



EXAMINATIONS PROCEDURE: PLANNING, CONDUCTING AND CONCLUDING (FULL-TIME PROVISION)

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1. Definitions

1.1. Examination

Examination refers to any theory based, oral, aural, online or practical examination **which occurs on a specific date and for a specific duration**. All other assessment techniques, including assignment, collection of work, learner record, project and skills demonstration are not informed by this document.

1.2. Examination Resources

Examination resources refer to any **permitted** resources which learners require in an examination as informed by the programme. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Dictionaries
- Maths formulae and log tables
- Art materials
- Non-programmable calculators (see Appendix 1)

Additionally, some learners may require specific resources: these should be considered and approved under the **Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure**.

1.3. Examination Supervisor Pack

The Examination Supervisor pack refers to the following documentation which is available to support supervision of examinations:

- Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version) (Appendix 2)
- **Examinations: Planning, Conducting and Concluding** and any other relevant Provision and specific awarding body examination procedures
- **Assessment Malpractice Procedure** (outlines what to do if a serious incident occurs)
- Examination documentation (e.g. examination papers, etc.)
- Sign-in sheet, Examination Supervisor Report and Seating Plan (**07_Examination Attendance Register template**). This document lists all learners sitting the examination along with a space for learners to sign. Additionally, the template allows the Examination Supervisor to record any incidents which occurred during the examination.
- Any specific resources needed for the examination (e.g. printer paper, working computers, pens, papers, USB keys) and checked prior to the examination
- Door sign (Exam in progress; No unauthorised access)

The Examination Supervisor pack is prepared by the Assessor or other person designated by the Provision Co-ordinator.

2. Principles of Assessment in relation to Examinations

Quality assured assessment ensures that, in criterion referenced assessment, “learners are assessed and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award” (QQI, Revised 2018, p.5). Central to quality assured assessment is the assumption that learners are assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the award standard. Quality assured assessment ensures adherence to the principles of assessment.

The following sets forth the principles of assessment which apply to this document: these principles are based on the QQI (Revised 2018) principles of assessment.

2.1 Principles of Assessment

2.1.1 Validity

Validity is a fundamental assessment principle ensuring that an assessment measures what it is designed to measure: the relevant standard of knowledge, skill or competence required for an award should be assessed.

Validity in assessment occurs when:

- Assessment is fit for purpose (i.e. a practical assessment assesses a practical skill)
- Learners can produce evidence which can be measured against the award standard
- Assessors can make accurate assessment decisions
- Assessment is accessible to all candidates who are potentially able to achieve it

2.1.2 Reliability

Reliability in assessment ensures that assessment measurement is accurate: the knowledge, skills and competence which the assessment measures should produce reliable and accurate results. Reliability in assessment ensures that results are consistent under similar conditions.

Reliability in assessment occurs when:

- The assessment is based on valid assessment techniques
- Assessment conditions are consistent
- Learner evidence is reliable
- Results are consistent over time across various assessors, contexts, conditions and learners

2.1.3 Fair

Fairness in assessment supports the validity and reliability principles and provides equal opportunity to all learners. Fairness in assessment ensures learners have access to appropriate resources/equipment in assessment; assessment design and implementation are fair to all learners; and policies and procedures exist to ensure fair assessment of learners.

2.1.4 Quality

Quality in assessment ensures that all assessment processes are quality assured.

2.1.5 Transparency

Transparency in assessment ensures that assessment policy and procedures provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders.

In order to ensure that assessment is fair for all learners along with being reliable and consistent across Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's programmes and modules, the following process should be followed in relation to planning, conducting and concluding examinations.

3. Examination: Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Examination Supervisor

The Examination Supervisor must:

- Be in attendance **within a specific timeframe (minimum timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes)** prior to the commencement of the examination.
- Distribute examination papers and any other specific examination instructions.
- Note the actual start, duration and finish time on a white board/flipchart/other and read aloud same to learners.
- Actively monitor the learners, for the entire duration of the examination, thus ensuring the proper conduct of the examination. The Examination Supervisor is required to give their **entire attention** to the work of invigilating. The use of mobile phones or personal music appliances; reading of newspapers, or books; personal/work related activities; or engaging in any occupation other than invigilating, during the examinations, is strictly forbidden. The Examination Supervisor should not bring into the Examination Centre, any items (including newspapers, books, other personal/work related materials) other than those which relate to the examination.
- Deal with any problems which may arise. It is recommended that there is another member of staff available on site (or within close proximity) in the case of any emergency.
- Adhere to the guidelines in this document for when commencing, conducting and concluding an examination (see Section 4).
- Adhere to any other specific guidelines as specified by the awarding body.

3.2. The Provision Co-ordinator

The Provision Co-ordinator must:

- Assign examination locations (e.g. rooms) and designate the Examination Supervisor (ensuring no conflict of interest exists).
- Ensure that the room layout and relevant facilities are fit for purpose (see 4.1.4 and 4.1.5).
- Assign the role of Examination Supervisor Pack compilation to the Assessor or other designated person.
- Ensure that all Assessors have submitted dates for examinations in advance of the programme commencing and that learners have been given sufficient notice of an examination taking place.
- Ensure that the Examination Supervisor is aware of any reasonable accommodation in assessment pertaining to the specific examination.

3.3. The Assessor

The Assessor must:

- Ensure secure storage of assessment materials (examination papers, outline solutions and marking schemes, etc.) in line with the **Secure Storage Procedure**.
- Distribute the assessment plan including examination dates to learners at the earliest opportunity.
- Prepare the Examination Supervisor pack (if requested by Provision Co-ordinator).

Where possible, the Assessor, or person responsible for the examination paper, will ensure that s/he or a person capable of handling queries shall be available at the examination or by telephone when the event is underway.

3.4. The Learner

The learner must:

- Take responsibility to note carefully the assessment: date/time; duration; and examination location, as fixed on the timetable, for the examination in the modules in which the learner intends to present himself/herself.
- Be responsible for making their own arrangements to ensure timely attendance at the examination.
- **Be in attendance within a specific timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least fifteen (15) minutes) before the time stated in the timetable.**
- **Not enter the examination after a specific timeframe (recommended timeframe: thirty (30) minutes) from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).** Access to a learner will be denied after the specified time has elapsed.
- **Not leave the examination until a specific timeframe has elapsed (recommended timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes) from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).** Permission to the learner will be denied until after the specified time has elapsed.
- Present a valid photo ID (passport, drivers licence, college ID or public services card) for inspection by the Examination Supervisor where the learners are unknown (e.g. larger Provisions).
- Not bring into the examination, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is in such room:
 - Any resource, memorandum, notes, etc., except those as permitted under the particular examination
 - Any electronic equipment/internet enabled devices.

Note: If secure storage for electronic equipment/internet enabled device is not available they must be switched off, placed on the floor and out of reach. If a learner is found to have a mobile phone and/or internet enabled device, that is switched on, in his/her possession i.e. not on the floor, it will be confiscated and reported as a breach of the examination. Non adherence to this examination instruction could

ultimately result in application of the sanctions as detailed in the **Assessment Malpractice Procedure**.

- Be responsible for their personal property. Where small bags (e.g. handbags) are permitted in the examination, learners are responsible for their own property. Small bags should be placed away from learners on the floor, not accessible during the examination. Phones must be switched off. Bags must be placed on the floor and out of the reach of each learner.
- Sit the examination/practical assessment at the published time.
- Adhere to the guidelines in this document.
- Be aware of the implications of any malpractice.
- Sign and submit all assessment materials after the examination.

No learner shall be permitted to leave the examination **in the final ten (10) minutes** of the examination time (**recommended time for 2-hour examination**).

4. Examination: Guidelines for staff

4.1. Planning an Examination

4.1.1 Reasonable accommodation in assessment

The Examination Supervisor should be notified by the Provision Coordinator of any reasonable accommodation in assessment pertaining to the specific examination (see **Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure**).

4.1.2 Keeping assessment materials secure

All Assessors are responsible for the secure storage of assessment materials (examination papers, outline solutions and marking schemes, etc.) in line with **Secure Storage Procedure**. They should make the assessment materials available for the Examination Supervisor in line with the Provision policy.

4.1.3 Examination Timetable/Examination Learner Instructions

Sufficient notice of examination timetables should be given to the learners. While the assessment plan should be made available at the commencement of the programme, the examination dates should be published using Provision's communication system (e.g. notice board, Moodle, email, etc.) within a **specific timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least one (1) month)** prior to the examination.

A copy of the Examination Learner Instructions (Appendix 2) should be distributed to the learner in advance of the assessment.

4.1.4 Room Layout/Facilities

The room layout and relevant facilities need to be checked so that they are fit for purpose. Sufficient space around learners must be available in order to maintain assessment integrity.

All posters/diagrams/wall materials/etc. (which may impact the validity of the specific assessment) should be removed prior to the examination.

A working clock should be available and visible.

4.1.5 Examination Resources

Any examination resources needed for the assessment (e.g. printer paper, working computers, internet access, pens, papers, USB keys) should be provided and checked prior to the examination.

All examination resources provided by the Provision need to be checked to ensure the integrity of the examination.

4.1.6 Prearranged Seating Plan

In some instances (e.g. awarding body requirement), a seating plan may be required prior to the examination.

4.2. Conducting an Examination

4.2.1 On the day of the Examination

4.2.1.1 Examination Supervisor Check

The Examination Supervisor should sign out the Examination materials from the secure storage location and this should be co-signed by the Provision Co-ordinator or designated person.

The Examination Supervisor should take the Examination Supervisor Pack to the Examination room.

The Examination Supervisor must report on any issues which may arise using **07_Examination Attendance Register template**, located in the Examination Supervisor Pack.

4.2.1.2 Learner Identification

In examinations where the learners are not known to the Examination Supervisor, learners may need to verify identity. Examples of learner identification include but are not limited to:

- Photo ID (Passport, Drivers Licence or Public Services Card)
- Assessor verification (or Provision Manager, Provision Co-ordinator)

The Examination Supervisor should confirm the identification of each learner.

4.2.1.3 Examination Equipment/Resources (Learner)

All examination resources provided by the learner (e.g. dictionaries) must be submitted to the Examination Supervisor by the learner: these resources are checked by the Examination Supervisor to ensure the integrity of the examination.

4.2.1.4 Reasonable Accommodation

If reasonable accommodation is provided to a learner, care must be taken to ensure that the integrity of the examination and adherence to the standards is maintained at all times.

4.2.1.5 Seating Plan

All learners are required to sit in the designated seat according to the pre-arranged seating plan if a pre-planned seating plan is required.

4.2.1.6 Mobile Phones/Internet Enabled Devices/Bags

Mobile phones and/or internet enabled devices must be switched off and placed on the floor. If a learner is found to have a mobile phone and/or internet enabled device, that is switched on, in his/her possession i.e. not on the floor, it will be confiscated and reported as a breach of the examination.

Bags must be placed out of the reach of each learner.

4.2.2 Commencing the examination

4.2.2.1 Attendance/Sign-in

The Examination Supervisor will distribute the **07_Examination Attendance Register template** and ensure that all learners in attendance have signed. This will be done in conjunction with the ID check (see 4.2.1.2)

4.2.2.2 Examination Papers

The opening of the examination papers is witnessed and signed by a learner: the Examination Supervisor co-signs.

The examination papers and answer books (if required) will be distributed face down by the Examination Supervisor at the commencement of the examination. Learners are not permitted to commence reading the instructions until permitted by the Examination Supervisor. If required, computers and other equipment may need to be switched on or learners logged in prior to the commencement of the examination.

4.2.2.3 Commencement of Examination

The salient points from the **Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version)** (see Appendix 2) should be **read aloud** to all learners before the time for the examination commences.

The specified examination start time, duration and end time will also be **read aloud** to learners and **written on** whiteboard/flipchart/other.

Learners may then commence the examination. The examination starting time will be noted on the **07_Examination Attendance Register template**.

4.2.3 Conducting an Examination

4.2.3.1 Guidelines on conducting an examination

Only learners sitting the examination and authorised personnel can be present in the room

No learner may be authorised **to enter the examination after a specified timeframe (recommended timeframe: thirty (30) minutes)** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).

No learner may be authorised **to leave the examination until after a specified timeframe (recommended timeframe: at least thirty (30) minutes)** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination). Permission to the learner will be denied until after the specified time has elapsed.

Strict silence must be observed in the examination. (Due to the nature of some specific events (for example, oral assessments, some practical assessments), this guideline may not apply).

Each learner should check that they have the correct examination instructions (e.g. examination paper, task list).

A learner should raise his/her hand if he/she wishes to attract attention of the Examination Supervisor during the examination.

A learner shall not, while in the examination

- Use, or attempt to use, any book¹, memorandum, notes or paper (save the examination paper and such answer books, etc., as shall have been supplied to him/her by the Examination Supervisor); or
- Aid, or attempt to aid, another learner; or
- Obtain, or attempt to obtain, aid from another learner, or Examination Supervisor; or
- Communicate, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another learner within the Examination centre or by electronic means with a person outside the Examination centre.

A learner shall:

- Not take out, or attempt to take out, of the examination, any answer books, whether used or unused
- Not take out examination paper (if applicable)
- Shall not damage the examination premises or its furniture

4.2.3.2 Learners leaving the examination

A learner may not be permitted to leave the examination and return during the examination period, unless the Examination Supervisor is satisfied that the learner's need to leave the examination is genuine, (e.g. because of illness, urgent need to visit the toilet, etc.). A learner who leaves the examination during any period of examination shall not be re-admitted during that period unless the learner has been in the care of a representative of the Provision. The learner must hand the examination material/documentation to the Examination Supervisor on leaving the examination. In the event of a practical examination, computers and other equipment may need to be switched off. The Examination Supervisor should record on the cover of the answer book the time of departure from and return to the examination and the reason for the absence; the time lost by the learner may not be compensated for at the close of the examination period. Particulars of any such occurrence should be reported on the appropriate Examination Supervisor Report.

4.2.3.3 Erratum notice

Where an error in the examination has been noted, the Examination Supervisor will seek clarification from the Assessor (or other subject matter expert if Assessor is unavailable) who should be available to clarify the query. This amendment will be

¹ Exceptions include resources specifically required for the assessment event (e.g. dictionary, log books etc.)

communicated to all learners and noted on the Examination Supervisor Report. **The integrity of the examination must be maintained at all times.**

4.2.3.4 Unexpected event during an examination

When an unexpected event occurs during an examination (fire alarm, medical emergency, etc.), the Examination Supervisor must ensure that integrity of the examination is maintained.

Any unexpected events should be noted in the Examination Supervisor Report.

In some instances (e.g. critical illness, fire, etc.) the examination may need to be abandoned.

4.2.3.5 Learners who have completed at least ten (10) minutes before the concluding time

No learner shall be permitted to leave the examination in the final **ten (10) minutes** of the examination

4.3. Concluding an Examination

The Examination Supervisor will remind learners that there are **ten (10) minutes** remaining and that all learners should remain in the room until the examination concludes.

At the end of the examination:

- Learners are reminded to ensure that all scripts are signed
- Learners must remain in their seats until all examination material has been collected by the Examination Supervisor.

Once all examination materials have been collected, learners are permitted to leave.

The Examination Supervisor is responsible for the collection and packaging of all examination material in the manner required by the Provision and transporting it to the designated member of staff for safe and secure storage.

4.4. Repeat of an Examination

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board recognises that providing learners with the opportunity to repeat an examination is good practice although due to resourcing issues this is not always practical.

In the case of an unsuccessful result in an Examination on a specific date, it is at the discretion of the Provision as to whether the Provision can practically accommodate the learner at an alternative sitting at the next assessment period.

The actual marks and grade awarded for a repeat Examination are determined solely on the basis of the evidence submitted in accordance with the standards for the award. **There is no mark/grade penalty under this procedure.**

4.4.1 Repeat Assessments in the context of Limerick and Clare ETB as co-ordinating provider for Apprenticeship programmes

A Referral assessment result is recorded when an apprentice fails to achieve an overall pass grade in an individual module assessment component. The grade is recorded as "Referral".

- Set-down by the Labour Service Act 1987-Apprenticeship Rules 1997, Apprentices have an opportunity to attempt each off-the-job assessment on three occasions.
- A minimum period of 5 days must elapse before an apprentice can attempt a re-sit of a referred assessment.
- The Pass Mark for graded assessments is 50%.
- The repeat assessment(s) will be graded in accordance with the standard of the assessment criteria, **with no penalties imposed on repeat assessments.**

If the apprentice fails the final attempt, apprenticeship will be terminated but the apprentice can appeal this decision. If the appeal is successful, the apprentice may be given one last attempt to complete the exams.

References

QQI (2018 Revised) *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers*. Ireland: QQI. Available from: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%20Revised%202013.pdf> [accessed 2nd April 2019].

Appendix 1: Non-programmable calculators

- 1 Programmable calculators are **prohibited**. The term “programmable” includes any calculator that is capable of storing a sequence of keystrokes that can be retrieved after the calculator is turned off or powers itself off. Note that the capacity to recall, edit and replay previously executed calculations does not render a calculator programmable, provided that this replay memory is automatically cleared when the calculator is powered off. Also, the facility to store numbers in one or more memory locations does not render a calculator programmable.
- 2 Calculators with any of the following mathematical features are prohibited:
 - graph plotting
 - equation solving
 - symbolic algebraic manipulation
 - numerical integration
 - numerical differentiation
 - matrix calculations
- 3 Calculators with any of the following general features are prohibited:
 - data banks
 - dictionaries
 - language translators
 - text retrieval
 - capability of remote communication

(State Examinations Commission, 2017)

See www.examinations.ie for full list of calculators which are allowed and disallowed in SEC examinations. This is a useful guide.

Appendix 2: Examination Learner Instructions (Short Version)

- 1 Mobile phones and/or internet enabled devices must be switched off and placed on the floor. If a learner is found to have a mobile phone and/or internet enabled device, that is switched on, in his/her possession i.e. not on the floor, it will be confiscated and reported as a breach of the examination. Non adherence to this examination instruction could ultimately result in application of the sanctions as detailed in the **Assessment Malpractice Procedure**.
- 2 Bags must be placed out of the reach of each learner.
- 3 No learner may be authorised **to enter the examination after thirty (30) minutes** from the time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).
- 4 No learner may be authorised **to leave the examination until thirty (30) minutes** from time at which the examination began (recommended time for 2-hour examination).
- 5 Strict silence must be observed in the examination. Due to the nature of some specific events (for example, oral assessments, some practical assessments), this guideline may not apply.
- 6 Each learner should check that they have the correct examination instructions (e.g. examination paper, task list).
- 7 A learner should raise his/her hand if he/she wishes to attract the attention of the Examination Supervisor during the examination.
- 8 A learner shall not, while in the examination:
 - Use, or attempt to use, any book², memorandum, notes or paper (save the examination paper and such answer books, etc., as shall have been supplied to him/her by the Examination Supervisor); or
 - Aid, or attempt to aid, another learner; or
 - Obtain, or attempt to obtain, aid from another learner, or Examination Supervisor; or
 - Communicate, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another learner within the Examination centre or by electronic means with a person outside the Examination centre.
- 9 A learner shall:
 - Not take out, or attempt to take out, of the examination, any answer books, whether used or unused,
 - Not take out the examination paper (if applicable)
 - Not damage the examination premises or its furniture.
- 10 No learner shall be permitted to leave the examination in the **final ten (10) minutes of the examination**.

² Exceptions include resources specifically required for the assessment event (e.g. dictionary, maths formulae and log table etc.)

- 11 At the end of the examination:
 - Learners will be reminded to ensure that all scripts are signed.
 - Learners must remain in their seats until all assessment material has been collected by the Examination Supervisor.
- 12 Once all assessment materials have been collected, learners are permitted to leave.
- 13 A learner may be expelled from the examination if his/her behaviour is such as to jeopardise the successful conduct of the examination.

References

State Examinations Commission (2017) *Candidate Information Booklet Leaving Certificate 2017*. Available at: <https://www.examinations.ie/misc-doc/BI-CA-96791328.pdf>. [Accessed 6th December 2017].

QQI (2018 Revised) *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers*. Ireland: QQI. Available from: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%20Revised%202013.pdf> [accessed 2nd April 2019].