

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

This section of the Quality Assurance (QA) Handbook defines the policy and procedures used at Kerry ETB FET Colleges and Centres to ensure fair and consistent planning of assessment, operation of assessment and marking/grading of assessment. This policy and the associated procedures do not exist in isolation, so cross reference will be made to other related policies and procedures where appropriate. The Kerry ETB assessment procedures are listed below and can be found on page 56.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that programme assessment is valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic. This policy also has the purpose of complying with the following:

- a) The requirements of QQI, as set out in its Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and its Sectoral Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines, that Kerry ETB documents and implements a policy for Quality Assurance.
- b) The requirements of QQI, as set out in its Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning, that Kerry ETB documents and implements a policy for Quality Assurance.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all assessed courses across Kerry ETB FET provision.

POLICY

Assessment as a valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic process

The College Principals, the Campus Manager and FET Centre Managers will play a key role in ensuring that assessment is valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic. The assessment tasks (and marking criteria) devised by programme staff will enable learners to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes, and will facilitate robust decisions. The scheduling of assessment will be efficient, especially regarding the amount and timing of assessments.

Within each programme a broad and balanced range of assessment techniques will be used, with an interdisciplinary approach being adopted where possible. A range of assessment instruments will be used to avoid over-reliance on any single instrument. Assessment briefs will comprise of:

- a) Guidelines that explain the format to be used for assessment outputs.
- b) Details on what should be contained therein.
- c) Marking schemes which are to be devised in line with assessment criteria.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Kerry ETB recognises assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, which supports an understanding of core theory and practice for learners. Assessment will be promoted as a positive activity, which contributes to and enhances learner's development and progression.

Learner Communication

Learners will be informed about assessment policies and procedures through the Learner Handbook, which is made available to all Learners as part of the course induction. The handbook will be updated as required to align with any changes to the assessment process. The format and requirements of a particular assessment will be provided through a detailed assessment brief at the start of each module. Queries relating to a given assessment by Learners will be addressed by the relevant instructor/tutor.

Scheduling assessment

Assessment schedules will take into account learner workloads and allow time for learner reflection. Such assessment schedules will be available to learners.

Reasonable accommodation

In admitting applicants with specific needs, Kerry ETB acknowledges its obligation to ensure that assessment arrangements are designed so that all learners are assessed on equal terms. Across FET provision there will be a number of learners who qualify for specific adaptations for assessment. This may be due to a disability, a medical condition or specific learning differences. Some, such as physical or sensory disabilities may be obvious, whilst others may not be apparent, unless disclosed by the learner. Additionally, conditions may be temporary. The needs of individual learners with apparently similar conditions will also vary.

Learners will be required to inform the College Principal, Campus Manager, FET Centre Manager where they identify themselves as persons with specific needs, and request that arrangements be made to provide an adaptation to assessment. Learners are required to inform their College Principal, Campus Manager, FET Centre Manager in writing at least six weeks in advance of the assessment date.

Learners will be required to inform their College/FET Centre where they consider that they require an adaptation to assessment, arising from a short term condition or temporary injury. Learners are required to inform their College/FET Centre in writing as soon as is practicable.

The College Principal/Campus Manager/FET Centre Manager will determine the nature of the adaptation to the standard assessment conditions:

- a) Accessible venue
- b) Additional time
- c) Reader/scribe/prompt
- d) Use of assistive technology
- e) Use of a separate room/space
- f) Supervised breaks - use of this is likely to include a recommendation for a separate room
- g) Examination paperwork in preferred format

The determination will be made on the basis of the written request and the documentation submitted by the Learner. The Learner will be informed in

writing of the decision on the adaptation to the standard assessment conditions.

Where a learner is unhappy with the decision on the adaptation to the standard assessment conditions, s/he can appeal. The Assessment Process Appeals procedure shall be used for reconsiderations of outcomes of the applications for an adaptation to assessment.

Extension of date of submission

Where circumstances beyond a Learner's control may have impacted unfairly on an assessment task s/he may submit a request for an extension of the date of submission. Requests for such an extension will apply to circumstances beyond a Learner's control such as accidents or sudden illness or the death of a family member. Requests will not be approved if they arise from a Learner's poor time management, or a Learner's failure to take reasonable steps to avoid circumstances that may affect their ability to complete the assessment by the due date.

A Learner who considers that their performance in a continuous assessment task has been affected by circumstances beyond their control may formally request an extension of the date of submission, indicating the grounds for their request and attaching relevant documentary evidence. The request must normally be made in writing to the relevant instructor/tutor in advance of the due date or, in extreme cases, no later than five working days after that date.

The instructor/tutor, in consultation with the College Principal/Campus Manager/FET Centre Manager, will decide if extending the due date of submission is justified. Where it is decided that it is justified, the Learner will be informed in writing of the extension of time which has been granted for the submission of the assessment task. The full range of marks/grades used in the original assessment will be applied when determining the mark/grade following special consideration.

Where a learner is unhappy with the decision on extending the date of submission, s/he can appeal. The Assessment Process Appeals procedure shall be used for reconsiderations of outcomes of the applications for extending the date of submission.

Academic Integrity and Malpractice

Learners are expected to strive for academic integrity with the support of the College and to undertake assessment tasks honestly and truthfully, avoiding plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. The responsibility to demonstrate academic integrity lies with the enrolled learner.

Kerry ETB will provide guidance referencing and acknowledging all sources. Information will also be provided in the Referencing Handbook for the FET Sector. Kerry ETB hosts the anti-plagiarism package Turnitin.com, which facilitates learners to reflect on the content of their written assessment and the associated referencing before final submission. The responsibility to demonstrate academic integrity lies with the learner. All submitted work for assessment purposes, which includes but is not limited to, text, graphics, tables, formulae, or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or any other media, in addition to artefacts, computer software and algorithms, must correctly acknowledge the source of any data which is not original to the learner. Turnitin.com will be used to ensure that written assignments do not display evidence of plagiarism. Where an Instructor/ Tutor/Teacher suspects malpractice, the College Principal/ Campus Manager/ FET Centre Manager will be informed. An investigation will determine whether there is a case of assessment malpractice to answer by the Learner.

The responsibility to act or engage in a practice that undermines the fairness of an assessment lies with the enrolled learner. Learners are required to avoid plagiarism, unauthorised collusion or any form of contract cheating, or the evasion of assessment regulations.

Any suspected intended or unintended act of assignment falsification, misrepresentation, deception, or breach of examination regulations will be considered Academic Malpractice. Where programme staff suspect Assessment Malpractice, the College Principals/Campus Manager and FET Centre Manager will be informed. An investigation will determine whether there is a case of assessment malpractice to answer by the Learner.

Marking and Feedback

Learners will be given timely feedback on the continuous assessment elements of their course (e.g. all assessments undertaken during a module, prior to the module completion date). Such feedback will explain the basis of the learner's assessment mark against the assessment criteria and will provide information on how the learner can strengthen their work for future assessment purposes and/or repeat assessment. College Principals/the Campus Manager/FET Centre Managers shall record the dates when assessment marks and feedback are given to learners as part of the course assessment schedule and notify learners at induction. Instructors/tutors/teachers shall ensure that marks are available and feedback given to learners within 20 working days of the submission date.

Release of Results

The release date for approved results shall be determined by the Quality Assurance Governance Board. College Principals/the Campus Manager/ FET Centre Managers shall record such dates as part of the course assessment schedule and notify learners at induction. Approved results will be issued to learners as soon as possible after the meeting of the Results Approval Panel at which they are determined.

Where a learner is unhappy with the approved result s/he can appeal. The appeal must be made in writing to the College Principal/Campus Manager/FET Centre Manager within 10 days of the issuing of the approved result by the College/FET Centre. The Assessment Result Appeals procedure shall be used to appeal results. The Assessment Result Appeals procedure applies to all learners enrolled on FET Courses and de-registered learners whose assessment results have yet to be issued.

Internal Verification

All work submitted for assessment which has been marked by an instructor/tutor/teacher and which contributes to the achievement of credit or a qualification will be subject to internal verification. For practically based assessment, where marking takes place at the time of the assessment, the formal record of how the mark was arrived at, with reference to the marking criteria and where practicable a recording of the assessment will be used for internal verification purposes.

An explanation of the purpose of internal verification will be provided to learners in the Learner Handbook.

Staff conducting internal verification are required to confirm that Learner evidence exists and that marks are correctly computed and recorded for a sample of Learners.

Staff conducting internal verification are required to record the details of the particular pieces of assessment which have been selected within the sample for review, and any resulting changes to marks that have been as a result of identifying and correcting any errors.

Results Approval Panels; convened by the College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres, will review such reports.

The Internal Verification of Results procedure shall be used to internally verify results.

External Authentication/Examination

All work submitted for assessment which has been marked by an instructor/tutor and which contributes to the achievement of credit or a qualification will be subject to external authentication. The Quality Assurance will be agreeing individuals to act as External Authenticators and External Authenticators and submitting details to the FET Quality Council for ratification.

An explanation of the purpose of external authentication will be provided to learners in the Learner Handbook.

External Authenticators are required to complete the Kerry ETB External Authentication training workshop.

External Authentication will provide independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards.

External Authenticators will conduct a review of internal verification reports- authenticating the findings/outcomes of internal verification.

External Authenticators are required to review assessment results for a sample of learners and ensure that assessment results have been marked in a valid and reliable way and are

compliant with the requirements of the award.

External Authenticators will note any inconsistencies in the grading of learner evidence which has been selected within the sample for review and moderate such grades. External Authenticators are required to record the details of the particular pieces of assessment which have been selected within the sample for review, and any resulting changes to marks.

External Authenticators are required to complete a report recording the outcomes of their review of internal verification reports, and authenticating the findings/outcomes of internal verification. Their report will also record the details of the particular pieces of assessment which have been selected within the sample for review, and any resulting changes to marks.

Results Approval Panels; convened by the College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres, will review such reports.

The External Authentication procedure shall be used to externally authenticate the assessment of learners.

Results Approval

Results Approval Panels will review and recommend assessment results to the Quality Council. Such recommended results communicated to learners prior to formal ratification of provisional results.

College Principals/the Campus/Manager/Managers of FET Centres will inform learners and programme staff of the approved results once ratified.

Ratification of Approved Results by the Quality Council

The Quality Council will ratify recommended results presented by the QA Officer (or equivalent), prior to their submission to the awarding body for the purposes of certification.

Monitoring of Grade Achievement

Kerry ETB monitors and analyses learner attainment at programme level; including the benchmarking of grade achievement. Such information is used to initiate quality and enhancement activities, including liaising with external authenticators to facilitate programme improvement.

Assessment at Programme Level (New Programmes)

A programme assessment strategy will be devised for each new programme and documented in the validated programme specification. The programme assessment strategy provides guidance for programme staff, learners and those who are involved in work-based elements of the programme.

The Programme Governance Board will consider the effectiveness of the learning outcomes being employed in both the programme development process and in the programme provision. They will also ensure that over-assessment of the learner is avoided.

The Programme Governance Board will undertake periodic evaluations of the range of teaching methods and assessment methods to identify best practice as well as areas for improvement, and, where necessary, training and resource requirements which will support improvement practice.

Following the programme evaluation process, the Programme Governance Board will consider the totality of the learning experience and identify how the blend of teaching methods and assessment serves the overall programme aims and intended outcomes.

PROCEDURE

The Kerry ETB assessment procedures are as follows:

- Examinations: Planning, Conducting and Concluding
- Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances
- Short-Term Extensions Assessment Deadlines
- Secure Storage of Assessment Materials, Records and Learner Assessment Evidence
- Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Assessment Result Appeals
- Assessment Process Appeals
- Assessment Malpractice
- Internal Verification of Results
- External Authentication
- Results Approval Procedure

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Quality Council is responsible for approving this policy and procedure for ratification by the Chief Executive Officer.
- The FET Director has overall responsibility for the assessment process managed by Kerry College and FET Centres.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres, are responsible for prompting assessment as a positive activity, ensuring the accuracy of information related to course assessment instruments and assessment schedules and for ensuring the accuracy of updated information if and when any changes are made.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres, are responsible for ensuring that learners have confirmed their understanding of academic integrity and how it applies to their course assessment.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres are responsible for the management of the use of the Kerry ETB anti-plagiarism package at College/Centre level.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager are responsible for ensuring that learners are informed about assessment policies and procedures.
- Instructors/tutors are responsible for ensuring that learner's queries relating to a given assessment are addressed.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres are responsible for the scheduling of assessments at the college/centre and for the maintenance and updating of assessment schedules.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres are responsible for determining the nature of adaptations to standard assessment conditions where a learner has informed the College/FET Centre that they require an adaptation to assessment.
- Instructors/tutors/teachers, in consultation with College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres, are responsible for decisions to extend the due date of submission of an assessment, where a learner has requested such an extension arising from circumstance beyond the learners control.

- Instructors/tutors/teachers are responsible for informing College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres of suspected assessment malpractice.
- Instructors/tutors are responsible for providing timely feedback on continuous elements
- The Quality Assurance Governance Board is responsible for issuing the release dates of approved results.
- College Principals, the Campus Manager and Managers of FET Centres are responsible for the operation of internal verification of all work submitted for assessment marked by an instructor/tutor/teacher.
- The Quality Assurance will be agreeing individuals to act as External Authenticators and submitting details to the FET Quality Council for ratification.
- The QA Unit is responsible for the centralised organisation of external authentication.
- The QA Unit is responsible for the processing of assessment appeals.
- The Quality Council is responsible for ratifying results prior to their submission to the awarding body.
- The QA Unit is responsible for monitoring and analysing learner attainment.

CONTROL SHEET

Policy and Procedures Title	Assessment of Learning
Responsible Officer(s)	FET Director
Issuance Date	
Effective Date	
Last Revision Date	
Supersedes	Version 1.0
Next Revision Date	September 2024
Relevant Kerry ETB Policies	
Designated Reviewers	Senior Management Team; Quality Council
Scope	All assessed courses and programmes

REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved by
New Policy Version 1.0			Quality Assurance Officer	