may be accommodated by the adaption of assessment activities in the following ways:

- Modified presentation of assignments, e.g., enlargements (can be sanctioned by the Internal Assessor, i.e. Teacher/Tutor)
- Use of scribes/readers
- Use of sign language/ Braille
- Practical assignments
- Using a dictionary- where no advantage takes place

- Rest periods
- Adaptive equipment
- Use of assistive technology
- Extra time

Applications for Reasonable Accommodation must be supported by evidence of impairment. Reasonable accommodation is subject to available resources.

Compassionate Consideration

In exceptional circumstances learners may be afforded the opportunity to complete assessment activity which has not been completed within the specified deadline through the Compassionate Consideration process.

Compassionate Consideration applies to the following criteria:

- Injury, accident or trauma caused to the learner
- An acute illness or serious on-going medical condition
- Acute or on-going serious personal/ emotional circumstances
- Bereavement
- Terminal illness of close family member or partner

In order for a learner to be assessed under compassionate consideration, the following steps need to be taken:

1. The Learner must talk to the Teacher/Tutor or Course Coordinator and discuss the reasons for which they need compassionate consideration.
2. The Record of Compassionate Consideration form is completed by the course Coordinator and Learner
3. The Course Coordinator will assess the request and let the learner know within five working of days of submitting the form whether or not they have been granted compassionate consideration.
4. Rescheduled assessment will take place at the next available opportunity. Depending on the nature of the assessment this may only be available in the next programme cycle.

Appeals

Assessment Results for QQI accredited programmes may be appealed through the DDLETB QQI appeals process.

Information about the appeals process is supplied in writing to learners when they receive the final statement of results.

Learners who wish to appeal are advised to contact the college within a specified timeframe.

Learners may view their assessment portfolio and final results with a staff member prior to deciding to commence the appeals process.

The college forward the learner's documentation and all required material to DDLETB as required.

The college will inform the Learner of the outcome of the appeal in a timely manner.

Appeals for programmes accredited by other awarding bodies will be managed in line with the requirements of the particular awarding body.

Borderline Cases for Major Awards

In situation where a learner is borderline unsuccessful in one module required to achieve a major award (for example where a learner has passed seven modules and

achieved 48% in an eight module) the Assessor should bring this to the attention of the Course coordinator or Further Education coordinator for review. Review of borderline cases may include consultation with the internal assessor, other subject Teachers and the Learner.

Appendix 1

Grading Criteria for awards at Level 4 - Level 6

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A Pass indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard ▪ used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently ▪ attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately ▪ provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity. 	<p>A Merit indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved ▪ used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency ▪ expressed and developed ideas clearly ▪ demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills ▪ presented coherent and comprehensive evidence. 	<p>A Distinction indicates that the learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved ▪ used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently ▪ demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter ▪ demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills ▪ demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking ▪ expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively ▪ presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence

(OOI: Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised 2013)

Bibliography:

County Dublin VEC (2012) Quality Assurance Procedures for FETAC Assessment: February 2012 *

DDLETB/County Dublin VEC (2013) Handbook for Teachers/Tutors of FETAC-accredited programmes: Assessment. *

**(The Above publications below are no longer publicly available as they apply only to former Co Dublin VEC services but are available on the school server (subs and prongs))*

QQI. (2013) Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers: Revised 2013. <http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Quality-Assuring-Assessment---Guidelines-for-Providers,-Revised-2013.aspx>