

# CMIT Quality Policy and Procedures

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## 6. Assessment Policies



College of Management and IT  
Southern Cross Business Park  
Bray, Co. Wicklow.

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## 6.1 Introduction

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### What is the purpose of this policy?

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- This policy sets out the College's approach to assessing students, the principles for assessing and grading assessments, and the practices and procedures involved in maintenance of academic standards regarding assessment.

### To whom does this policy apply?

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- This policy applies to all learners on CMIT programmes, including those leading to awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
- This policy applies to all Assessors, IVs, EAs, and those with a role in the administration of certification on programmes where effort is formally assessed.

### Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

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- The Academic Director, Certification Administration staff, Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators who are responsible for ensuring that this policy is carried out in respect of academic programmes.
- Assessors who are responsible for achievement and maintenance award standards, and any academic standards.

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## 6.2 Assessment policy

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### Fairness

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- Learner effort is always judged based on the achievement of learning outcomes and no other criteria.
- Assessment tasks reflect the type and level of the learning outcome(s) being assessed. This means that learners are only assessed on knowledge, skill, or competences that they have had an opportunity to acquire.
- Reasonable Accommodation procedures are in place to ensure that all Learners are awarded equal opportunity to complete assessments to their fullest capability (See Learner Supports Section 5. for full policy and procedure).
- Learners have three fair attempts to complete any module.
- A formal and comprehensive appeals process is in place and communicated to all learners.

### Transparency

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- All staff and learners are fully informed of the assessment process, assessment criteria and certification timelines.
- Summative feedback is provided to learners following external authentication.
- Assessment outcomes are accompanied by qualitative feedback on the learner's effort which correlates with the marks awarded. Individualised formative feedback will be provided to all learners following submission of each assessment as they progress through the programme.
- Summative feedback is provided to learners following external authentication.

### Reliability and consistency

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- Assessment outcomes for each programme are the same from learner to learner, cohort to cohort and are based on national standards.
- Assessments are mapped to Learning Outcomes contained in the Programme Specification.
- Assessments instruments, briefs, marking schemes are approved by an independent panel as part of Programme Validation.
- Assessments are mapped to Learning Outcomes contained in the Programme Specification.
- Learners are assessed by competent and trained Assessors.

- Assessment outcomes are internally verified and externally reviewed. Procedures for Internal Verification and External Authentication are consistent with national standards and are in line with QQI assessment policy and guidelines.
- A Results Approval Panel is in place for each certification period. The outcomes of each meeting are minuted and actioned.

## Validity

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- The outcomes of assessment decisions enable student progression and certification with the relevant awarding body.
- The level of the QQI or ILM award achieved will be recognised and aligned to the National Qualifications Framework.

## Grading of QQI programmes

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- Grading of work is criterion-based and not norm-based (i.e., based on normal distribution curve).
- Programme and module grades are provisional until agreed at a formal meeting of Results Approval Panel.
- The college avoids issuing borderline grades (e.g., 64%) where possible. Instead, a clear decision is made about the grade band into which the learner's effort falls.
- QQI awards at level 5 and level 6 are classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction where a learner has achieved the standards for the award within the grading criteria.
- A Pass is a grade awarded to a learner who has attained the minimum standard. To be awarded a pass grade a learner must have achieved a mark of between 50-64%.
- A Merit is a grade awarded to a learner who has exceeded the minimum requirements. To be awarded a merit grade a learner must have achieved a mark of between 65-79%.
- A Distinction is a grade awarded to a learner who has exceeded the minimum requirements. For a learner to be awarded a distinction grade the learner must have achieved a mark of 80% or over.

## Formative feedback

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- Following each submission, learners will receive written individual developmental / formative feedback on the assessment.
- There are clear and monitored response times for tutor feedback which allows learners to manage their programme schedule accordingly.

- Learners submit assessment work for review in line with the programme schedule, which has built-in flexibility for learners.
- Following each submission, learners will receive written individual developmental feedback on the assessment.
- Tutors will provide learners with the opportunity to resubmit an assessment if there is a development or learning opportunity identified. This is in line with assessment guidelines and limited to no more than two resubmission requests.

## **Summative feedback**

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- Following External Authentication and Results Approval, Learners are issued with a Provisional Statement of Results which provides summative feedback on their achievement.
- Learners have an opportunity to appeal summative results, and this is documented in the Appeals policy and procedures in section 6.9 of this document.

## **Benchmarking grades against national standards**

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- A grade analysis is completed for each certification cycle. Grades awarded are compared to the national standards (published by QQI). This is completed for each domain of learning.
- The Quality Committee review the results of each grade analysis and agree any further investigations or actions that may be required.
- This analysis is presented in the Internal Verification report and made available to the External Authenticator.
- An overall analysis is completed and presented in the programme scorecard. This is presented for review to the Academic Board annually.

## **Cross moderation of assessment results**

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- Cross Moderation is where Tutors are required to assess pre-selected pieces of work and provide marks for same using the marking scheme provided. Results are discussed with tutors for training purposes.
- Cross Moderation exercises are completed twice per year. The moderated sample will include work from all grade bands, all borderline grades and all fails.
- Cross Moderation is where Tutors are required to assess pre-selected pieces of work and provide marks for same using the marking scheme provided. Results are discussed with tutors for training purposes.

## Tutoring standards analysis

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- Assessment outcomes are internally verified and externally reviewed.
- A grade analysis is completed as part of the Internal Verification process which examines grades awarded against previous certification cycles, national standards (published by QQI), and individual tutors.
- Grade changes identified during External Authentication are communicated to Tutors follow each certification cycle.
- Feedback is gathered and reviewed on learner experience with tutors during and on completion of their course. This feedback is reviewed on a continual basis and events logged in line with corrective action procedures.
- Feedback is provided to Tutors following each assessment cycle regarding marking and feedback. This feedback includes the grade analysis completed by the Internal Verifier.

## 6.3 Assessment administration and planning

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### Co-ordinated planning of assessment

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- Prior to validation and the introduction of a programme, planning is completed by the Programme Committee, led by the Student Services Director. For each programme / module, the following are agreed and documented: (1) assessment technique, (2) weighting, (3) time required to complete, and (4) format and context. Prior to submission for validation, assessment briefs are designed, and the programme learning outcomes are clearly mapped to the assessment. A marking scheme is designed for each assessment which includes a rubric which documents the expected standards at each grade band.
- Once a course is introduced, assessment is co-ordinated by the Academic Director.
  - Assessors are monitored, and feedback provided on their work. There are procedures in place to ensure the security and validity of assessments.
  - A plagiarism procedure is in place to detect and prevent plagiarism.
  - Procedures are in place to ensure Reasonable Accommodation is afforded to learners regarding assessment.
  - A rigorous Internal Verification process takes place to quality assure learners work and assessment procedures.
  - A rigorous External Authentication / Standards Verification process takes place to review learners work and assessment procedures.
  - A Results Approval Panel is in place for all assessments (QQI only).
  - A procedure is in place to ensure formative and summative feedback is provided to learners.
  - An Appeals process is in place for all learners.

### Reasonable accommodation

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- There are robust policy and procedures in place for Reasonable Accommodation. See Section 7. Learner Supports and the Learner Journey.
- This policy outlines accommodations and arrangements which are made in relation to assessment extenuating circumstances.
- This policy is published for all learners and learners are further directed to this policy and the related procedures in their Personal Learning Plan.

## Co-ordinated data management

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- The assessment of learners is managed through a centralised Certification Spreadsheet. Access to restricted to authorised individuals.
- Verified learner details are recorded including name, student number, course, email address, PPS number, date of birth, address, certification fee exemption eligibility.
- Assessment outcomes are recorded including results confirmed, marking sheet(s) received, tutor marks, and grade.
- Internal Verification outcomes are recorded including: IV name, webinars attendance confirmation, student work is available, tutor responses are recorded for each assessment, plagiarism result, IV notes, the date of internal verification.
- External Authentication outcomes are recorded including External Authenticator name, date of sample, approved grades, and sampled learners.
- Other details recorded are date provisional results were issued, date appeals information provided to learner, date results submitted to QQI via QBS system, date of issuance of certificates.

## 6.4 Information for Learners

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### Information for prospective and existing learners

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The following information, regarding assessment, is published on our website for prospective and existing learners:

- The award title, level, and CAS code for every programme.
- Specific assessment requirements (examination, skills demonstration, etc.).
- Pre-requisites for every programme.
- Learning effort, in terms of hours, for each programme.
- Equipped to participate statements are included which outline the knowledge, skills and competence required to complete courses at each level for every programme.
- Technology requirements and levels of technical ability for every programme.
- Plagiarism policy and guidelines.
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

The following information, regarding assessment, is provided to learners of each programme:

- The assessment process and administration procedures.
- Assessment brief containing details on the method of assessment – project, assignment, etc. and specific tasks including wordcount.
- The marks awarded for each task are provided.
- The QQI Certificate Specification document is provided for learners. Assessment guidelines including formatting guidelines, how to submit/ upload/resubmit an assessment.
- Learner responsibilities: Learners must accept CMIT Terms and Conditions, which includes an authorship declaration before the submission of any assessment work.
- Learners are responsible for demonstrating achievement of the learning outcomes, familiarising themselves with these regulations (and associated procedures) and any other policies and procedures that apply to their programmes, complying with all rules and regulations relating to the assessment of their efforts, and undertaking assessment in a fair and honest manner.
- There is a clear statement of learner responsibility published for all learners (See Teaching and Learning Section 6. for full policy and procedure).

## 6.5 Security of assessment

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### Learner verification

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- All learners are issued with a unique Student Number and secure login/password.
- Learners submit assessments securely online within the VLE, which links their work to their unique Student Number and password.
- Their submitted work is linked only to their profile and viewable by them, their tutor, and certain staff involved in learner administration.
- Learners accept CMIT Terms and Conditions, which includes an authorship declaration before the submission of any assessment work.
- Learners complete an 'end of course' completion form including name, programme, address, and unique Student Number. This form includes their PPS number which is required by QQI.
- Tutors confirm that the learners work is complete, suitable for verification, and in their view, is their original work.

### Learner records and storage of assessments

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- All assessment materials are stored securely and backed up daily. Learner results are stored securely. Access to all services is password protected and fully encrypted. See 8. Information and Data Management policies.
- Student data is securely backed-up on the server each night, with a secure copy also stored on a different location to the server.
- Details of learner results will only be discussed with a third party, where the learner has explicitly permitted to do so either: (1) in writing through a letter or email, or (2) in the case where a 3<sup>rd</sup> party has funded the programme and learners have consented to their progress and certification status being disclosed if requested.
- Assessment materials and learner results are deleted in line with data retention policies See 8. Information and Data Management policies.
- QQI learners being entered for major / special purpose awards will be notified that a transcript will be provided along with their certificate. They will have the option to opt-out of receiving this.

## Examination procedures (physical exam)

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### Prior to exam

- Learners must register before sitting an exam.
- Detailed CMIT Examination Rules are emailed to all learners prior to the exam and a minimum of two copies are printed on A3 paper and displayed in the Examination room.
- Examination Rules and Invigilator Instructions are available and communicated to all members of staff involved in the supervision of the exam before the examination.
- All exam papers and answer booklets are prepared and printed in the college by authorised employees. Once printed, the examination papers are sealed in an envelope/box, which will not be opened until the examination commences.

### On day of exam

- Learners must sign-in and present an acceptable form of photo identification (Passport, Driving License or National Identity Card) which is checked by the invigilator before gaining entry to the exam room.
- Students will be allocated a number which indicates where they must sit for their exam.
- The invigilator instructions are read out by the primary invigilator before the commencement of the exam.
- All CMIT exam papers and answer booklets must be returned to the invigilator when leaving the examination.
- Learners are not permitted to remove any examination documentation out of the examination room.

### Re-sits

- There is no cost for sitting your allocated QQI exam, however, if you do not sit your allocated exam, a re-sit fee of eur40 will be payable.
- As per assessment policy learners may avail of two re sits.

## Examination procedures (online exam)

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### Prior to exam

- Examination rules and study topics are made available to all learners via their course page in advance of the examination.
- Learners are assigned an exam date and time, on commencing their programme.
- Online exams are not available to access at any time outside of the designated exam time.
- Exams are developed using a question bank which randomly selects the required questions for each exam sitting. This ensures the integrity of the online exam as no two versions of the exam will be the same.

### On day of exam

- On the day of the examination, learners must log in to their CMIT eLearning course page using their unique student number, password, and account verification code. IP addresses are logged.
- Learners will have access to the exam at the designated time via their CMIT eLearning course page.
- Once a learner accesses the exam their attendance is logged, and this is counted as an 'attempt' regardless of how long the learner accesses the exam for. This is clearly communicated in the exam rules provided to learners.
- The exam will open for learners at the same time and will automatically close once the allowed time expires.

### Re-sits

- Learners who do not attempt their assigned exam may apply to re sit the exam (further detail on the procedure for re-sits below).
- Learners who 'attempt' the exam but do not complete it may apply to re sit the exam. There is a eur40 fee for re-sitting exams. As per assessment policy learners may avail of two re sits.

## Assessment by third parties

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- Supervisor Reports may be required as part of assessment activities.

- The purpose of these reports is to: (1) confirm that learners have completed an assessment task in the workplace, and (2) obtain feedback on the quality of the task undertaken.
- Supervisor Reports are submitted as part of validation and approved for use during the QQI validation process.
- Learners are provided with specific criteria for the selection of an appropriate supervisor and supervisors are required to a formal statement of supporting this.
- Clear instructions are provided to the supervisor, including (1) the purpose of the report, (2) how the report supports the assessment, (3) how to complete the report, (4) guidance (rubrics) on quantitative ratings for each criterion being rated.
- Supervisor Reports are checked by the assessor for consistency with learner's work.
- Supervisor Reports are sampled by the Internal Verifier and Supervisors may be contacted personally as part of the verification process.
- Supervisor Reports are available for sampling by the External Authenticator.

## Professional Practice Placements

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- Professional Practice Placements may be required for some programmes. If required, this will be clearly stated on the programme information provided to learners prior to enrolment.
- To allow enhanced access and limit situational barriers, the college will support learners in selecting local organisations for the completion of professional practice placements.
- Organisations must meet the criteria identified for the placement and a declaration form confirming the criteria will be signed by both the learner and a suitable representative from the organisation.
- Learners will be provided with a professional practice placement handbook which will include guidance on selecting a placement, a code of conduct which learners are expected adhere to while on placement, details of the dedicated supports in place while on placement.
- A nominated suitably qualified person within the placement organisation will be provided with a handbook outlining the requirements for the placement.
- This handbook will provide an outline of the role and purpose of the placement, the code of conduct for the placement, the requirements for the placement in terms of what a learner will need to do, observe etc. and details of the relevant contact and support staff within the college to assist the workplace supervisor as required for the duration of the placement. The guidelines as stated above for assessment by a third party will also be included in the handbook.
- A workplace assessor induction will be provided which explains the role and purpose of workplace assessment and best practice in making assessment decisions regarding workplace assessment.

- In the event of a grievance or complaint during the professional practice placement the Academic Director will be responsible for implementing the relevant procedures to resolve the issue.

## 6.6 Plagiarism

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### Plagiarism policy

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- Plagiarism is defined as taking the work of someone else and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious offence, but often, results from misunderstandings rather than a deliberate intention to cheat. Therefore, CMIT's approach to plagiarism is both in prevention and detection.
- Many learners simply do not understand what plagiarism is. Although confusion is understandable, ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse, or as a defence, against an accusation of serious plagiarism. Learners must therefore make sure that they understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.
- The College upholds the principle of assessment integrity, and that acknowledgement is given to the contributions of others in any work, through appropriate references. It is acceptable to use quotations from others and paraphrase information from other sources, however this must be referenced.
- Learners may be found guilty of plagiarism for any one of the following:
  - Presenting or passing off another person's work as their own.
  - Using or submitting the words or ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source.
  - Using more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and identification of the source.
- Any learner(s) who are found to have used materials/content which they have not created themselves (regardless of the source, e.g., online, another learner etc.) and which have not been referenced, is in breach of the Plagiarism Policy.

### Prevention / creating awareness of plagiarism

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- Learner awareness and understanding is important in the prevention of plagiarism. A clear policy on Plagiarism is provided to learners to inform learners of CMIT's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- Easy-to-use guides which contain examples of the required method for referencing are provided to learner.
- A custom video has been produced to provide additional support to learners in correctly referencing their work.
- Tutors are trained in how to detect plagiarism. Teaching and Learning forums discuss cases of plagiarism and provide training on techniques that can be used to detect plagiarism.

- CMIT uses practical methods which do not lend themselves easily to plagiarism — e.g., build a website, complete a digital marketing plan based on a case provided.
- CMIT encourages originality and discourages plagiarism by designing assessment tasks which seek to apply knowledge to specific scenarios — applying theory X to event Y, e.g., 'Develop an Event Proposal for a Conference in Dublin for 25 businesspeople, with a budget of €25,000', rather than 'Describe the elements of an Event Proposal?'
- Internal Verifiers review tutoring standards as part of the Internal Verification process. This check includes plagiarism and anti-collusion / cheating checks to ensure results have not been tampered with, excessive assistance has not been provided to a learner in writing an assessment and that referencing has been applied by the learner correctly.
- Learners must accept CMIT Terms and Conditions, which includes an agreement to comply with this plagiarism policy
- Learners undertaking ILM programmes must sign and upload a Learner Authenticity Statement at the beginning of their programme.

## Detection

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- Tutors are trained in the detection of plagiarism and detecting assessment infringements and refer cases of suspected plagiarism / infringement to the Academic Director when required.
- CMIT uses plagiarism software to identify plagiarised work in submitted assessments.

## Procedure for a minor case of plagiarism

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- A minor case of plagiarism is where referencing is incomplete, or a small amount of text has been detected as coming from another source.
- In this case, the Tutor will discuss directly with the learner to provide advice about the correct citation and how to avoid plagiarism in the future.
- The learner may be required to resubmit the work, in full or part, without any further penalty.

## Procedure for a serious case of plagiarism

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- Where a large amount of text has been transcribed without attribution and without quotation marks, it will be referred to the Academic Director.

- Plagiarism software will indicate the source(s) of the material and the percentage which has been copied.
- CMIT will communicate the learner in writing of the nature of the alleged malpractice, and the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
- CMIT will allow the learner to respond to the allegations made before proceeding and making a final decision.
- For QQI programmes, the Academic Director will review the learner's response and decide on the penalties, which may include: (1) resubmission of work (where the maximum grade awarded is a pass), or (2) exclusion from the programme. The Academic Director will communicate the outcome of this investigation to the learner. Any actions resulting from this investigation will be implemented by CMIT within the agreed timeframes.
- A report on serious cases of Plagiarism will be presented to the Academic Board by the Academic Director.
- For ILM programmes, CMIT will investigate and report to ILM within 20 days of the conclusion of the internal investigation. Where a serious case is confirmed, Learners will be: (1) removed from the programme, and (2) a report issued to ILM using the Centre Investigation Report Form. ILM will investigate, and the outcome will be communicated to CMIT within 15 working days. CMIT will communicate the outcome of this investigation to the learner. Any actions resulting from this investigation will be implemented by CMIT within the agreed timeframes and completion notified to the ILM Quality and Compliance Manager for sign off.

## 6.7 Contract cheating

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### Contract cheating policy

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- "Contract cheating is a term used to refer to the practice of companies that sell bespoke assignments, essays and theses which learners may then submit for assessment, as their own work." (QQI, 2021)
- Organisations offering these services are often referred to as "essay mills".
- There is legislation in place [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) \(Amendment\) Act 2019](#) which was enacted in July 2019. This legislation identifies the provision and advertising of contract cheating organisations as a prosecutable offence. Under this legislation QQI have specific powers to prosecute those who facilitate academic cheating.
- As per the CMIT Plagiarism Policy "Plagiarism is defined as taking the work of someone else and passing it off as one's own."
- This policy aims to document the specific procedure for investigating a suspected case of contract cheating. It is supplementary to the Plagiarism Policy in place and the specific procedures outlined in this policy will be enacted in the case of suspected contract cheating.

### Detection

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- There are several indicators which may trigger a contract cheating investigation. The list below is not exhaustive. An investigation may be launched based on one or more indicators which trigger suspicion:
  - Excessively low plagiarism score (<10%). This can be an indication of the measures taken by contract cheating services to avoid plagiarism detection.
  - Assessment work which is highly inconsistent with previous work submitted by a learner.
  - Assessment work which is highly inconsistent with the level / standard / academic requirements of the programme being completed.
  - Excessive referencing.
  - Lack of evidence of practical application to support the assessment.
  - Assessment does not specifically address the key themes, requirements of the task as outlined in the assessment brief.
  - Inconsistent language. This can include inconsistencies with samples of the learners previously completed work or inconsistencies with spoken language.

- References which cite numerous sources that are not consistent with the ideas / themes being discussed in the assessment.
- Language and phrasing patterns which can indicate an attempt to bypass usual plagiarism detection methods.

## Procedure

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### Phase 1

- In the event one or more indicators are noted the learner will be contacted by email to advise that a contract cheating investigation is being initiated.
- If a learner has submitted multiple assessments, they will be advised that all assessment work submitted will be subject to review.
- The learner will be offered one opportunity to remove the assessment(s) and resubmit a new fully revised assessment with a 10-mark penalty (i.e., the revised assessment will be graded, and 10 marks will be deducted to acknowledge the admission by the learner that the original version submitted was not the learners own original work).
- The learner will agree to submit a new assessment which is entirely new and original work. If it is not submitted as required, the assessment will not be accepted.
- The original submission(s) will be kept by the college to facilitate a comparative review when the learner submits their revised assessment.

### Phase 2

- If the learner responds to the initial correspondence to state that the assessment is their own original work, an investigation will be formally opened, and the following steps will be taken:
- The learner will be requested to submit copies of draft / rough work and any research undertaken in completing the assessment.
- The learner will be requested to submit a written explanation for three of the references cited which documents the source used and their approach in constructing their answer using the three references selected. The learner will be allowed a period of 10 days from the date of contact to provide the requested information. If a learner does not provide the required information or fails to respond to the request the investigation will be closed, and the learner removed from the programme. Any submitted assessment work will be withdrawn from certification.

- The Academic Director will request the Quality Assurance Executive and a nominated tutor to review the submission to verify the references provided. A reference will be deemed verified if (a) it is publicly available, or the source material can be provided by the learner and (b) if the title and general theme of the source matches the information provided in the assessment. A reference will be deemed not verified if (a) it cannot be accessed or (b) the title or general theme of the source cited does not match the content of the answer provided. The acceptable threshold for verified references is 90% verified.
- On receipt of the required information and the reference verification reports from the Quality Assurance Executive and nominated Tutor, the Academic Director will review the documentation.

### **Possible outcomes**

- If it cannot be definitively confirmed the work is not that of the learner, then the investigation will be closed. The learner is advised of the outcome, the assessment is reviewed and marked by the programme tutor.
- If the evidence gathered provides definitive evidence that the assessment is not the original work of the learner, the Academic Director will write to the learner to advise them that a Fail grade is being issued.
- Learners have the right to appeal. Information on the procedure for appeals is provided in the appeals policy (QA 6.10).
- In cases of contract cheating, the Academic Director will report the investigation that took place and the outcome to the Academic Board.

## 6.8 Internal verification of assessment

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### Internal verification policy

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- Internal verification is where assessment policies and procedures relating to planning, managing, and operationalising all aspects of assessment practices, are monitored CMIT.
- The process includes checking that assessment procedures have been applied across the range of assessment activities from planning to finalising results including checking/monitoring the accuracy of assessment results to ensure learner evidence exists and that results, and grades are correctly computed and recorded.
- Internal verification takes place on a sampling basis.
- Internal verification is undertaken by the assignment of one or more internal verifiers.
- The outcome of the internal verification process is an internal verification report.
- A sample template for the internal verification reports is provided to internal verifiers.
- The role of the internal verifier is to systematically check that the provider's assessment procedures have been applied consistently across assessment activities and to verify the accuracy of assessment results. The internal verifier(s) will: check that the provider's assessment procedures were adhered to monitor assessment results on a sample basis and produce an internal verification report.
- A suitably qualified Internal Verifier is chosen for each programme (Job role in place).
- The Internal Verifier will always be a different individual to the person who assessed the work.
- No assessor is permitted to verify an assessment decision that they have made themselves.

### Internal verification procedure

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- The following information is made available to the Internal Verifier before verification:
  - Internal Verifier Job Role (including the qualifications, competencies and experience required).
  - CMIT Assessment Quality Assurance Procedures.
  - CMIT Sampling Strategy.
  - QQI programme specification for each award being verified.

- Programme Descriptor for each award being verified.
- Assessment brief for each award being verified.
- Assessment Mapping Matrix and rubrics for each award being verified.
- Blank Internal Verification report (QQI template).
- Certification Spreadsheet (containing names, results, and grades of learners).
- Learner assessment work and feedback.
- Summary of the latest review of CMIT grade analysis (compared to national standards).
- For each award, the Internal Verifier:
  - Checks that assessment procedures have been adhered to. Confirms that assessment results are documented and recorded as per the provider's procedures.
  - Checks that learning has been assessed using the techniques and instruments as indicated in the validated programme.
  - Ensures evidence is generated as per the technique identified in the Award Specification and using appropriate instruments as indicated in the validated programme.
  - Checks results on a sampling basis. This involves checking that assessment evidence is available for all learners presented and that results are recorded, and grades are assigned according to QQI requirements.
  - Completes a grade analysis for the cohort of learners presented.
  - Completes an Internal Verification report (using the QQI Internal Verification report template) detailing the findings from the completed review.
- For each completed module, the Internal Verifier:
  - Initials the marking sheet(s) for each sampled learner confirming that assessment results are available for each learner and that marks are totalled, and percentage marks are calculated correctly.
  - Checks the percentage marks and grades awarded are consistent with QQI grading bands.
  - Checks that the learner's assessment work is available on the CMIT eLearning system. Samples Mentor/Supervisor Reports (where applicable) to ensure accuracy and completeness.
  - Checks that tutor feedback has been provided for each learner submission.
  - Checks the learner's assessment work using plagiarism detection software and records the result on the Certification Spreadsheet (%).
  - Checks that the marks detailed on the Certification Spreadsheet match those supplied on the Marking Sheet completed by the Tutor.
  - Notes any discrepancies in the marks on the Certification Spreadsheet.

## 6.9 External authentication of assessment

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### External authentication policy

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- External authentication provides independent, authoritative, confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards. It establishes the credibility of the 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 for each major, special purpose and supplemental award.
- External authenticators are independent of CMIT.
- External authenticators moderate assessment results for an award or across several awards within a related field or sub-field of the major, special purpose, supplemental of learning.
- External authenticators have subject matter expertise in the appropriate field or subfield to which they are assigned.
- External Authenticators are selected in line with QQI guidelines on the identification and engagement of suitable External Authenticators.
- A Code of Conduct form must be signed by all External Authenticators.
- The outcome of the external authentication process is an external authentication report which will comment on the effectiveness of the application of the assessment process and procedures and in particular comment on the extent to which the marks/grades conform to national standards.
- Findings from External Authentication are discussed in Results Approval Panel Meeting and are recorded in minutes. Areas of good practice and areas for improvement are also identified and minuted.

### QQI external authentication procedure

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- The following information is made available to the External Authenticator before verification:
  - Internal Verification Report(s).
  - Authentication Report by Learner Group (from QBS).
  - Marking Sheets / rubrics, Programme Descriptors and Assessment Briefs.
  - Learner Assessments.
  - Completed Learner marking sheets.

- Tutor Feedback for learners.
- Blank EA Report template.
- Minutes from previous RAP meeting.
- The QQI external authenticator will:
  - Review internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes.
  - Confirm assessment has taken place in line with validated programme descriptors.
  - Apply a sampling strategy to moderate assessment results consistent with QQI requirements.
  - Moderate assessment results per standards outlined in the Award Specification.
  - Participate in the results approval process as per the provider's agreed procedures.
  - Identify any issues/irregularities concerning the Assessment Process.
  - Confirm the fair and consistent assessment of learners consistent with the provider's procedures and with QQI policy on quality assuring assessment.
  - Produce an external authentication report.
  - Make recommendations on results submitted for approval.

## **ILM external authentication**

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- External Authenticators are assigned to the college by ILM.
- Dates for sampling are agreed and entered the ILM Quality Portal.
- CMIT completed a PA1 submission advising of learners available for sampling.
- On receipt of the PA2 sampling request from the EV, the selected sample work is sent remotely for Verification.
- Documentation is prepared for presentation at the time of External Authentication and includes at least the following:
  - Learner Authenticity Statement for each learner.
    - Assessment Briefs.
    - Learner Assessments.
    - Completed Learner marking sheets.
    - Tutor Feedback for learners.
  - Any other documentation as requested by the EV.
- The External Verifier completes remote sampling of learner work and records decisions.
- CAR form is completed and submitted to the Quality Portal.
- Actions and areas for improvement are included in this report.
- EV will release certificates if satisfied that assessment procedures and decisions are correct.

## 6.10 Appeals policy

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- An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision of the college regarding the grade received for an award. The nature of an appeal request by a learner could include for instance, a request for a recheck of the calculation of marks, a review of their assessment work, or an appeal regarding inconsistency of assessment procedures.
- Learners are advised of the Appeal Process in this document, when provisional results are issued, on completion of their course.
- Appeals mechanisms are provided to ensure fairness and all decisions are fairly made.
- There is eur75 appeal fee required to cover administration, Internal Verifier and External Authenticator costs.
- All appeals must be evidence based.
- General rules
  - Only approved and issued provisional results may can be appealed by the learner.
  - After an appeals procedure has been executed in line with this policy, there is no further right of appeal.
  - 14 days are allowed from receipt of results to appeal a result.
- There are two grounds for appeal:
  - Procedural inconsistency – where a learner feels there has been an inconsistency with the assessment procedure (e.g., where the learner is not marked according to the assessment criteria), a case of unfair practice (e.g., where a learner is not provided with the same assessment resources or time as other learners) or infringement by the college (e.g., a disruption during an exam which disadvantages a learner) that has had an unfavourable impact on their result.
  - Administrative errors – where the learner perceives there has been an error in the calculation or communication of grades.
- The following are not grounds for an appeal:
  - Dissatisfaction – where a learner is dissatisfied or disappointed with a result.
  - Academic judgement – where a learner questions the academic judgement of an assessor.
  - Complaints about individuals or about established procedures.
  - A decision that has previously been reviewed or appealed cannot be appealed on the same grounds again.
- Possible outcomes
  - Reject the appeal – the original decision stands.
  - Uphold the appeal – the student’s grounds for appeal are found to be valid and the original outcome is reconsidered. If an appeal is upheld, the consequences depend on the decision being appealed but will normally include: (1) a

reconsideration of the original decision and the issuing of a new decision to (as far as is possible) place the student in the position where they would have been had the error not occurred, (2) notification to all relevant parties.

## Procedure for submitting an appeal.

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- Learners are notified of their right to appeal when provisional results are issued. Learners who are considering appealing will be provided with information about the appeals process and the criteria / grounds for an appeal.
- Should a learner perceive their grounds for appeal is valid, an appeals form must be completed and submitted by the learner.
- Learners who wish to appeal must lodge a completed appeal form within 14 days of receipt of results. An appeals form is available by contacting the college.
- When a completed appeals form is received, the learner will be advised that they will be withdrawn from the current certification period to facilitate the appeals process. They will be notified of the next available certification period.
- If a request for appeal is not received within 14 days, the awarded grade shall constitute the final grade for that learner and can no longer be appealed.

## Procedure for processing an appeal.

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### Phase 1

- Upon receipt of an appeal application, the Academic Director reviews the appeal and confirm if the grounds for appeal meet the requirements to be deemed valid. If the appeal is not valid the learner is advised of the outcome and the appeal fee will be refunded to the learner. If the appeal is valid, the learner is advised that an appeal is proceeding, and a review will be undertaken. Per QQI policy a 'review means the re-consideration of the assessment decision, either by the original assessor or by other competent persons.'
- The Academic Director will forward a copy of the learner's coursework to the original Internal Verifier, the original assessor/Tutor, and an additional assessor/Tutor. These parties will review for: (1) consistency of the application of the assessment procedure, and (2) administrative errors.
- The above parties will meet, and submit their recommendations to the Academic Director, no longer than 14 days of receiving the Learners work.
- The recommendations will then be issued to the Learner by the Academic Director detailing the findings of the review and that they request a further review if they are not satisfied with the decision.

## Phase 2

- Where the learner (who has appealed) is not satisfied with the outcome of the Phase 1 review, the learner may request a further review of their coursework.
- On receiving this request, the college will engage an External Authenticator who will be provided with the learner's history, feedback, assessment work and related course materials.
- This External Authenticator will review for: (1) consistency of the application of the assessment procedure, and (2) administrative errors.
- The External Authenticator will submit their recommendation to the Academic Director, no longer than 14 days of receiving the Learners work.
- A feedback report will then be issued to the Learner detailing the findings of the Phase 2 review and that they request a further review by QQI if they are not satisfied with the decision.

## Phase 3 (applies to QQI Programmes only)

- Should a learner still request further action, CMIT would then lodge an appeal on behalf of the Learner to QQI.
- At this stage, it is QQI's policy that they will not alter the grade or results of the Learner but will investigate CMIT's assessment procedure. Following the submission of the Learners Appeals Submission Form, including the eur10 QQI Appeals Fee, the appeal will be made to QQI by CMIT on behalf of the Learner. Appeals may be made to QQI within six months from receipt of notification to provider and within one year of receipt of certification. The QQI National Appeals Procedure is a formal process that involves two stages.
  - Stage 1: Internal QQI Review - at this stage, QQI may require further evidence from a Learner concerning the appeal.
  - Stage 2: An Appeals Review Panel is appointed to determine that the Learner has been treated fairly and that due process has been followed by the provider. The Panel may request to meet the Learner, who may be accompanied if required.
- The outcome of the National Appeals Process will not alter a Learners grade. However, recommendations may be made to the provider for amendments to assessment processes.

## Phase 3 (applies to ILM Programmes only)

- Should a learner still request further action, they may then submit an appeal to ILM.
- ILM will consider appeals only after the Internal Appeals Process has been exhausted.

- However, there are some issues they will not investigate. ILM will not investigate appeals:
  - Submitted more than 30 working days after the date on which CMIT notified the learner of the result of the Internal Appeals Process.
  - That took place before ILM received the learner's registration.
  - That is or should be dealt with under an employer's disciplinary or grievance procedures.
  - Involving another awarding organisation.
  - Involving points of law.
- A Learner has the right to further appeal the decision made by ILM, and the details to do so will be issued with the report outlining the results or the submitted enquiry.

## 6.11 Results approval process

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### Results approval process

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- A Results Approval Panel will be formed to ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, judged, and processed in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner.
- The Results Approval Panel will meet to review internal verification and external authentication reports.
- The Results Approval Panel will meet to agree to the submission of results to QQI to request certification.
- The Results Approval Panel will meet to identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.

### Procedure for the results approval panel

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- The results approval panel occurs on the same day as the External Authenticator review.
- The Internal Verifier(s) reports are reviewed, and the findings discussed.
- The External Authenticator(s) report is reviewed, and the findings discussed.
- Provisional results are reviewed and compared against Internal Verifier(s), and External Authenticator(s) reports.
- The panel agrees to submit results to QQI to request certification.
- In the event of a disagreement between the External Authenticator and an Internal Verifier judgement, the Results Approval Panel shall convene to reach a consensus decision. If the Results Approval Panel is unable to reach a consensus and is therefore unable to approve the results awarded, the Chair may suspend the RAP meeting pending any of the following: (1) further review, (2) additional information, (3) consultation with learner/assessor/internal verifier, or any other relevant party, (4) consultation with another External Authenticator. The Results Approval Panel shall reconvene to reach a consensus decision.
- Additional conclusions, improvements and actions agreed are recorded.
- The meeting is minuted and signed off by the Chair.

### Documenting improvements

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- Issues are recorded and actioned by the Quality Committee using the corrective action procedure.

- This may entail errors in assessment briefs or marking schemes. Issues may be identified by Admin Staff, Tutors, Learners, or auditors.

## Appendix 6.1 Appeals process

