Quality Assurance Handbook

SETANTA COLLEGE

Section 7:
Assessment of Learners

SETANTA
College

7.1 Assessment Overview

7.1.1 Policy and Procedures related to Assessment

Setanta College adheres to the policies, criteria and guidelines regarding assessment as described in the following QQI documents:
- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013)
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013)
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018)
- Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017
- HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018
- Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017

Further, the College has ensured that it has the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for programme validation as outlined in Qualification and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012).

7.1.2 The Assessment Process

The Assessment process at Setanta College is managed through a series of policies and procedures that include:
- Planning the Assessment
- Assessment Regulations
- Assessment Marking and Authentication
- Academic Integrity
- External Examiner
- Examination Board

The relevant policies and procedures applying to the above are documented within the Assessment section.

7.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The College units or bodies (Council, Boards, Committees) and their members, charged with roles and responsibilities of overseeing, implementing and evaluating Assessment related policies and procedures, are described in Table 7.1 below.

Body	Members	Roles and Responsibilities with regards to Assessment
Academic Council	• Chair of Academic Council (external) • Academic Director • Head of Learner Services • Programme Leaders • College Registrar • Learner Representative • Educational Technology Manager • Quality Assurance Officer	Implementation and approval of all quality assurance policies, procedures and amendments Approval of External Examiner(s) Review of External Examiner's Report Review Examination Board minutes Review outcomes of all academic appeals Take appropriate actions with regards to assessment Approve proposed amendments to QA policies and procedures with regards to assessment Review outcome of academic appeals
Academic Affairs Committee	• College Registrar • Quality Assurance Officer • Programme Leaders • Programme Administrators • Head of Learner Services	To process any changes to quality assurance documentation and to submit such changes to the Academic Council for adoption Action issues that arise from quality assurance monitoring processes following annual report to the Academic Council meeting Monitor the effectiveness of all quality assurance procedures through the various boards and committees of the College
Programme Board	• Academic Director (Chair) • Programme Leaders • Assistant Programme Leaders • College Registrar • Educational Technology Manager • Head of Learner Services • Learner Representative(s)	Examinations and assessment planning and standards Approval of Assessment techniques (Methods) and Guidelines Review Learner performance, retention & feedback Assessment monitoring and recommendations for enhancement Assessment trends and statistics review Adopts recommendations from External Examiner annual reports
Examination Board	• Internal Examiners (Programme Leaders and Academic Director) • External Examiner(s) • College Registrar (Chair) • Programme Administrators • Learner Representative from a different programme	Consideration of Assessment Findings Determine Progression Eligibility Authentication of Assessment results Ratify Assessment Results Review Assessment related penalties Classifications of awards Consider External Examiner(s) report(s) Review assessment statistics, trends and benchmarking

Internal Examiner meeting (pre Examination Board)	• Programme Leader • Internal Verifier • College Registrar	Internal verification of Learner results
Academic Standards Committee	• College Registrar (Chair) • Programme Leader • Academic Director • Quality Assurance Officer	Resolution of complaints relating to assessment that are deemed formal in nature Make recommendations for dealing with such issues Develop policies and procedures to reduce risk of disciplinary issues arising/developing
Appeals and Review Committee	• Chair to be nominated by the Academic Director • Programme Leader from a different programme whence the appeal has originated • Quality Assurance Officer to act as secretary with non-voting rights	Considers appeals relating to Learner review of assessment, grade and award Determines the outcome of such appeals following the investigation process Where an appeal is accepted the Appeals and Review committee is required to determine the appropriate actions to be taken.

Table 7.1: College bodies (Council, Boards, Committees) charged with roles and responsibilities of overseeing, implementing and evaluating Assessment related policies and procedures.

7.1.4 Individual Roles and Responsibilities

Individual roles and responsibilities with reference to Assessment are described as follows.

<u>Learner</u>
The Learner is expected to:
- Actively engage with the assessment activities and act on feedback provided by the Tutor.
- Ensure that they familiarise themselves and fully understand assessment guidelines and assessment briefs.
- Submit legible work for assessment as required.
- Ensure that all assessment deadlines are met or that approval for an extension has been granted in advance of the original assessment deadline.
- Understand what constitutes academic integrity, malpractice and plagiarism.
- Seek advice and guidance if in doubt about the assessment procedure.

Internal Examiner – Tutor

The Internal Examiner or Tutor is expected to:

- Assist in the preparation of programme assessments
- Consult with the appropriate External Examiner(s) in the drafting of assessments by providing to the External Examiner(s) assessment proposals together with appropriate marking schemes and worked solutions to any numerical questions involving quantitative data
- Take account of all suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions and amendments proposed by the External Examiner(s)
- Submit assessment instruments, as approved by the External Examiner(s), to the College Registrar in accordance with the dates and regulations set down in the college calendar
- Prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners, to consult with the External Examiner(s) and to agree the grades/marks proposed to be awarded to each candidate

Internal Verifier

The Internal Verifier is expected to:

- Systematically check that the assessment procedures in the College have been applied consistently across assessment activities
- Verify the accuracy of assessment results
- Check that the College's assessment procedures were adhered to
- Monitor assessment results on a sample basis
- Identify and correct any errors
- Note any irregularities and take corrective action
- Produce an Internal Verification report.

Academic Director

The Academic Director is expected to:

- Ensure that learning materials and methods are consistent to the programme aims and outcomes.
- Lead the knowledge management committee in content development and instructional design.
- Ensure that procedures for assessment and moderation are implemented.
- Receive and audit reports on programme and Learner evaluation.
- Ensure that inputs are made to appropriate committees for programme changes, external reports and research monitors.
- Ensure that approved programme evaluation and review processes are carried out
- Work with the teaching team in devising and reviewing programme schedules.
- Direct the process of assessment planning and preparation for all new programmes
- Ensure industry relevance to all assessment methodologies
- Review in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Co-Ordinator the mapping of outcomes and standards

Programme Leader

The Programme Leader is expected to:

- Prepare draft summative assessment tasks in line with the module and programme aims and outcomes
- Review and suggest revision of assessment strategies and methodologies where necessary
- Ensure that all programme related documents are up to date
- Develop assessment briefs and marking schemes in conjunction with module tutors
- Oversee Internal Moderation and Verification

Teaching and Learning Co-Ordinator

The Teaching and Learning Co-Ordinator is expected to

- Review in conjunction with the Academic Director the mapping of outcomes and standards of a given programme of study
- Evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of a programme's assessment methodologies
- Liaise with the Programme Leader and Academic Creators in assessment planning and review

Quality Assurance Officer

The Quality Assurance Officer is expected to:

- Manage and implement Quality Assurance systems and procedures designed to enhance and monitor the effectiveness of all college programmes.
- Work closely with the academic leadership and programme leaders in implementing all Quality Assurance requirements in the college.
- Contribute to programme development specifically in relation to the teaching and learning strategy.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance policies and procedures within the College
- Prepare and present reports on: Academic Integrity
- Attend Academic Council meetings

External Examiner

The External Examiner is expected to:

- Complete the College induction process
- Visit the College and meet with appropriate staff and Learners
- To attend appropriate meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners as required
- Participate in the results approval process as per the College's agreed procedures
- Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of Learners consistent with the College's procedures and with QQI policy on quality assuring assessment
- Review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes
- Agree with the respective Internal Examiner(s) the proposed final marks/grades for consideration by the appropriate Board of Examiners

- Review the appropriateness Review borderline cases and, if necessary, interview such candidates in person or by means of electronic communication
- Apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment result (see Resources)
- Identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process
- Recommend results for approval
- Produce an External Authentication Report (see Resources)
- Meet and discuss findings with relevant College staff

The module Tutor will communicate with the External Examiner to ensure compliance of Assessment methodology and procedure prior to forwarding the Assessment for inspection and approval.

<u>College Registrar</u>
The College Registrar shall have overall responsibility for the conduct of assessments in the College and shall, in particular, ensure:
- The proper conduct of assessments, including their scheduling and invigilation
- Maximum security in all matters pertaining to assessments
- That all assessment entrants are notified to the relevant awarding body by the required date(s) if necessary
- That assessment question papers/and appropriate marking schemes/ are prepared by Internal Examiners, sent in good time for approval by External Examiners and made available in good time for examinations
- That appropriate arrangements are made for each candidate who is registered for assessment
- That examination answer scripts and other assessment records are examined by Internal and External Examiners and that results for each candidate are made available for meetings of Boards of Examiners
- That accurate records in regard to continuous assessment are maintained and made available to External Examiners
- That there are proper arrangements for holding meetings of Boards of Examiners
- Timely transmission of the recommendations of meetings of Boards of Examiners to the relevant awarding body if required
- That candidates are provided with relevant information relating to assessment regulations and procedures

7.1.5 Assessment Process summarised

Figure 7.1 summarises the management and administration of the processes involved within the area of Assessment within Setanta College.
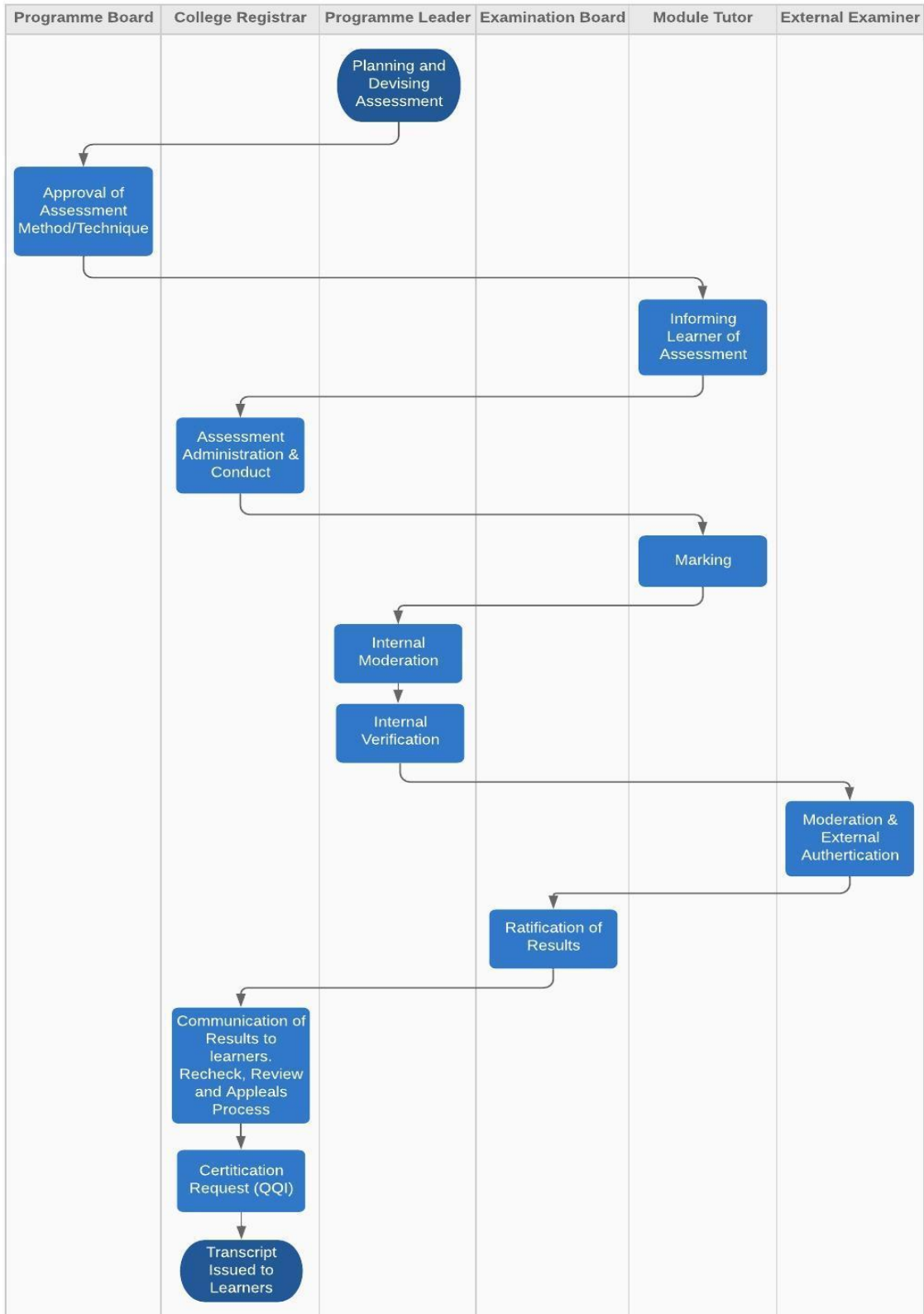
Setanta College Assessment Processes

Programme Board	College Registrar	Programme Leader	Examination Board	Module Tutor	External Examiner
		Planning and Devising Assessment			
Approval of Assessment Method/Technique					
				Informing Learner of Assessment	
	Assessment Administration & Conduct				
				Marking	
		Internal Moderation			
		Internal Verification			
					Moderation & External Authentication
			Ratification of Results		
	Communication of Results to learners. Recheck, Review and Appleals Process				
	Certification Request (QQI)				
	Transcript Issued to Learners				

Figure 7.1 Assessment Process

7.2 Policy and Procedures of Planning the Assessment

7.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the policy and procedures used at Setanta College to ensure a fair and consistent policy and associated procedures in planning Learner assessments and establishing grading criteria.

7.2.2 Scope

This document applies to programmes validated by QQI only at the Higher Education level only.

7.2.3 Definitions[1]

Assessment Framework: An assessment framework is the blueprint that guides the development of the assessment and the content to be assessed. Frameworks define the subject-specific content and thinking skills needed by Learners to deal with the complex issues they encounter in and out of the teaching setting.

Criterion Referenced Assessment (CRA): Assessment that tests a Learner's knowledge or skill against a pre-defined standard of performance, target, desirable performance, benchmark or criterion.

External Examiner: An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment informs a Learner how to improve their learning and is generally carried out in the early stages of, or during, a programme. Formative assessment provides feedback on a Learner's work, and is not necessarily used for certification purposes. The emphasis in formative assessment is on encouraging more understanding by Learners of their respective strengths, weaknesses and gaps in knowledge. An example is the use of multiple choice questionnaire to provide feedback to the Learner as to how their learning is progressing.

Grading Criteria: Grading criteria describe what a Learner must attain to achieve a particular grade for an award at a particular level.

HE: QQI Higher Education programmes. In the case of Setanta College the level of study is at Level 6 and Level 7 according to the Framework of Qualifications (www.nfq.ie and www.QQI.ie).

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[1] *Definitions have been derived from Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013), Quality Qualifications Ireland.*

Internal Examiner/Assessor: The module tutor is the internal assessor.

Learner Assessment: This means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a Learner's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this definition.

Mark: This means the same as grade, that is to award marks or to grade an assessment or assignment.

Norm Referenced Assessment: Norm referenced assessments report whether Learners performed better or worse than a hypothetical average Learner, which is determined by comparing results against the performance results of a statistically selected group of Learners, typically of the same age or grade level, who have already taken the assessment.

Marking Scheme: A written specification of how to grade or mark a response to an attempted assessment task. For an essay, this might take the form of a matrix describing different performance thresholds for each of the criteria being used to assess the essay.

Sectoral Conventions: A very small set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and by all associated providers, and where any right to unilateral deviation is waived.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessment refers to those assessments which enable Learners to demonstrate their levels of achievement in reaching learning outcomes.

7.2.4 Policy relating to Planning the Assessment

Setanta College is committed to a teaching and learning approach that fosters active learning and allows Learners to take ownership of their learning. Planning the assessment is informed through a series of procedures relating to principles, frameworks and grading criteria as well as procedures relating to devising assessment methods. Taken together these ensure a fair, transparent and consistent format of assessment planning.

7.2.5 Procedures related to Planning the Assessment

This section describes the principles, frameworks and grading criteria that underpin the assessment procedures at Setanta College. The College adheres to the policies, criteria and guidelines regarding assessment as described in the following QQI documents:

- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013)
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013)
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018)

7.2.6 Principles underpinning Assessment

The principles that underpin the policy on quality assuring assessment are as follows:

i. Validity: A valid assessment means that the assessment should measure what it is supposed to measure i.e. only the standards of knowledge, skill or competence required for the award should be assessed.

ii. Reliability: Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure.

iii. Fairness: A fair assessment in addition to being valid and reliable provides equity of opportunity for Learners. For assessment procedures and practices to be fair and equitable for Learners the influence of these factors is taken into account in the design and implementation of assessment.

iv. Quality: Quality is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of the College awards. Quality is assured following relevant QQI guidelines through the publication of national award standards, the providers' own quality assurance, the establishment of an assessment framework, programme validation, the process of self-evaluation and national monitoring.

v. Transparency: Transparent assessment policy and guidelines ensures clarity and understanding by all relevant stakeholders. This includes clear and unambiguous definitions and requirements with regards to fairness, consistency, validity and reliability.

vi. Complementarity: The principle of complementarity acknowledges the separate and distinct roles of the provider and QQI in the context of their explicit responsibilities relating to assessment as outlined in the Qualifications Act.

7.2.7 Assessment Frameworks

Setanta College recognises that there are many different types of learning styles and that Learners also vary in their capacity to engage with specific assessment methods. The College has in place a blended learning focused system for content creation (see Figure 6.4. ADDIE Model in Instructional Design, and Procedures for Assuring the Quality of Online Content: Section 6: Teaching and Learning).

This model informs the Assessment Framework process during the Assessment planning and devising stage. The College therefore uses a variety of assessment methods both within and between modules.

Assessment frameworks for programmes and modules include the following:

i. Assessment which are criteria based rather than norm referenced, and which may include individual or collaborative achievement or both.

ii. A combination of assessment techniques or methods where possible to cater for different learning styles

iii. An assessment framework which ensures that each learning outcome is assessed

iv. A clear statement of the purpose of each assessment and the learning outcomes to be assessed
v. A limit on the number of assessments per year and per module having regard to the need to assign a balanced workload to Learners throughout any academic period.
vi. An appropriate spread of assessments throughout the learning cycle
vii. An appropriate equivalency between the scale of different types of assessment
viii. An appropriate relationship between the number of assessments and the number of credits for the module being assessed
ix. A clear marking scheme to enable consistent grading of papers by examiners.
x. Oversight of assessment marks by external examiners and internal processes
xi. Assessment techniques or methods may take a variety of techniques or methods*: the key criteria for choice among methods should be their appropriateness to the learning outcomes being assessed.
xii. Assessment tasks should provide a reliable basis for the grading of Learner performance against explicit performance standards and be designed to indicate progress towards the desired learning outcomes
xiii. Assessors should implement appropriate moderation processes in relation to the setting of assessment tasks through peer review with internal and/or external colleagues
xiv. Assessment methods should make explicit alternative provision for Learners with special needs.

Valid and reliable assessment techniques or methods for QQI awards are grouped into the following six broad categories:
1. Assignment
2. Project
3. Portfolio
4. Skills Demonstration
5. Examination
6. Learner Record

Table 7.2 below outlines the various assessment techniques or methods and how they might be used.

Types of Learning/ Learning outcomes	What is required from Learners?	Assessment Technique/Method
Thinking critically and making judgments	Development of arguments, reflection, judgment, evaluation	Essay Report Journal Article Review
Solving problems/developing plans	Identify problems, define problems, analyse data, review, design experiments, plan, apply information	Problem scenario Group Work
Performing procedures and demonstrating techniques	Take measurements use equipment, follow gym/laboratory procedures, follow protocols, carry out instructions	Skills Demonstration Role Play
Demonstrating knowledge and understanding	Recall, describe, report, identify, recognise, recount, relate, etc.	Written examination Oral examination MCQs Essays Reports, Learner's Record
Managing/developing yourself	Work co-operatively and, independently, be self-directed, manage time, manage tasks	Learning journal Portfolio Self-evaluation Group projects Peer assessment
Communicating	Written, oral, visual and technical skills	Written presentation Oral presentation Discussions /Debates/ role plays Group work

Table 7.2: Learning outcomes, requirements from Learners and assessment methods.

7.2.8 Grading Criteria

The College provides awards at Level 6 and Level 7 and the grading criteria is classified according to Sectoral Convention 1 as outlined in Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013 (QQI). Table 7.3 below describes the grading criteria applied in Setanta College programmes as validated by QQI. The College uses a percentage grading system in accordance with Sectoral Convention 4.

Classification of Higher Certificates (Level 6) and Ordinary Bachelor's Degrees (Level 7)	Percentage Mark	Description
Distinction	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Merit Grade 1	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Merit Grade 2	50%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in some respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013 (QQI)		

Table 7.3 Grading criteria applied in Setanta College

In relation to the grading classification the following guidelines apply.
Outright Fail: According to Sectoral Convention 4 an outright fail is adjudged to occur when a Learner attains a percentage mark <35. In such circumstances no credit is allocated to a Learner in respect of modules which are failed outright.

Pass: A Pass indicates that the Learner has:
- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the award where a minimum acceptable standard has been achieved
- Used the language of the vocational area competently
- Attempted to apply the theory, concepts and practical application appropriately
- Provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity

Merit: A Merit indicates that the Learner has:
- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the award where a good standard has been achieved
- Used the language of the vocational area with a degree of fluency
- Expressed and developed ideas clearly
- Demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills with an applied application
- Presented coherent and comprehensive evidence

Distinction: A Distinction indicates that the Learner has:

- Achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the award where an excellent standard has been achieved
- Used the language of the vocational area fluently and confidently
- Demonstrated a depth of understanding in the subject area
- Expressed and developed ideas clearly
- Demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills with an applied application
- Demonstrated a high level of evaluation and analytical skills
- Demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking
- Expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively
- Presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence

7.2.9 Procedures related to Devising Assessments

i.   <u>Devising the Assessment Brief</u>

Prior to implementing a blended learning assessment Setanta College will ensure that the Learners:
- Have the necessary technical skills required i.e. computer skills required
- Have access to appropriate resources such as the technical equipment required e.g. computer, printer
- Are provided with secure IDs
- Are familiar with the operating system and assessment software before undertaking any assessment activities.
- Have access to technical training and support
- Are aware of procedures for ascertaining reliability of Learner evidence and Learner validity
- Are aware of procedures for accessing assessment information and for submitting Learner evidence.

ii.   Learners are familiarised with on-line skills during their induction to the programme. Where Learners require specific support for completion of an on-line or e-assessment, the relevant module tutor will assist the Learner.

iii.   <u>The specific procedures in place to devise an assessment include</u>

During the initial stage the programme leader and module tutor prepare an assessment plan under the guidance of the Programme Board. The assessment plan takes into account the level of the programme of study, the outcomes of the module, the technique or method to be used and the instructions to be related to the Learner. The Programme Leader and Module Tutor select a relevant assessment brief and this is made available to the Learner for the particular module. This is in the form of a set of written instructions which describe the assessment criteria and the topic being assessed. The assessment brief includes:

- The assessment instrument: these are specific activities or tasks or questions based on the specified assessment method or technique. This may include a case study, a report, a critical analysis, a Learner record or a work-place test etc. Please reference section 7.2.7 (Table 7.2 above) for assessment techniques or methods that are typically used at Setanta College
- Weighting of the assessment
- Word count guide, if appropriate
- Instruction on what the Learner is required to do
- Supporting evidence required
- Allocation of marks.

A marking scheme is provided detailing how marks are to be allocated to the assessment criteria (see Resources). All assessment techniques and guidelines are approved by the Programme Board.

7.2.10 Learner Communication

All Learners are informed about assessment policies and procedures through the Learner Handbook. This is made available to all Learners at the start of the programme of study. The handbook is updated as required to reflect on-going updates and modifications to the assessment process.

Specifically, the format and requirements or a particular module assessment are provided through the detailed assessment brief at the start of each module. Queries relating to a given assessment by Learners can be addressed by the module tutor.

7.2.11 Responsibility for this Policy and Procedures

The responsibility for planning the assessment ultimately resides with the Programme Board overseen by the Academic Director. The Academic Director in conjunction with each Programme Leader and the respective Module Tutor within each programme will manage this process. These functions, in turn are overseen by the Academic Council and its relevant subcommittees. Please refer to Assessment Policy Statement Overview, Sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 for Board, Committee and Council Roles and Responsibilities and Individual Roles and Responsibilities, respectively.

7.2.12 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Assessment of Learners
Policy Title	Policy for Planning the Assessment
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013) - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013) - Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018) - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017 - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015.
Monitoring Procedures	- Academic Director report - Teaching & Learning Co-Ordinator report - Tutor feedback and report - Programme Board - Programme Leader Report - External Examiner Report

7.3 Policy and Procedures Assessment Regulations

7.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the quality assurance of assessment regulations that are applied during the assessment of Learners at Setanta College.

7.3.2 Scope

This document applies to programmes validated by QQI at the Higher Education level only.

7.3.3 Definitions[2]

Criterion Referenced Assessment (CRA): Assessment that test Learners' knowledge or skill against a pre-defined standard of performance, target, desirable performance, benchmark or criterion.

External Examiner: An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment informs a Learner how to improve their learning and is generally carried out in the early stages of, or during, a programme. Formative assessment provides feedback on a Learner's work, and is not necessarily used for certification purposes. The emphasis in formative assessment is on encouraging more understanding by Learners of their respective strengths, weaknesses and gaps in knowledge.

An example is the use of multiple-choice questionnaire to provide feedback to the Learner as to how their learning is progressing.

HE: QQI Higher Education programmes. In the case of Setanta College the level of study is at Level 6 and Level 7 according to the Framework of Qualifications (www.nfq.ie and www.QQI.ie).

Internal Assessor/Examiner: The module tutor is generally the internal assessor/examiner.

Learner Assessment: This means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a Learner's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this definition.

Mark: This means the same as grade, that is to award marks or to grade an assessment or assignment.

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[2] *Definitions have been derived from Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013), Quality Qualifications Ireland.*

Marking Scheme: A written specification of how to grade or mark a response to an attempted assessment task. For an essay, this might take the form of a matrix describing different performance thresholds for each of the criteria being used to assess the essay.

Sectoral Conventions: A very small set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and by all associated providers, and where any right to unilateral deviation is waived.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessment refers to those assessments which enable Learners to demonstrate their levels of achievement in reaching learning outcomes.

7.3.4 Policy Statement

Setanta College is committed to a teaching and learning approach that fosters active learning and allows Learners to take ownership of their learning. The College is committed to ensuring the assessment procedures applied are reliable, valid, accurate and fair. Assessment policies and procedures reflect this approach and adhere to the policies, criteria and guidelines regarding assessment in the following QQI documents:

- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013)
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013)
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015)
- Policy and Criteria for Marking Awards QQI 2017
- Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training QQI 2017
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI, March 2018)

7.3.5 Procedures - Assessment Regulations

The purpose of the College Assessment Regulations is to ensure an efficient, effective and equitable examination and assessment system that shall apply to all examinations leading to all QQI awards, to be held at Setanta College.

   i.   <u>General Procedures Pertaining to Marks and Standards and Assessment Practices at Setanta College pertaining to QQI awards</u>

The following assessment regulations shall apply to all examinations leading to awards, to be held by the College in the academic year 2019/20 and subsequent academic years, unless and until amended by the College.

   ii.   <u>Registration for Assessments</u>

Candidates for assessments qualify to undertake those assessments provided they have complied with all College regulations. Entries by candidates who have not complied with all College requirements or with any requirements of the relevant awarding body will be regarded as provisional. Any recommendations by a Board of Examiners in respect of the result of any such candidate will be regarded as provisional until such time as the candidate has complied with the appropriate requirements. It should be noted that the awarding

body may not grant an award to any candidate whose result is regarded as provisional.

iii.   Return of Assessment Marks/Grades by Internal Examiners

The College has a right not to present a Learner's results to an awarding body by virtue of personal, health, discipline or other relevant grounds. If a Learner's results are not so presented, it is a matter for the College whether or not it will present such a Learner's results again, and under what circumstances e.g. as a first attempt or otherwise. In this context, personal difficulties and special circumstances, such as special needs, certified illness or absence due to other legitimate and verifiable reasons, may be taken into consideration for determining assessment results. In this procedure, the College will take cognisance of the fact that the Learner has access to an appeal procedure through which examination results may be rechecked or reassessed.

iv.   Blended Learning Assessment Validity

Setanta College operates a robust and consistent system to manage the submission, receipt, marking and return of assessments that are completed remotely (Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018)

The intention being that the College has capacity to:
- Verify the identity of Learners
- Guard against cheating, plagiarism or other kinds of unfair advantage.

v.   Assuring Learner Validation of Assessment

In all assessment frameworks it is important to ensure, especially in the context of blended learning, validity of a Learner's work in relation to assessment. Setanta College aims to ensure that it seeks to minimise any fraudulent submissions for those assignments which are not directly observed. The College aims to ensure that where there may be limited control on the identity of the Learner completing the work, that strategies are in place to confirm the identity of the Learner.

The strategies that are in place for minimising fraudulent submissions include:

a) Ensuring that all Learners are aware of the Academic Integrity Policy of the College
b) Educating Learners about what constitutes academic integrity. As part of the orientation process Learners will receive a face-to-face workshop on academic integrity
c) The content of this will set out the expectations of both Learner and Tutors and will clarify the expectations of both Learner and Tutor
d) A quiz will be provided for all Learners on academic integrity during the course induction or orientation. This is called a Course Readiness Quiz
e) Assessments will change for each repeat module and a minimum of three versions of the assignment will rotate on a particular module
f) Each assignment with a value greater than 30% will require a Learner to submit a video summary of the assignment content. This will be used partly as a Learner recognition for the material completed and will also be used to assist in assessing the integrity of the written content submitted

g) Turnitin is used to ensure that written assignments do not display evidence of plagiarism. Setanta College has access to this service for all faculty members. Each module administration syllabus states that the College uses this service.

vi.   Regulations for Practical Assessment - Skills Demonstrations

Practical examinations are conducted in a face-to-face setting where a set period of time is allocated to the Learner to demonstrate that he/she has a level of practical knowledge, skills or competency. To ensure that the Learner is adequately prepared for a practical skills demonstration assessment they will be provided with a set of instructions outlining:

a) The location and duration of the assessment (the duration will depend on the nature of the task)
b) Details of the learning outcomes that will be assessed and/or instructions to carry out the assessment
c) Materials and/or equipment that the Learner is required to have or that will be provided
d) Allocation of marks.

Where appropriate video evidence of the Learners' skill demonstration will be attained and will be made available to the External Examiner.

The assessor will maintain an official record of the making sheet for all Learners and this is submitted for review by the External Examiner.

vii.   Regulations for Practical Assessment - Preparing an Audiotape

When devising a practical assignment the assessor may be required to prepare material for use by the Learner e.g. an audiotape. When preparing this type of material the assessor will ensure that:

a) Adequate instructions and information is provided for Learners
b) An introduction is included with each task with clear instructions regarding the
    a. requirement of the separate elements/tasks
c) Individual tasks are clearly identified by number
d) A slight pause is left between each task and clear unambiguous diction, tone and pace is used.

viii.   Regulations for Assessment – compiling and assessing a Learner Record

Where a Learner record is the method or technique of assessment the following procedures will apply. The record may take a number of forms: it can be a structured logbook, a diary, a selective record of events or experiences over a period of time, a learning journal, a lab notebook or a sketchbook.

For example, a lab notebook could record specific tasks or activities carried out within a coaching or testing period and the analytical results and their interpretation described by the Learner. When using a Learner record the assessor should ensure that:

a) The Learner has a clear brief or set of instructions on the format of the record and is aware of what details should be included

b) The brief is based on a range of learning outcomes
c) The Learner is aware of any requirements on the presentation of the Learner record e.g. format of results presentation
d) A process for maintaining and updating the record is agreed between the Learner and the module Tutor.

ix.   Assignment Feedback

Teaching, learning and assessment are recognised as linked activities and Learners on Setanta College programmes are provided with feedback on all assessments. This is facilitated by a standard feedback form provided with each assessment result other than a written terminal examination. Results and feedback from assessment work are posted on the college notice boards and the online learning portal using Learner identity numbers only as soon as is practicable. When possible, Tutors make themselves available for Learner consultation in relation to feedback on the assignment/assessment either online or in person.

x.   Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of assignment falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the College community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. Please refer to Section 7.5 Policy and Procedures Academic Integrity for more detail regarding the College policy and procedures regarding Academic Integrity.

xi.   Requests for Special Consideration with regards to Continuous Assessment

Where circumstances beyond a Learner's control may have impacted unfairly on an assessment task he/she may submit a claim for special consideration. Circumstances beyond a Learner's control may include accidents or sudden illness or the death of a family member. The following steps apply:

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

- The Tutor, in consultation with the Programme Leader, shall decide if special consideration is justified. Requests for special consideration will not normally be approved if they arise from a Learner's poor time management, a Learner's own negligence or carelessness 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.

- Where it is decided that special consideration is justified, the Learner will be informed in writing that:
  - An extension of time has been granted for the submission of the assessment task
  - All or part of the assessment task may be resubmitted

- An alternative assessment task and due date will be set

Learners granted an extension of time or an opportunity to resubmit work under these provisions will have the full range of marks/grades used in the original assessment applied when determining the mark/grade following special consideration.

The Student Services Manager will also be informed of the extension given to the Learner or the consideration granted.

xii. Absence from Examinations

If a candidate is absent from a practical examination a detailed explanation must be submitted to the office of the College Registrar either before or immediately after the practicum, together with a medical certificate if the absence was due to illness.

Details of all such absences shall be reported immediately to the Chairperson of the relevant Examinations Board by the office of the College Registrar.

xiii. Infringement of Assessment Regulations

Any alleged or suspected infringement of any assessment regulation by a Learner may have serious consequences and will be referred to the College Registrar and, if necessary, to the Academic Standards Committee which may result in a penalty or disqualification from an examination or a programme.

xiv. Recheck, Review and Appeal Procedures

Please refer to the College's Policy and Procedures on Recheck, Review and Appeal in the section on Support for Learners in this document.

7.3.6 Responsibility

The overall responsibility for the administration and management of assessment regulations resides with the College Registrar. These functions are overseen by the Academic Council and its relevant subcommittees. Please refer to Assessment Policy Statement Overview, Sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 for Board, Committee and Council Roles and Responsibilities and Individual Roles and Responsibilities, respectively.

7.3.7 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Assessment of Learners
Policy Title	Policy for Assessment Regulations
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. - Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI. - Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI. - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015. - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013) QQI - Effective Practice Guidelines for External examining (2015 – Revised) QQI - Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (2015 – Revised) QQI - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017
Monitoring Procedures	- Tutor feedback and Report - Programme Leader feedback and Report - External Examiner feedback and Report - Quality Assurance Officer Report

7.4 Policy and Procedures Assessment Marking and Authentication

7.4.1 Purpose

As part of the assessment framework, Setanta College is required to put in place an Authentication Process. The purpose of which is to define a fair, consistent and reliable policy and associated procedures for marking assessment elements and for both the internal moderation and verification and external authentication of these methods.

7.4.2 Scope

This document applies to programmes validated by QQI only at the Higher Education level only.

7.4.3 Definitions[3]

Criterion Referenced Assessment (CRA): Assessment that test Learners' knowledge or skill against a pre-defined standard of performance, target, desirable performance, benchmark or criterion.

External Authentication: Process by which the College is assured that its internal Assessment Process and procedures are consistent with best national practice and that the assessment results are consistent with national standards across providers. Any deviations in assessment procedures will be identified and rectified.

External Examiner: The external examiner plays a key role in ensuring external authentication of the process and procedures of assessment. An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment informs a Learner how to improve their learning and is generally carried out in the early stages of, or during, a programme. Formative assessment provides feedback on a Learner's work, and is not necessarily used for certification purposes. The emphasis in formative assessment is on encouraging more understanding by Learners of their respective strengths, weaknesses and gaps in knowledge.

An example is the use of multiple choice questionnaire to provide feedback to the Learner as to how their learning is progressing.

HE: QQI Higher Education programmes. In the case of Setanta College the level of study is at Level 6 and Level 7 according to the Framework of Qualifications (www.nfq.ie and www.QQI.ie).

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[3] Definitions have been derived from Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013), Quality Qualifications Ireland.

Internal Assessor/Examiner: All College staff who exercise an approved teaching role shall be deemed to be Internal Examiners. The Internal Examiner is also known as a Tutor

Internal Verification: Internal verification is the process by which the College's assessment policies and procedures relating to planning, managing and operationalising all aspects of assessment practices are internally verified i.e. monitored by the College.

Learner Assessment: This means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a Learner's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this definition.

Mark: This means the same as grade, that is to award marks or to grade an assessment or assignment.

Marking Scheme: A written specification of how to grade or mark a response to an attempted assessment task. For an essay, this might take the form of a matrix describing different performance thresholds for each of the criteria being used to assess the essay.

Moderation: The process of ensuring fair, consistent and reliable assessment outcomes across all Tutors within a particular programme.

Sectoral Conventions: A very small set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and by all associated providers, and where any right to unilateral deviation is waived.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessment refers to those assessments which enable Learners to demonstrate their levels of achievement in reaching learning outcomes.

7.4.4 Policy Statement

Setanta College is committed to a teaching and learning approach that fosters active learning and allows Learners to take ownership of their learning. Assessment policies relating to marking, internal moderation, verification and external authentication of this process reflect this approach. The College adheres to the policies, criteria and guidelines regarding assessment in the following QQI documents:

- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013)
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013)
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015)
- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018)
- Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017
- HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018
- Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017

7.4.5 Procedures for Marking and Authentication

i. <u>Marking</u>
Tutors are required to mark each assessment based on the detailed making scheme developed for each particular assessment element or method. The use of a standard assessment marking scheme ensures accurate criterion-referenced assessment with reference to relevant learning outcomes. Assessors are required to complete marking sheets which are provided by the Programme Leader and are specific to each programme.

ii. <u>Internal Moderation</u>
Internal moderation ensures consistency of standards and fairness across all Tutors and assessors within a given programme. The process allows the Tutors to discuss, evaluate and reach agreement concerning assessment methodologies in a transparent, valid and consistent manner. To ensure appropriate and effective moderation the following procedures are applied:

   a) Tutors will have a sample of their assessments internally moderated at least once in a 12 month period. The process is managed by the Programme Leader.
   b) Internal moderation is also conducted where an external examiner has noted inconsistencies in the grading of particular Learners or by specific Tutors. In addition, this procedure occurs in all borderline cases within a +/- 5% scale.
   c) Internal moderation is completed by a Tutor who was not involved in marking the original assessment.
   d) The moderator reviews all assessed material which relates to the module in question and completes a new Learner marking sheet. The original Learner marking sheet is not made available to the moderator.
   e) Following the completion of the moderation, both marking sheets are reviewed and both parties should seek to reach agreement on any matters identified and adjust marks accordingly if appropriate.
   f) In the event that agreement does not take place, the matter should be referred to the College Registrar. In such cases the decision to adjust the mark will be made by the External Examiner.
   g) In all cases, an Internal Moderation Report Form is completed and is made available to the external examiner in advance of his or her review of the assessment material.
   h) All forms are stored and retained in accordance with the data retention register.

iii. <u>Internal Verification</u>
Internal verification includes checking whether the assessment marks have been recorded correctly to ensure correct Learner evidence exists and that marks and awards are correctly computed and recorded. The Internal Verifier is normally a module Tutor appointed by the Programme Leader. The procedures of Internal Verification include the following:

a) Internal verification is undertaken on a sampling basis (See Resources section: Sampling Policy)
b) The process is overseen by the Programme Leader and directly managed by the Internal Verifier
c) The internal verifier will monitor the assessment process including the accuracy of assessment results
d) Using a sample of Learners the internal verifier will:
- Check marks are totalled and percentage marks are calculated correctly
- Check that marks are transferred correctly from Learner evidence to Learner marking sheet or record
- Check percentage marks are allocated consistently with the specific award status.
- The outcome of the internal verification process is an Internal Verification Report.

iv.   <u>External Authentication</u>

External authentication provides independent authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of Learners in accordance with national standards. It establishes the credibility of the College's assessment processes and ensures that assessment results have been marked in a valid and reliable way and are compliant with the requirements for the award.

External authentication is undertaken through the assignment of an independent external authenticator by the College otherwise known as the External Examiner. The policy and procedures relating to the External Examiner's appointment and conduct are detailed in Policy and Procedures External Examiner.

Where programme completion takes place more than once in a year, External Examiners shall, normally, deal with additional assessments material by correspondence. The remainder of their duties shall be carried out during the principal visit, or, at prior additional visits, if such are required for substantial reasons and agreed with any awarding body where necessary.

In addition, the policy and procedures pertaining to the Examination Board are provided in Policy and Procedures Examination Board.

7.4.6 Responsibility

The Programme Leader is responsible for the oversight of a programme's marking procedures and for internal moderation and internal verification of same. The External Examiner is responsible for the oversight of a programme's external authentication. The overall responsibility for the administration and management of assessment resides with the College Registrar. These functions are overseen by the Academic Council and its relevant subcommittees. Please refer to Assessment Policy Statement Overview, Sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 for Board, Committee and Council Roles and Responsibilities and Individual Roles and Responsibilities, respectively.

7.4.7 Policy Control sheet

Policy Area	Assessment of Learners
Policy Title	Policy for Assessment Marking and Authentication
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013) - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013) - Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018) - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017 - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015.
Monitoring Procedures	- Marking Procedures - Internal Moderation - Internal Verification Report - External Authentication Report - Programme Leader Report

7.5 Policy and Procedures Academic Integrity

7.5.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for the ethical conduct of academic work, to establish parameters for the detection and investigation of instances of academic malpractice, and to set penalties for those found to have engaged in academic malpractice.

7.5.2 Scope

This policy applies to all Learners completing all Setanta College programmes. This policy applies to any individual acting in an academic capacity on behalf of Setanta College.

7.5.3 Definitions

i. Academic Integrity

This refers to the process of completing academic work independently, honestly and in an appropriate academic style using good referencing and acknowledging all sources. Achieving good academic practices involves a Learner:

- Independently evaluating theoretical and practical dimensions of a particular discipline
- Engaging with and using high-quality research from their discipline
- Demonstrating an understanding of the thinking, writing, and practices of the leaders in the discipline (past and present)
- Originating new ideas.

ii. Academic Malpractice

This refers to any action or practice that undermines the fairness of an assessment.
The action may be deliberate or accidental. The following actions are considered to constitute academic malpractice however, these actions and practices are not exhaustive:

- Plagiarism: attempting to pass off others' effort, intellectual property, or any other work as their own by copying without consent or failing to use academic referencing conventions (deliberately or otherwise)
- Self-plagiarism: attempting to submit their own work as genuine effort for more than one assessment task
- Unauthorised collusion: aiding, attempting to aid, obtaining aid from or attempting to obtain aid from another Learner or any other person to contribute to an assessment task (except where required for group assessment tasks) or any form of contract cheating
- Fabrication of data: making up results and recording or reporting them
- Falsification of data: manipulating research, materials, equipment, or processes or changing or omitting data or results such that the work is not accurately represented in the research record
- Evading or attempting to evade assessment regulations.

7.5.4 Policy Statement

The College is committed to building a culture which values and supports good and honest academic conduct. This commitment implies that the College will not tolerate acts of assignment falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. The policy applies where an individual is engaging in academic work and bears responsibility for upholding academic and ethical standards.

7.5.5 Procedures for Minimising Academic Malpractice

The procedures that are in place for minimising Academic Malpractice include:
- Ensuring that all Learners are aware of the Academic Integrity Policy of the College
- Educating Learners about what constitutes academic integrity. As part of the orientation process Learners will receive a face-to-face workshop on academic integrity.
- The content of this will set out the expectations of both Learner and Tutors and will clarify the expectations of both Learner and Tutor.
- A quiz will be provided for all Learners on academic integrity during the course induction or orientation. This is called a Course Readiness Quiz.
- Assessments will change for each repeat module and a minimum of three versions of the assignment will rotate on a particular module.
- Each assignment with a value greater than 30% will require a Learner to submit a video summary of the assignment content. This will be used partly as a Learner recognition for the material completed and will also be used to assist in assessing the integrity of the written content submitted.
- Where assessments are being carried out at practical classes, these assessments will be recorded and reviewed by programme leaders/topic specialists to ensure consistency of marking.
- Turnitin.com is used to ensure that writing assignments do not display evidence of plagiarism. Setanta College has access to this service for all faculty members. Each module administration syllabus states that the College uses this service.

7.5.6 Procedure for Investigating Academic Malpractice

Where a Tutor suspects Assessment Malpractice, the Programme Leader should be informed immediately, and the following steps completed:

i. All material related to the alleged malpractice should be made available to the Programme Leader. A report should be prepared by the Programme Leader taking into consideration the extent of the evidence of the alleged malpractice

ii. If the outcome of this investigation is that there is no case to answer, then the case is closed, and no formal records are maintained

iii. If the Programme Leader is of the opinion that there is a case to answer, then a meeting of the Academic Standards Committee is arranged. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether the allegation is upheld and if so, what the appropriate penalty is to be. If the outcome of this meeting is that the allegation is not upheld, then the case is closed, and no formal records are maintained

iv. The Learner is invited to attend this meeting in person or if they so choose with a companion or may be examined orally on the assessment content

v. A record of the meeting is maintained and reported to the Examination Board and Academic Council only where the case has been upheld by the Academic Standards Committee

vi. The Learner is notified in writing of the outcome including the penalty, if applicable, within 5 working days of the Academic Standards Committee meeting

vii. The Learner has the right to appeal the Academic Standards Committee decision and should do so within five working days of receiving the Academic Standards Committee outcome notice

7.5.7 Membership of the Academic Standards Committee

The following will be selected as members of the Academic Standards Committee

- Academic Director (Chair)
- Programme Leader – not related to the Learner programme of study
- Teaching and Learning Co-Ordinator
- Quality Assurance Officer
- The Learner concerned may choose to address the Committee on the circumstances of the review. In the event of the Learner seeking this opportunity a person of his/her choice may accompany the Learner.

7.5.8 Guidelines for Establishing Penalties for Assessment Malpractice

A judgement is made on the required penalty for a plagiarism offence based on the following criteria:

a) History of the Learner and whether the particular case is a first, second etc. time offence
b) Amount of plagiarism involved (the percentage of the document plagarised)
c) Level of Award and Credit weighting
d) Value of the Assessment/Assignment

7.5.9 Right of Appeal

The Learner has a right to appeal the decision of the Academic Standards Committee and this must be made within 5 working days of receiving outcome correspondence from the College. The policy and procedures for recheck, review, appeals are then implemented. The decision of the Appeals and Review Committee is final in this matter. The Learner is then notified of the decision within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.

i. Membership of Appeals and Review Committee

The following will be selected as members of the Appeals and Review Committee:

- The College Registrar (Chair)
- Chair of the Academic Council
- Programme Leader from a different programme whence the appeal has originated
- External Academic with experience of appeals

ii. Procedures of the Appeals and Review Committee

a) The Appeals and Review Committee:
   i. Shall consider the report of the relevant board, Academic Standards Committee and the Programme Leader.
   ii. Shall invite the Learner to address it on the circumstances of the appeal. In the event of the Learner accepting this opportunity a person of his/her choice may accompany the Learner.
   iii. Will seek (through the Chair) such information or advice as it considers necessary and in such manner as it considers appropriate.
   iv. Shall, having considered the circumstances, decide the outcome of the appeal.
b) The College Registrar may seek the advice of such external professionals as he or she considers necessary to ensure a proper and fair procedure.
c) All decisions of the Appeals and Review Committee shall be by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
d) The appellant shall be informed in writing, by registered post or electronically, of the outcome by the College Registrar. All decisions of the appeal board are final subject to any legal rights of the Learner. The College Registrar shall notify the Learner's Tutors, Programme Leader and Academic Director of the outcome of the appeal.

7.5.10 Responsibility

The College Registrar is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of this policy on behalf of the Academic Council. Further, all academic staff and Learners are responsible for upholding the principles of this policy. Academic staff are responsible for reporting suspected malpractice to the College Registrar. Please refer to Assessment Policy Statement Overview, Sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 for Board, Committee and Council Roles and Responsibilities and Individual Roles and Responsibilities, respectively.

7.5.11 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Assessment of Learners
Policy Title	Policy for Academic Integrity
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013) - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013) - Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018) - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017 - Qualifications and Quality Assurance Education and Training) Act 2012. - Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI
Monitoring Procedures	- Tutor feedback and Report - Programme Leader feedback and Report - External Examiner feedback and Report - Academic Standards Committee - Disciplinary Committee - Appeals and Review Committee - Quality Assurance Officer Report

7.6 Policy and Procedures for External Examination

7.6.1 Purpose

Setanta College is committed to a teaching and learning approach that fosters active learning and allows Learners to take ownership of their learning. Assessment policies reflect this approach and assessment and procedures are carried out in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. The role of the External Examiner in this process is a key quality assurance mechanism within the College.

7.6.2 Scope

This document applies to programmes validated by QQI only at the Higher Education level only.

7.6.3 Definitions[4]

Criterion Referenced Assessment (CRA): Assessment that test Learners' knowledge or skill against a pre-defined standard of performance, target, desirable performance, benchmark or criterion.

External Examiner: An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

HE: QQI Higher Education programmes. In the case of Setanta College the level of study is at Level 6 and Level 7 according to the Framework of Qualifications (www.nfq.ie and www.QQI.ie).

Internal Assessor/Examiner: This is the module Tutor.

Internal Verification: The process of internal verification ensures that all assessment results are recorded accurately for all Learners of the award. This is completed through identifying and correcting any errors.

Learner Assessment: This means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a Learner's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this definition.

Mark: This means the same as grade, that is to award marks or to grade an assessment or assignment.

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[4] *Definitions have been derived from Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013), Quality Qualifications Ireland.*

Marking Scheme: A written specification of how to grade or mark a response to an attempted assessment task. For an essay, this might take the form of a matrix describing different performance thresholds for each of the criteria being used to assess the essay.

Sectoral Conventions: A very small set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and by all associated providers, and where any right to unilateral deviation is waived.

7.6.4 Policy Statement

The purpose of the external examination is to ensure the quality of the overall programme and Learner performance within the programme of study at the College. The role of the External Examiner(s) is central in this process.

i.   Expertise of External Examiners

External Examiners are appointed by the College to ensure adequacy of standards at assessments moderated by the College. An External Examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and practice and whose accomplishments attest to his or her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

ii.   Functions of External Examiner

The External Examiner also has a key role in ensuring that the programme assessment procedures are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. The College welcomes feedback and recommendations from the External Examiner. All recommendations and actions set out in the Examination Board minutes and External Examiner reports are implemented by relevant Setanta College personnel and overseen by the College Registrar. When actions are required, a follow-up report is sent to all Examination Board members noting actions required and the status of the actions. Detailed roles and responsibilities of the External Examiner are described in Section 7.6.7 (i) below.

7.6.5 Procedures for the Appointment of External Examiner

These procedures in place at Setanta College are intended to ensure compliance with Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examination (QQI, 2015) and Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013) QQI.

i.   Procedural Steps

The following steps are undertaken in the proposal and appointment of an External Examiner. They are described in a step-like format.

Step 1: Any member of the Programme Board or the Academic Council may nominate an individual to the position of External Examiner.

Step 2: Nominations are brought to the attention of the College Registrar who then makes a proposal to the Programme Board who then approves to the appointment in principle.

Step 3: To ensure appropriateness with the appointment of External Examiner, the College Registrar may propose the candidate to QQI at this stage. If agreed by QQI then **Step 4** onwards applies. If not approved by QQI then the process recommences at **Step 2** above.

Step 4: The Academic Council must be satisfied that the proposed External Examiner:

- Possesses academic and professional qualifications appropriate to the programme to be examined and the External Examiner should have at least a post-graduate level of qualification within the discipline or a similar cognate field.
- Has appropriate academic and professional standing and has sufficient academic experience to adjudicate on comparability of standards.
- If the nominated External Examiner is retired then there should be evidence of continuing involvement in the academic and professional area in question.
- There must be no conflicts of interest, whether personal, professional or commercial, that would undermine or be seen to undermine the independence of the proposed External Examiner and their role as an External Examiner.

Step 5: Once the above conditions are satisfied, the Academic Council approves the nomination.

Step 6: Once a verbal agreement and commitment has been made by the nominee, details are confirmed in a formal letter of appointment by the College Registrar and a formal induction is provided prior to commencing the role.

Step 7: External Examiners are required to complete an External Examiner Appointment Form and a Declaration of 'No Conflict of Interest'. External Examiners are normally appointed for a period of 3 years after which time a replacement is proposed and appointed. External Examiners may be nominated to serve for an additional year subject to approval from both the Academic Council and QQI.

Step 8: The College Registrar notifies QQI of the appointment and relevant information is provided as required.

ii.   Induction and Support for External Examiner

Newly appointed external examiners are expected to complete the College induction process which provides a formal induction pack to the external examiner. Further, the external examiner is recommended to visit to the College before commencing their role. The Induction pack includes the following:

- Programme Aims and Outcomes
- Programme Learning Outcomes
- Programme Assessment Strategies
- Quality Assurance procedures
- Contact details of relevant internal staff, together with details of their key functions
- External examiner report template
- Copies of recent external examiner reports
- Appropriate QQI policy documents

In accordance with [QQI guidelines (Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised February 2015)](#) and following induction, the external examiner should:

- Know the College's policy on external examining, including the reporting
- requirements
- Understand the mission of the College and its context (e.g. the Irish higher
- education system)
- Be able to articulate the relevant professional infrastructure (regulation, associations etc.) in Ireland and beyond, the educational requirements for entry into related professions, and how the programme prepares Learners for entry into the relevant profession
- Be able to distinguish how the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
- and actual learning outcomes attained by graduates compare and contrast with
- similar programmes with which they are already familiar and with programmes in
- the same discipline for which suitable benchmarking data has been gathered by
- the College
- Know the overall structure of the programme
- Be able to evaluate and critique the programme assessment strategy
- Understand how the minimum intended programme learning outcomes relate to
- the award standard, and how the award standard relates to the National
- Framework of Qualifications
- Understand the programme assessment strategy and procedures, the grading
- system and how awards are classified
- Understand the principles of learning-outcome-based criterion-referenced
- assessment

The External examiner is supported in his or her role by the College Registrar.

iii. Replacement of an External Examiner

The procedures for the appointment of an External Examiner are outlined above and will apply should an External Examiner need to be replaced prior to their three year appointment.

7.6.6 Additional External Examiners and Subject External Examiners

The College may also appoint additional External Examiners and Subject External Examiners to support Programme External Examiners. The appointment procedure replicates that of the procedural steps undertaken when proposing and appointing the External Examiner as described above. Where Programme External Examiners require assistance in any specific subject areas they should consult with the appropriate Additional External Examiner. Visits to the College, where necessary, are arranged through the College Registrar who maintains primary formal communication with External Examiners.

i. Subject External Examiner

In some programmes, External Examiners are appointed as Subject External Examiners. While Subject External Examiners must ensure appropriate levels of academic performance in the individual subject for which they have been appointed as an examiner, it is the duty of the Examination Board to ensure that each candidate's overall performance in the programme as a whole is properly assessed, without undue emphasis being placed on performance in any individual subject.

ii. Specific Duties of External Examiner

The following section details specific duties that the External Examiner will undertake in carrying out his/her role.

iii. Reviewing Draft Assessments

It shall be the duty of the External Examiner to examine the drafts of assessment methodologies or instruments, marking schemes, worked solutions etc., before the assessments are put into effect. External Examiners shall have the right to make such suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions and amendments as they deem appropriate.

iv. Practical based Examinations

Where practical-based examinations constitute a substantial part of the assessment procedure and are conducted in the absence of an External Examiner(s), the proceedings of any such examination or assessment conducted entirely by Internal Examiners should be recorded and an appropriate sample of the recordings sent to the External Examiner(s), or, if the External Examiner(s) so require, retained for scrutiny by the External Examiner(s). Alternatively, where special circumstances so require, the Internal and External Examiner(s) together may examine a representative sample of the candidates concerned. This procedure will comply with the college's data protection policies.

v. Communications between Internal and External Examiners

External Examiners are required to acknowledge receipt of assessment material received from the College. All communications between Internal and External Examiners shall be by registered mail, or other secure electronic means of delivery. Use of telephones should be restricted to logistics and operational matters; mobile phones should not be used for any purpose in relation to examination material.

vi. Examination Sample

The college requires that all duly appointed External Examiners are provided with a representative sample of assessment material presented by candidates (approximately 5% where feasible), including borderline cases. The sample, which should be drawn on a basis agreed between the Internal and External Examiner(s), will include sufficient material to enable the External Examiner(s) to form judgement as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classification.

vii.   Visitation of External Examiner

Normally all programme External Examiners and Subject External Examiners will be required to visit the College once in each academic year. This visit will normally, take place at the time of determination of final results of a cohort of Learners. The duration of this visit will be established by the College Registrar.

Should the college deem it necessary for an External Examiner to visit more than once per year, this will be agreed in advance. Where any proposed additional visits to the college are sought by External Examiners these will be approved by the College Registrar.

7.6.7 Responsibility

The responsibility for the administration and management of assessment resides with the College Registrar. The policies and procedures in relation to the appointment, conduct and functioning of the External Examiner are managed by the College Registrar and overseen by the Academic Council and its relevant subcommittees. Please refer to Assessment Policy Statement Overview, Sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 for Board, Committee and Council Roles and Responsibilities and Individual Roles and Responsibilities, respectively. The specific role and responsibilities with reference to the external examiner(s) are presented below.

i.   External Examiner

The specific role of the external examiner is to provide independent confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of Learners in line with QQI requirements and to ensure consistency of assessment results with national standards.

The External Examiner is expected to:
- Complete the College induction process
- Visit the College and meet with appropriate staff and Learners
- To attend appropriate meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners as required
- Participate in the results approval process as per the College's agreed procedures
- Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of Learners consistent with the College's procedures and with QQI policy on quality assuring assessment [1,2]
- Review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes
- Agree with the respective Internal Examiner(s) the proposed final marks/grades for consideration by the appropriate Board of Examiners
- Review the appropriateness Review borderline cases and, if necessary, interview such candidates in person or by means of electronic communication
- Apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment results (see Resources – Sampling Policy)
- Identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process
- Recommend results for approval
- Produce an external authentication report (see Resources - External Examiner's Report template)
- Meet and discuss findings with relevant College staff.

7.6.8 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Assessment
Policy Title	Policy for External Examiner
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013) - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013) - Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018) - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017 - Qualifications and Quality Assurance Education and Training) Act 2012. - Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI.
Monitoring Procedures	- External Authentication Report - Tutor feedback and Report - Programme Leader feedback and Report - Academic Director Report to Academic Council

7.7 Policy and Procedures Examination Board

7.7.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define a fair and consistent policy and associated procedures for the assessment of Learners registered on QQI validated programmes with specific reference to the Examination Board.

7.7.2 Scope

This document applies to programmes validated by QQI only at the Higher Education level only.

7.7.3 Definitions[5]

External Examiner: An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

HE: QQI Higher Education programmes. In the case of Setanta College the level of study is at Level 6 and Level 7 according to the Framework of Qualifications (www.nfq.ie and www.QQI.ie).

Internal Assessor/Examiner: The module Tutor is the internal assessor/examiner.
Internal Verifier: The internal verifier within the College is usually a member of the College Administration staff.

Learner Assessment: This means inference (e.g. judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a Learner's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard based on appropriate evidence. Self-assessment is included in this definition.

Mark: This means the same as grade, that is to award marks or to grade an assessment or assignment.

Marking Scheme: A written specification of how to grade or mark a response to an attempted assessment task. For an essay, this might take the form of a matrix describing different performance thresholds for each of the criteria being used to assess the essay.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessment refers to those assessments which enable Learners to demonstrate their levels of achievement in reaching learning outcomes.

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[5] *Definitions have been derived or informed from Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013), Quality Qualifications Ireland.*

7.7.4 Policy Statement

Setanta College is committed to a teaching and learning approach that fosters active learning and allows Learners to take ownership of their learning. Assessment policies at the College reflect this approach such that all elements of assessment are carried out in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Central to this is the role of the Examination Board.

The College adheres to the policies, criteria and guidelines regarding the membership, functioning and conduct of the Examination Board in the following QQI documents:

- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013), QQI
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013), QQI
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI
- Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015), QQI
- Policy and Criteria for Making Awards QQI 2017

7.7.5 Examination Board

   i.   Responsibilities of the Examination Board
The responsibilities of the Examination Board are to:
- Consider Assessment Findings
- Determine Progression Eligibility
- Authenticate Assessment results
- Ratify Assessment Results
- Review Assessment related penalties
- Classify of awards
- Consider External Examiner(s) report(s)
- Review assessment statistics, trends and benchmarking

   ii.   Examination Board Procedures
The following procedures are in place relating to the Examination Board and they include:
- Membership of the Examination Board
- Confidentiality
- Authority
- Preparation for Examination Board meeting
- Internal Examiner meeting
- Quorum for Examination Board meeting
- Exceptional Circumstances in External Examiner Attendance
- Examination Board meeting conduct
- Guidelines for Grading
- Broadsheet of Results
- Provisional List of Results
- Recommendation of Results to Awarding Body
- Deferral of Examination Results
- Notification of Results to QQI

- Learner Results
- Discussing Scripts and Results with Learners
- Recheck, Review and Appeal Requests
- External Examiner's Report
- Recording and Archiving
- Certification Request from QQI

a) <u>Membership of the Examination Board</u>
   - Only Internal Examiners (Programme Leaders and Academic Director), who have participated in the examinations for a given award (or examination stage leading to an award), together with the College Registrar, such External Examiners and any appropriate Programme Administrators as decided by the College Registrar shall participate in the meeting of the Examination Board at which recommendations in relation to that award or examination stage are decided. A Learner Representative is invited to attend the meeting and this may occur remotely.

b) <u>Confidentiality</u>
   - All matters pertaining to the Examination Board are strictly confidential to the Board. Under no circumstances should any person attending a meeting of a Board of Examiners disclose to any other person a decision of the Board or any document, information or opinion considered, conveyed or expressed at the meeting. However, the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners may cause to be issued the provisional list of results, and may, as necessary, and as decided by the Board, communicate appropriately with an awarding body with regard to any matter requiring such communication arising out of the proceedings.

c) <u>Authority</u>
   - The Academic Council devolves responsibility to the Examination Board for the ratification of results and recommendations of awards to QQI.

d) <u>Preparing for Examination Board Meeting</u>
   - The dates of the Examination Board meetings are agreed as part of the annual certification schedule. Dates are agreed between the College and the respective awarding bodies and shall be published on the college's website and Learner portal. All relevant documentation and reports are made available to the Examination Board through the College internal network and this is used in preparation for each meeting. The following documents are made available by the College Registrar:

   i. Broadsheet of Results (draft)
   ii. Further relevant information to be considered by the Examination Board such as:
   iii. Extenuating circumstances reports
   iv. RPL statistics
   v. Completion rates

e) Internal Examiner Meeting
- Prior to the Examination Board meeting an Internal Examiner meeting is conducted. The purpose of this meeting is to consider Learners' moderated (and verified) results.

f) Quorum for Examination Board
- The quorum established for the Examination Board is a minimum of three including the College Registrar, External Examiner and Programme Leader. The chair will ensure that minutes of the meeting are recorded.

g) Exceptional Circumstances in External Examiner Attendance
- There may be rare and exceptional circumstances in which an External Examiner is unable to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners. In such circumstances it is expected that the external examiner has already visited the College premises, examined the assessment findings, agrees with the recommendations recorded on the draft broadsheet of results, and has provided a written report to be read out at the examination board meeting. The External Examiner may then be represented at the meeting (of the Board of Examiners) by a suitable person. He/she will be independent of the College and will report on the meeting directly to the external examiner. Where an External Examiner is incapacitated during his/her term of office, or is unable to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners owing to unforeseen circumstances, a replacement external examiner will be appointed.

h) Examination Board Meeting Conduct
- The business of the Examination Board shall be conducted so as to ensure that the principles of fairness, equity and transparency are maintained and there is no conflict between members of the Board, Disciplinary Committee and any committees of Appeal.

i) Guidelines for Grading

- *Borderline Cases*
Meetings of Boards of Examiners should allow for full and frank discussion of all borderline cases before a final decision is made. Borderline cases are considered to be within a +/- 5% mark. That final decision should be based on the cumulative evidence presented rather than on the view(s) of individual Examiner(s).

- *Addressing a Fail result*
In the case of a candidate who fails, recommendations of exemptions, if any, should be indicated. A pass by compensation should be recorded in all awarding body and institutional documentation in the same manner as ordinary passes. The annotation of results shall be in accordance with the awarding body's requirements in this regard.

- *Disagreement between Examiners*
In the event of disagreement between Examiners, with regard to the mark or grade which should be awarded to a candidate in any Examination Subject, not being resolved between them prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners, the Examiner

who continues to dissent at the meeting, may choose to have a dissenting opinion recorded on the Broadsheet of Results.

- *Decision Making Process where Disagreement Exists*
  In the case where the Examination Board is unable to reach agreement on a Learner's mark, the Chair of the Board should consent the External Examiner present to determine the final result. Any disagreement raised by other members of the Examination Board is recorded in the minutes and brought to the attention of the next Academic Council.

- Any dissenting opinion by an External Examiner shall be recorded upon the Broadsheet of Results.

- The Broadsheet(s) of Results shall be signed by the Chairperson and Secretary of the meeting, and by all of the Examiners (External and Internal) present at the meeting. Where appropriate it shall be forwarded by the College Registrar to the awarding body immediately following the meeting, where required. Broadsheets will be retained in a secure manner.

j) <u>Broadsheet of Results</u>
   - At the meeting of the Examination Board, a Broadsheet of Results shall be endorsed which shall record the total marks or grades awarded to each candidate in each Module Subject and which shall indicate, in relation to each candidate's overall result, as to whether the candidate has passed, or has passed with Merit (indicating the grade of Merit), or has passed with Distinction or has passed with Honours (indicating the grade of Honours), or has failed.

Any other overall result should be recorded in accordance with the following table:

Code(s)	Result	Effect on the Number of Examination Attempts
E	Exemption Granted	Counted as an attempt
A	Absent from Sitting	Counted as an attempt
F	Fail	Counted as an attempt
D	Deferral of the Result	Not counted as an attempt
W	Withdrew from Programme	Counted as an attempt
WH	Learner's results withheld	Discretion of Examination Board

Table 7. 4: Grading Codes

k) Provisional Lists of Results
- Where clear-cut recommendations emerge at a meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners may cause a provisional list of results to be issued by the college. The college will not issue a provisional result in the case of any candidate whose result is deferred, in dispute, indeterminate, the subject of a recorded dissenting opinion or the subject of referral to an awarding body.

- In addition, a result will not be issued where a candidate's entry is regarded as provisional or otherwise, and, the name of any such candidate shall not be included in any provisional list of results issued by the institution, nor shall any information in relation to results be communicated to any such candidate pending an awarding body decision thereon where relevant.

l) Recommendation of Results to Awarding Body
The following guidelines should be followed with a view to arriving at definite recommendations:

i. In the case of non-award examination stages, the candidate should, normally, be accorded the benefit of the doubt, given reasonable grounds, and the Board of Examiners should endeavour to make a firm recommendation on the matter without referral to the awarding body, unless a fundamental question of principle is involved.

ii. In the case of final (award stage) examinations, the requirements of the awarding body should be interpreted in such a manner as to require the candidate to have demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt an entitlement, on the basis of examination performance, to the result being sought.

m) Deferral of Examination Results
An Examination Board may, in the case of illness or bereavement, recommend that a final decision on a candidate's result be deferred to enable the candidate to complete specific outstanding requirements of the programme or examination.

n) Notification of Results to QQI
Following the Examination Board meeting, the original (signed) broadsheet of results will be sent to QQI, notifying it of results and recommendations for awards to be made.

A broadsheet of results will be returned for each 60-credit stage of a programme. Where appropriate, repeat supplemental assessment results will be returned on a separate broadsheet of results

o) Learner Results
Final and approved results are issued to Learners within 5 working days of ratification of approved assessment results based on the Examination Board meeting. Results communicated to Learners prior to formal ratification are considered provisional results.

p) Discussing Scripts and Results with Learners

Following the issue of results, assessors involved in the specific assessment tasks will be available to meet individual Learners to review their scripts etc.

Such consultations aim to:

- o Give formative feedback to Learners, especially to those who need to repeat.
- o Explain the basis of the Learner's grade/mark against the assessment criteria,

especially where the Learner believes that the assessor may have made an error in grading the work.

Such a consultation is distinct from a formal re-check or review of the results. Please see Policy for Recheck, Review and Appeal.

q) Recheck, Review and Appeal Requests

Learner recheck, review and appeals are overseen by the College Registrar with stage held responsibilities as described in Section 8. Support for Learner (Policy for Managing Learner Recheck, Review and Appeal). Note that Learners can only appeal approved and ratified results.

r) External Examiner's Report

The External Examiner(s) is required to submit to the College Registrar, not later than 21 days after their annual visit, a full report on the assessments with which they are involved. One report covering the academic year will normally be sufficient. A copy of the report is sent to the relevant Programme Leader and in addition shall be sent to the Awarding Body if relevant. Please view Resource 6: External Examiner Report Template.

s) Certification Request from QQI

Once received from QQI, Learner transcripts are issued to Learners by registered post.

t) Recording and Archiving

It is the responsibility of the Tutor to guarantee the integrity of Learner assessment data for which they manage and are responsible. This demands that all data are stored in a safe and secure manner in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

The following core elements underpin this process:

I. Any breach or suspected breach of the security of Learner data must be reported to the Senior Management team immediately.

II. All assessed work shall be retained by the Tutor (assessor) in safe storage until it is returned to the College.

III. Assessment material is stored securely at the College until after the Academic Council meeting subsequent to the Examination Board meeting following the release of final results to Learners.

IV. Records relating to assessment shall be disposed of by the College using a secure and confidential disposal system.

7.7.6 Responsibility

The responsibility for the administration and management of assessment resides with the College Registrar. The policies and procedures are reviewed by the Academic Director. The External Examiner is expected to ensure External Moderation and Authentication. These functions are overseen by the Academic Council and its relevant subcommittees. Please refer to Assessment Policy Statement Overview, Sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 for Board, Committee and Council Roles and Responsibilities and Individual Roles and Responsibilities, respectively.

7.7.7 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Assessment
Policy Title	Policy for Examination Board
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	- Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013) - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (Revised 2013) - Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (Revised 2015) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018) - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Policy and Criteria for Making Awards – QQI 2017 - Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI. - Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI. - Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (2015 – Revised) QQI
Monitoring Procedures	- Internal Verification Report - Internal Moderation Report - Programme Leader Report - External Examiner Report