



# SECURE STORAGE PROCEDURE

## SECURE STORAGE OF ASSESSMENT MATERIALS, RECORDS AND LEARNER ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Division	Further Education and Training
Policy Area	Quality Assurance: Assessment Policy
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Summary of Updates	Updated to reflect move to presentation of evidence on Teams / Moodle for EA. Updated to include reference to <i>the Digital Assessment Guidelines</i> and the <i>Admin, Storage and Retrieval Policy</i> . Incorporates process at IV and EA for addition and removal of IV and EA personnel. Personal devices not allowed to be used for recording of assessment evidence.
Monitored	Annually
Responsibility	Quality Council
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This procedure document is an uncontrolled copy. Each staff member should consult StaffCONNECT for the latest version of this document.	

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## Introduction

This procedure outlines how assessment materials (both pre and post-assessment) and learner assessment evidence should be securely stored. This procedure applies to both hard and soft copy formats of assessment materials and learner assessment evidence and should be read in conjunction with the *Digital Assessment Guidelines* and the *Assessment Online Specific Instructions* where assessment materials and/or learner assessment evidence is being stored/presented in a digital format. It is important to note that the approved platforms for the storage/presentation of soft copy assessment materials and/or Learner assessment evidence in the College of FET are MS Teams and Moodle<sup>1</sup>.

## Scope

This procedure applies to all Further Education and Training provision delivered by the College of FET or by organisations funded by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to provide further education and training, whether certified or non-certified. Procedures published by other awarding bodies supersede this document.

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<sup>1</sup> In extraordinary circumstances where Teams/Moodle are not suitable e.g. file size an application to use OneDrive can be completed. Link to MS Form.

## 1. Definitions

### 1.1. Assessment Materials

This refers to any documentation associated with the planning of an assessment (pre-assessment).

Examples of assessment material include (but are not limited to):

- Assessment briefs<sup>2</sup>
- Examination papers
- Solutions/marking schemes/rubrics/model answers
- Practical/Skills Demonstration instructions
- Any relevant documentation in relation to the planning of an assessment.

### 1.2. Assessment Records

This refers to any documentation which demonstrates evidence that the assessment has taken place (post-assessment).

Examples of assessment records include (but are not limited to):

- Completed attendance sheets
- Completed Invigilator report
- Completed seating plan
- Assessor verification
- Photo/audio evidence
- Signed assessment submission documentation
- Internal Verification reports
- External Authentication reports
- Appeals documentation (application forms, appeals outcomes, etc.)

### 1.3. Learner Assessment Evidence

This refers to any assessment evidence, created by the learner, which forms part of a module or programme assessment.

Examples of learner assessment evidence include (but are not limited to):

- Learner examination scripts
- Hard/soft copy of assessment evidence
- Artefacts

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<sup>2</sup> This assessment brief is the set of clear instructions given to the learner outlining the requirements and assessment/performance criteria of each piece of assessment.

## **2. Principles of assessment in relation to secure storage of assessment material and learner evidence**

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.

Assessment is underpinned by the **principles of assessment** including the *fair* principle (equal opportunity for all learners) and *consistent* principle (consistency in approach to assessment across Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's programmes and modules). As such, in order to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of learners, the following procedures should be followed in relation to the secure storage of assessment materials and learner assessment evidence. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Quality Assurance System overarches these principles and ensures learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the award standards.

### 3. Security and Storage Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3.1. The Provision Co-ordinator

The Provision Co-ordinator must ensure that:

- The staff are compliant with the assessment procedures of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, which reflects the requirements of the awarding body
- The assessment storage facility for hard copy portfolios and artefacts is secure with authorised access only
- A tracking and storage system are in place and the location of assessment materials and evidence is known
- He/she manages the secure storage of assessment evidence and materials.
- Assessors are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the secure storage of both assessment material and learner assessment evidence
- Learners are made aware of their responsibilities for their assessment evidence and submission process for same.

#### 3.2. The Assessor

The Assessor is responsible for:

- The understanding of and compliance with the assessment procedures of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, which reflects the requirements of the awarding body
- PRE-ASSESSMENT:
  - Secure storage and transportation of assessment material (related to programme delivery).
  - Ensuring due care in the secure storage (e.g. printing and photocopying of assessment briefs and examination papers (where applicable) so that assessment integrity is not compromised
  - Compliance with Provision arrangements for receipting of learner evidence
- POST ASSESSMENT:
  - Compliance with arrangements for the retention and secure storage of assessment materials (hard and soft copy) and learner assessment evidence (see relevant definitions)
  - Compliance with Provisions arrangements on timely return or secure disposal of assessment evidence following certification – See Section 7.

#### 3.3. The Learner

The learner is responsible for the:

- Submission of assessment evidence in accordance with the assessment deadlines
- Retention of any receipting evidence in line with Provision policies and procedures

- Management of and the security and integrity of their own assessment work in advance of submission. At Levels 1-3, support will be provided by the Assessor.
- Retention of backup copies of assessment evidence. In the case of original artefacts, it is advisable to ensure photographs are taken as backups are not possible.

It is recommended that learners should keep copies of all work submitted, where appropriate.

#### 4. Secure storage of assessment material by staff

**PRE-ASSESSMENT:** Assessment material (assessment plan, assessment briefs, examination papers, solutions, marking schemes and model answers) are stored securely by the Assessor or a designated member of staff for each programme module being taught, in advance of the assessment/examination date. Additionally, relevant documentation e.g. **07\_Examination Attendance Register template** and other relevant examination material and the correct number of examination papers are stored securely, with authorised access only.

**POST ASSESSMENT:** On completion of an examination or skills demonstration all learner assessment evidence together with relevant assessment documentation must be stored securely, with authorised access only. Any breaches to the integrity of assessment evidence (e.g. loss/damage etc.) should be disclosed to the Provision Co-ordinator immediately.

#### 5. Submission of Learner Evidence

Each Provision should ensure that Assessors confirm the submission of hard copy evidence by a learner to an Assessor using the **09\_Assessment Submission List template**.

Please see Digital Assessment Guidelines for information regarding the submission of soft-copy evidence.

Records of learners' assessment progress are held individually by each Assessor.

#### 6. Secure storage of learner assessment evidence by staff

Learner assessment evidence is the personal data of the learner. Storage arrangements for both hard and soft copy evidence must have regard to the [Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Data Protection Policy and Procedures](#). Learners have a right of access to their personal data and right of access to assessment evidence (in addition to an appeal of an assessment result or assessment process). Learners do not have a right to correct errors in their assessment answers. However, they do have the right to have processing errors corrected.

##### 6.1. Learner assessment evidence: hard copy and practical/artefact

In order to ensure best practice exists, the Provision **must provide a secure room or secure locked facilities, with authorised access**, to facilitate the storage of all hard copy learner assessment evidence over the course of the programme and until after all assessment QA procedures have been carried out. Assessors must comply with the [Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Data Protection Policy and Procedures](#) while they are in possession of assessment evidence.

## **6.2. Learner assessment evidence: Soft copy**

As per *the Digital Assessment Guidelines*, either Teams or Moodle must be used for the storage of soft copy learner evidence. OneDrive is only permitted where file size exceeds the limits of Teams/Moodle. Applications are reviewed by TEL/QA – add link to form. All College of FET learners are provided with access to Microsoft 365 and LCETB learner email addresses. Please refer to the *Assessment Online Specific Instructions* for guidance on how to set up course, correct naming conventions for courses and assignments, and the management of digital evidence on both Teams and Moodle.

The learner assessment evidence is then made available for the Internal Verifier (IV) and the External Authenticator (EA). Internal Verifiers are LCETB staff and must be added to Teams/Moodle using their staff email address. External Authenticators are provided with an LCETB email address for the duration of their employment at each certification period. Provision will be provided with the LCETB email addresses for the EAs allocated to them and they must provide access to assessment evidence by adding them to Teams/Moodle using this address.

**IV personal must have their access removed after the IV process is complete. EAs must have their access revoked after authentication is complete.**

Assessment evidence **should never be recorded on mobile phones** (personal or work). Where recording requires the use of other mobile devices (e.g. - GoPro's or tablets) the evidence should not be stored on the mobile devices hard drive. It should instead be immediately transferred/uploaded to the online platform (Teams/Moodle) and deleted from the hard drive of the mobile device.

The use of all mobile devices must comply with all relevant policies including Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Data Protection Policy, ICT acceptable Use policy and College of FET BYOD for Learning Policy.

## **6.3. Marking and grading**

In order to ensure best practice exists, where possible, space should be made available for Assessors to mark and grade assessment evidence in a secure location within the Provision. Additionally, each provision should ensure that a procedure exists for Assessors to sign out assessment evidence for marking and grading. The Assessor is responsible for assessment evidence until the evidence is signed back in.

## **6.4. Internal Verification/External Authentication**

**In preparation for the Internal Verification process**, the Provision Co-ordinator must ensure that learner assessment evidence is tracked using the Provision's tracking process (evidence of the signing in and out of assessment evidence).

**During the Internal Verification process**, all Assessors must adhere to the tracking system so that learner assessment evidence is stored securely at all times.

**On completion of the Internal Verification**, learner assessment evidence is moved into the allocated rooms/storage facilities with authorised access (using the Provision's tracking processes) for

relevant programme in order for external authentication to take place. **IV personnel should be removed from digital platforms.**

**During the External Authentication process**, only authorised staff should have access to the allocated rooms/storage facilities.

**On completion of External Authentication**, learner assessment material should be moved to the appropriate secure storage space using the Provision's tracking process, to facilitate ease of access in the event of learner appeals. **EAs should have their access to evidence on digital platforms revoked.**

**On completion of the Appeals Process** and when results can no longer be challenged, it is advised that all assessment evidence be safely destroyed<sup>3</sup> as per [Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Records Retention Schedule](#) (see below). **EAs should have their access to evidence on digital platforms revoked**

## 7. Duration of Storage

### 7.1. Duration of storage of learner evidence

All learner evidence will be retained until after the appeals process concludes (unless stated otherwise by the relevant awarding body) after which it will be disposed of securely as per [Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Records Retention Schedule](#) - "Once results are issued and period for learner appeals has expired, learners should be given a short window in which to collect their work, after which it is destroyed if uncollected. Exceptions: ESF-funded programmes."

### 7.2. Duration of storage of assessment material

All assessment material (including application forms, learner contracts, exam sign-in sheets, course evaluations, etc.) will be retained until after the appeals process concludes unless stated otherwise by the awarding body or due to a funding requirement, after which it will be disposed of securely (e.g. shredded/deleted from the relevant platform) by the Provision. All records retained must be retained in line with current legislation and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

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## References

QQI (2018 Revised) *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers*. Ireland: QQI. Available from: <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf> [accessed 16th April 2024].

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (2021) *Records Retention Schedule*. Available from: <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/PoliciesProcedures2/Shared%20Documents/Records%20Retention%20Schedule.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=w1awoW> [accessed 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024].

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<sup>3</sup> Case C-434/16 *Nowak v Data Protection Commissioner* [2017] ECLI:EU:C: 2017:582 Opinion of AG Kokott, para 65